

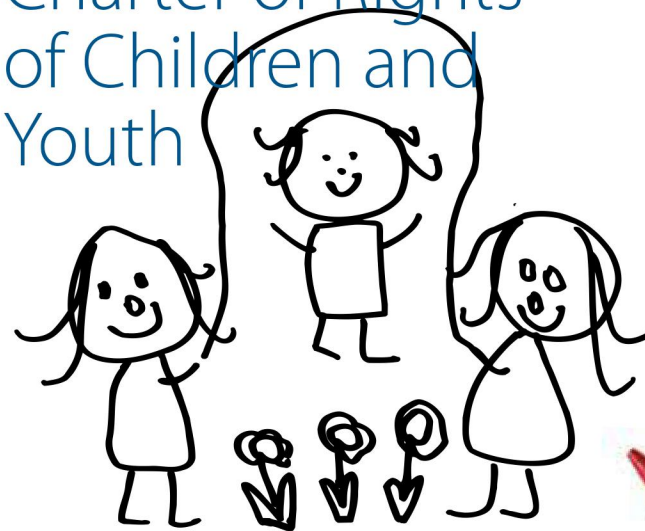
# Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth



This book belongs to:

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# Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth



Please  
colour  
me!





This Charter was created by the Children and Youth of Hamilton, in their words, through extensive community engagement. While families are responsible for raising their children, governments, schools, communities, parents and individuals have a duty to respect children's rights.

The Charter is not only about Making Hamilton the Best Place to Raise a Child, but also about Making Hamilton the Best Place to BE a Child.

# I have the right...

- ✓ to be heard.
- ✓ to live in a home, in a neighbourhood.
- ✓ to live with and be cared for by family.
- ✓ to have friends.
- ✓ to good food, and warm, clean clothes.
- ✓ to a healthy earth to live on.
- ✓ to play.
- ✓ to privacy.
- ✓ to express myself, my personality and thoughts without judgement.
- ✓ to learn more things.
- ✓ to make choices.
- ✓ to special help like a wheelchair if I ever need it.
- ✓ to know about and practice my culture.
- ✓ to care for living things.
- ✓ to be safe, secure, and healthy.
- ✓ to be free from discrimination.
- ✓ to rest.
- ✓ to be proud of who I am.

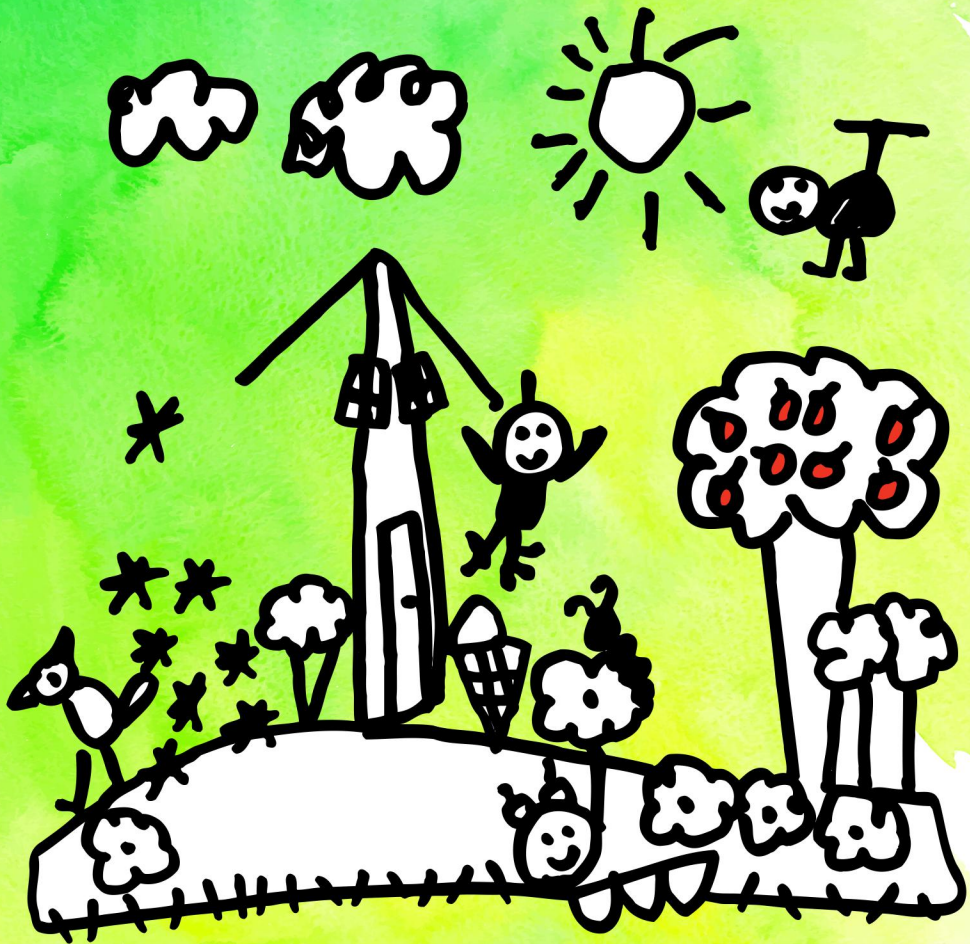


# I have the right to be heard.

## *I have the right...*

- ✓ to have a say in decisions that affect me
- ✓ to express an opinion and have it be heard by the people around me





I have the right to live in a home, in a neighbourhood.

I have the right...

- ✓ to live in a house with a bird house, grass, and trees
- ✓ for my neighbourhood to accept and respect children's rights
- ✓ to live in a house that is mold-free and bug-free and asbestos-free



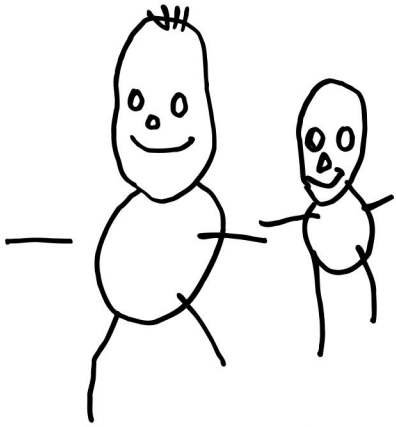
# I have the right to live with and be cared for by family.

## *I have the right...*

- ✓ to make something with my mom
- ✓ to have an adult hug me and take care of me
- ✓ to have someone who cares about me and is patient with me
- ✓ to be reminded of how important I am



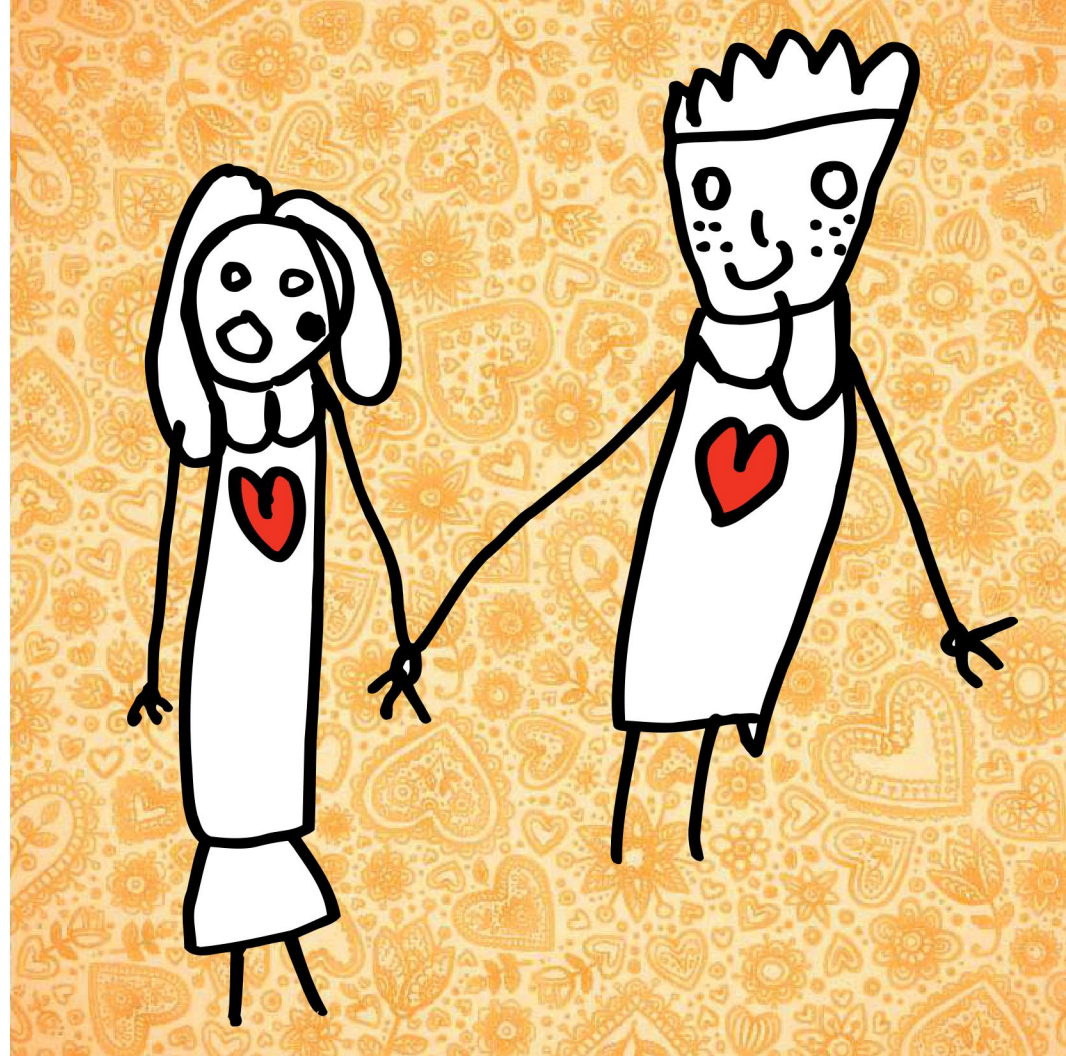


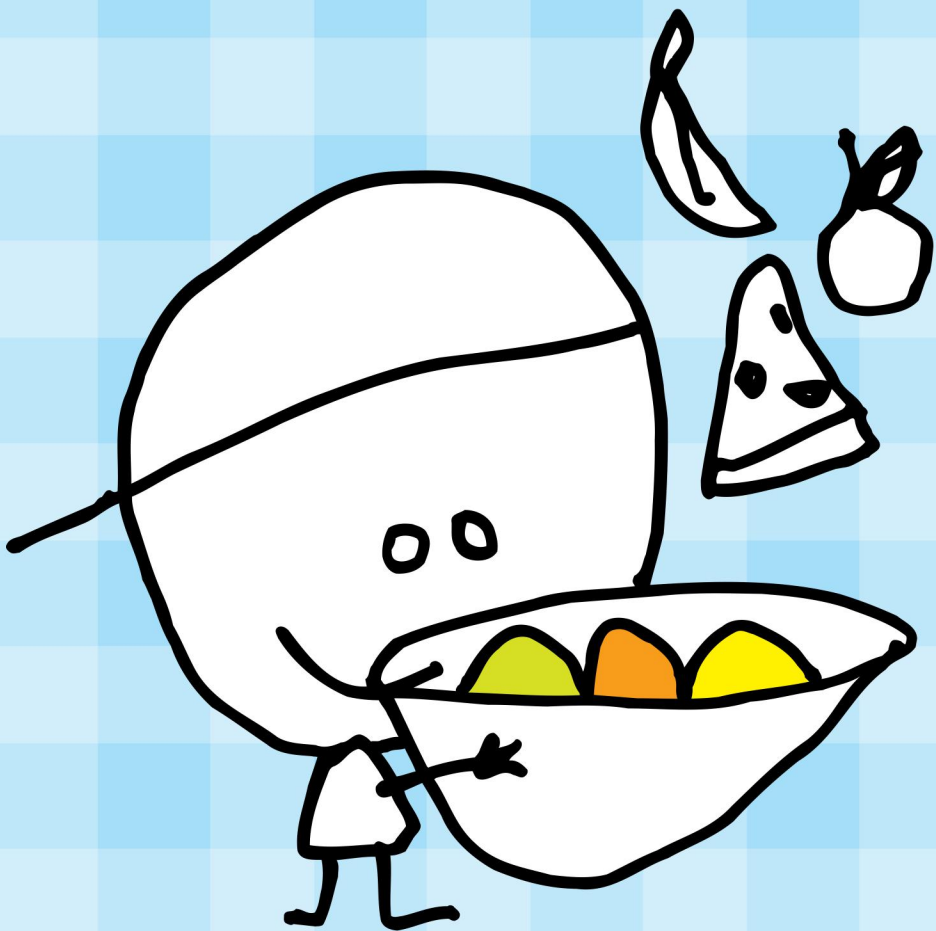


I have the right  
to have friends.

*I have the right...*

- ✓ to have a best friend
- ✓ to argue with my friend and then make up again
- ✓ to have fun and laugh
- ✓ to play with blocks with my friends





I have the right  
to good food,  
and warm,  
clean clothes.

*I have the right...*

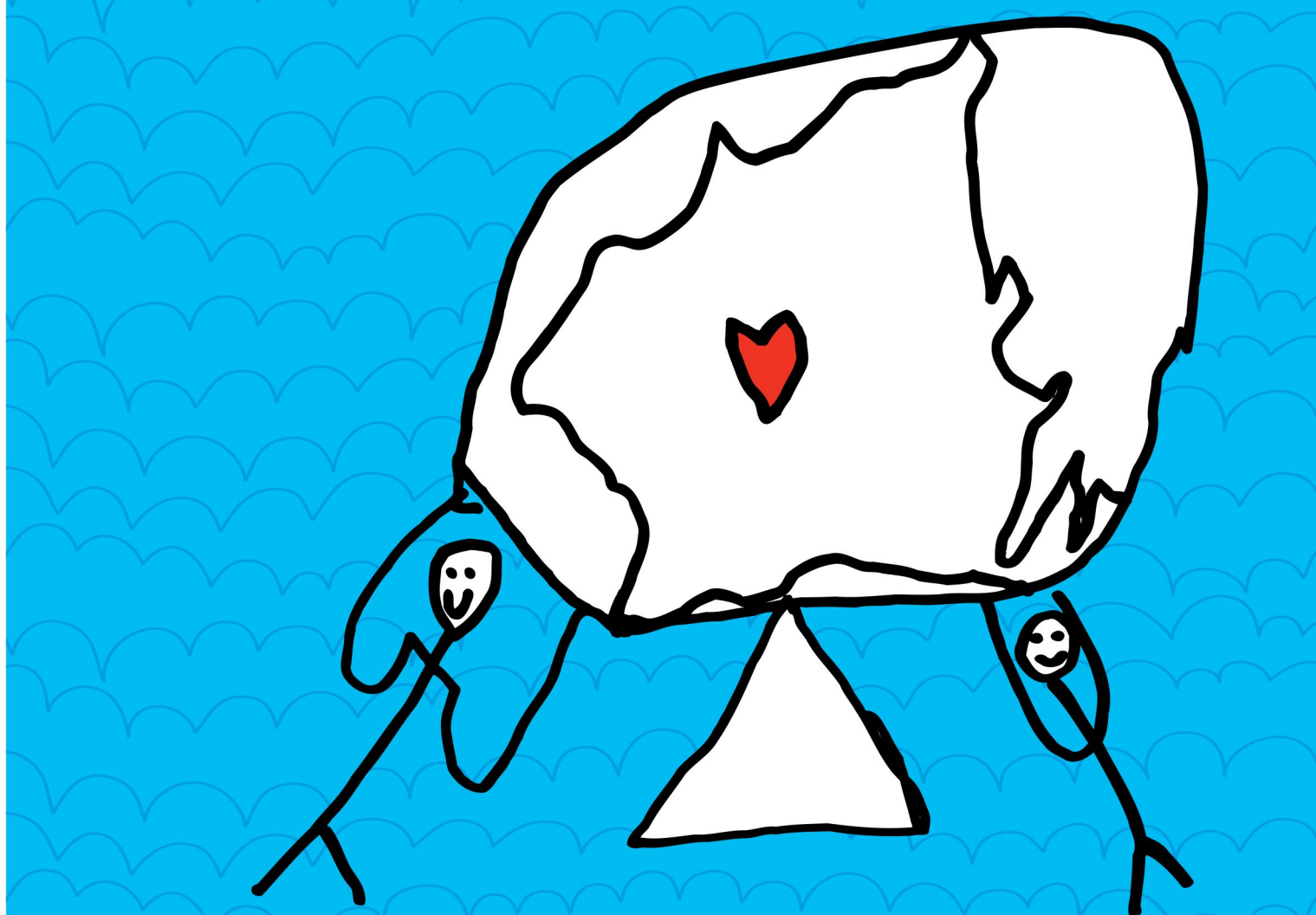
- ✓ to have breakfast before I go anywhere
- ✓ to make cupcakes
- ✓ to more, and better school and club snacks

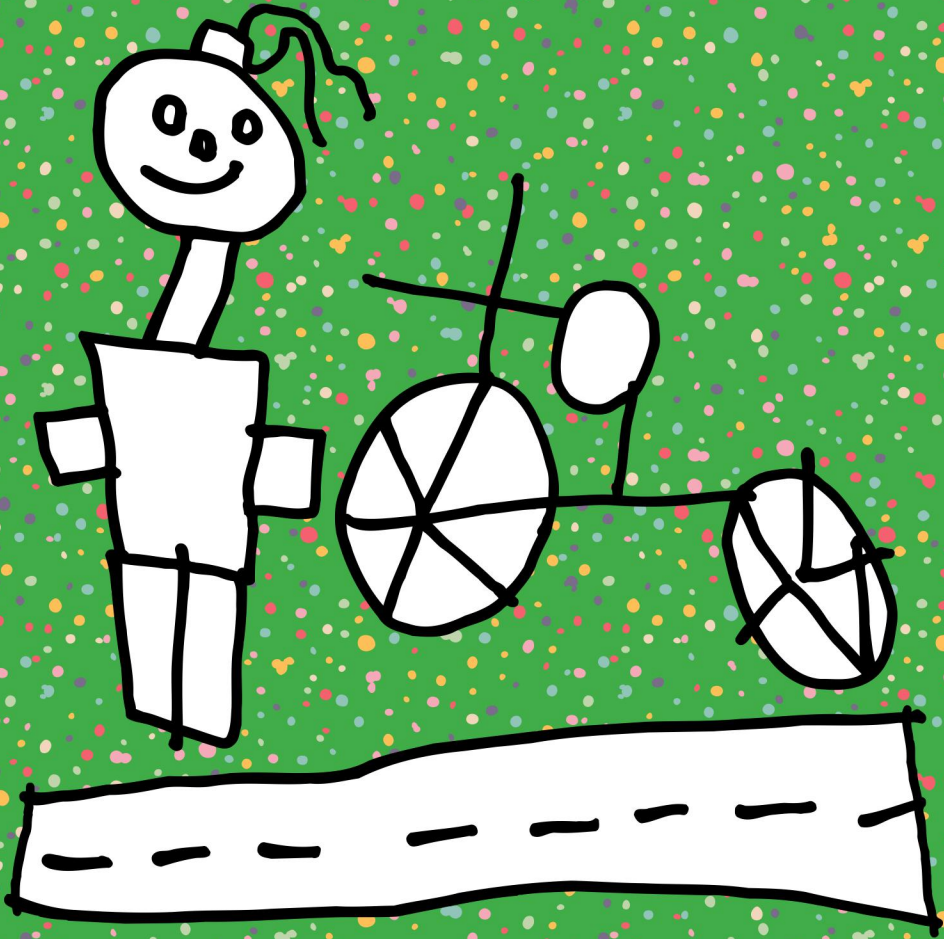


I have the  
right to a  
healthy  
earth to  
live on.

*I have the right...*

- ✓ to have free, fresh, clean water
- ✓ to have clean air
- ✓ to play with leaves
- ✓ to dig in the dirt
- ✓ to be in nature





# I have the right to play.

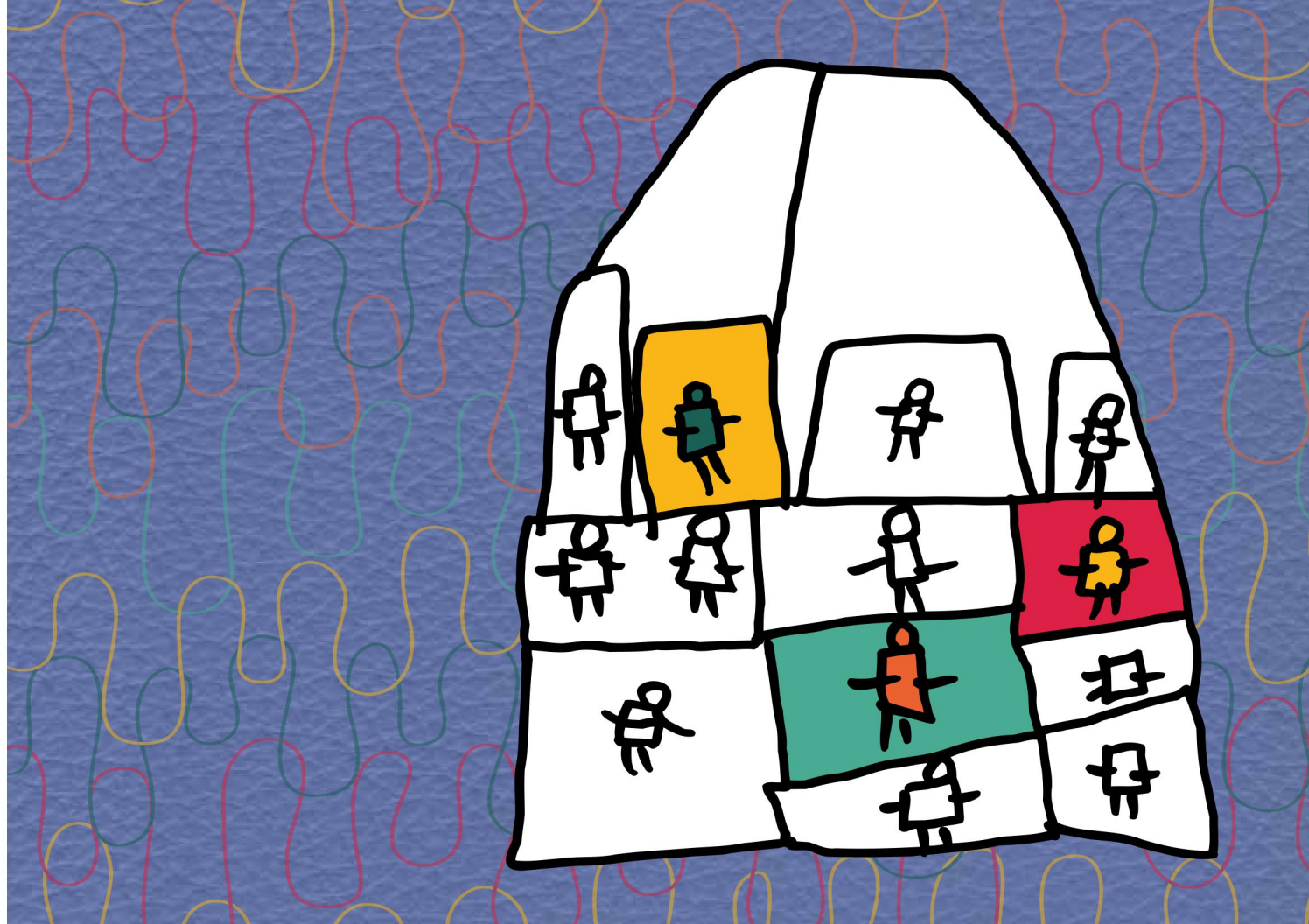
## I have the right...

- ✓ to have toys
- ✓ to play games on my computer
- ✓ to play on a swing at the park
- ✓ to slide on the big slide
- ✓ to test out my own body
- ✓ to have extra-curricular activities: drama, dance, clubs, and sports
- ✓ to be able to go to the playground with my parents
- ✓ to ride my bike
- ✓ to get really messy
- ✓ to jump
- ✓ to play in bigger parks
- ✓ to climb on branches
- ✓ to go to camps
- ✓ to play sports
- ✓ to ride my bike
- ✓ to exercise
- ✓ to race toy cars

# I have the right to privacy.

## *I have the right...*

- ✓ to be in my home and be private in my room so my cat won't bother me
- ✓ to have a place where I can be by myself or maybe with a friend, like a fort or a tent





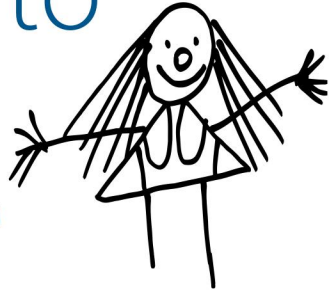


I have the right to express myself, my personality and thoughts without judgement.

*I have the right...*

- ✓ to tell other people what I am thinking and feeling
- ✓ to express myself through creative experiences
- ✓ to have art supplies and to make art, and have art teachers
- ✓ to have my concerns treated with respect
- ✓ to be free to show who I am or what I think
- ✓ not to understand life or know the meaning to everything
- ✓ to feel loved or mad... or to feel confused
- ✓ to dance
- ✓ to think for myself
- ✓ to be imaginative

I have the  
right to  
learn  
more  
things.



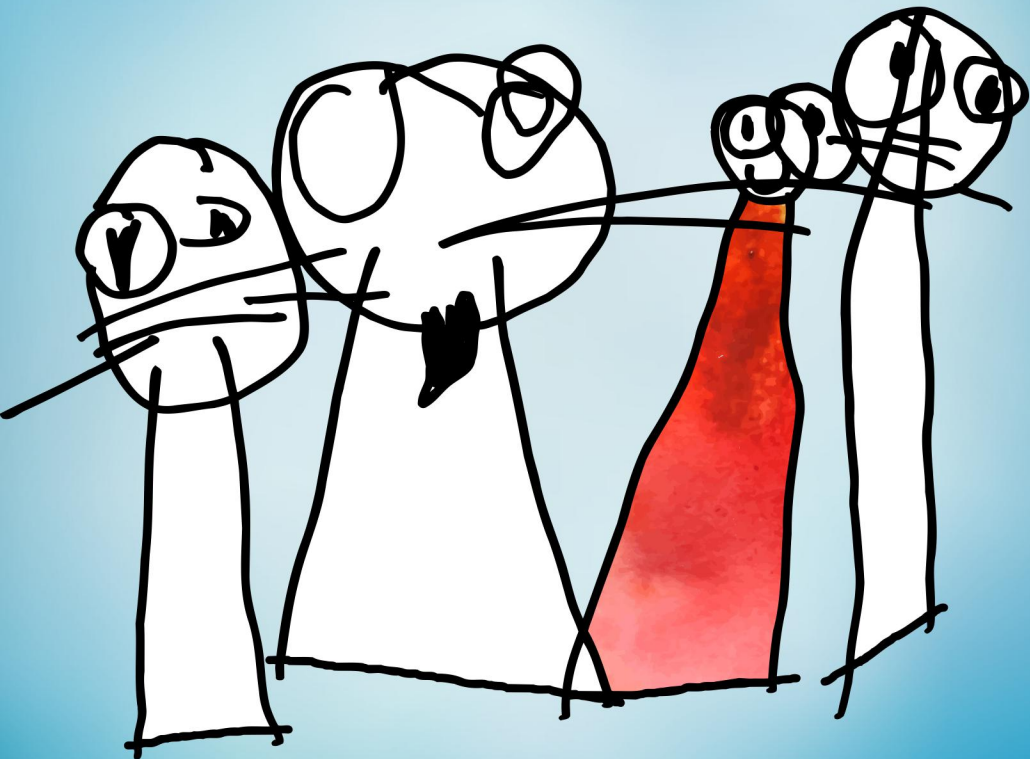
*I have the right...*

- ✓ to learn in fun ways
- ✓ to have more books
- ✓ to go to school and have a safe learning environment
- ✓ to graduate from university
- ✓ to have opportunities; to reach goals
- ✓ to do my best work
- ✓ to notice what is important to me



I like school because I play  
with the toys and I like to play in  
the sand and it's good to be at school  
and I like to play on the computer  
and I like the time I eat lunch and  
I like my Teachers





# I have the right to make choices.

## I have the right...

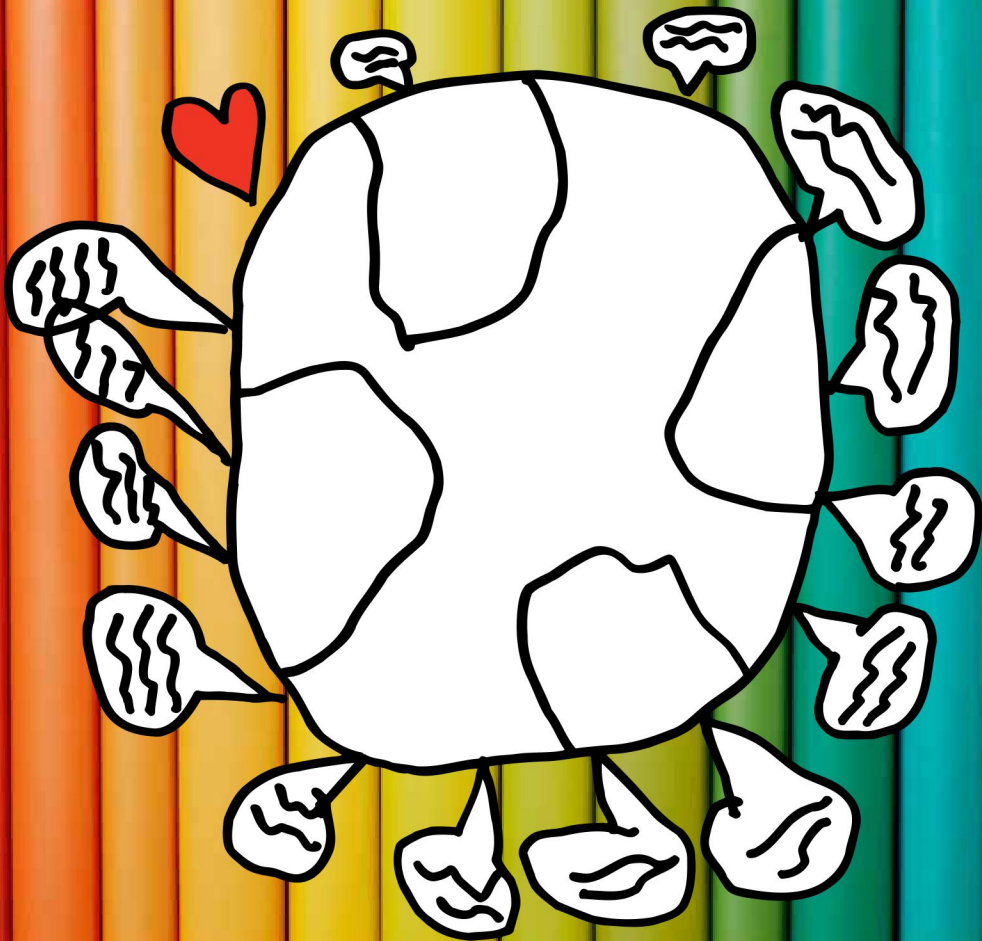
- ✓ to choose my friends
- ✓ to have my favourite colour
- ✓ to have the chance to learn by making mistakes
- ✓ to be silly if I feel like it
- ✓ to choose my girlfriend or boyfriend
- ✓ to have a part-time job

I have the right  
to special help  
like a wheelchair  
if I ever need it.

*I have the right...*

- ✓ to be helped and have hope
- ✓ to have supports available so I can develop
- ✓ to help people

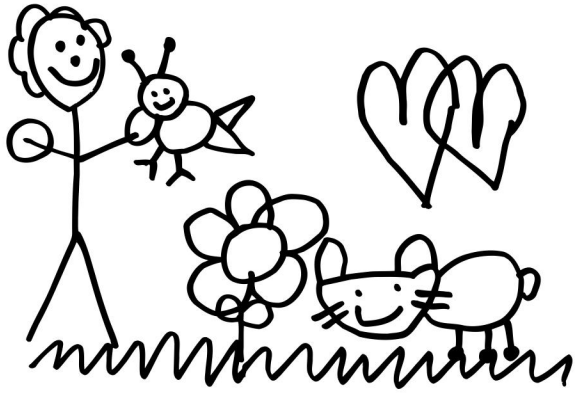




I have the right  
to know about  
and practice my  
culture.

*I have the right...*

- ✓ to learn about my culture
- ✓ to speak and sing in my own language
- ✓ to know my family and my grandmother
- ✓ to have a birthday party with balloons



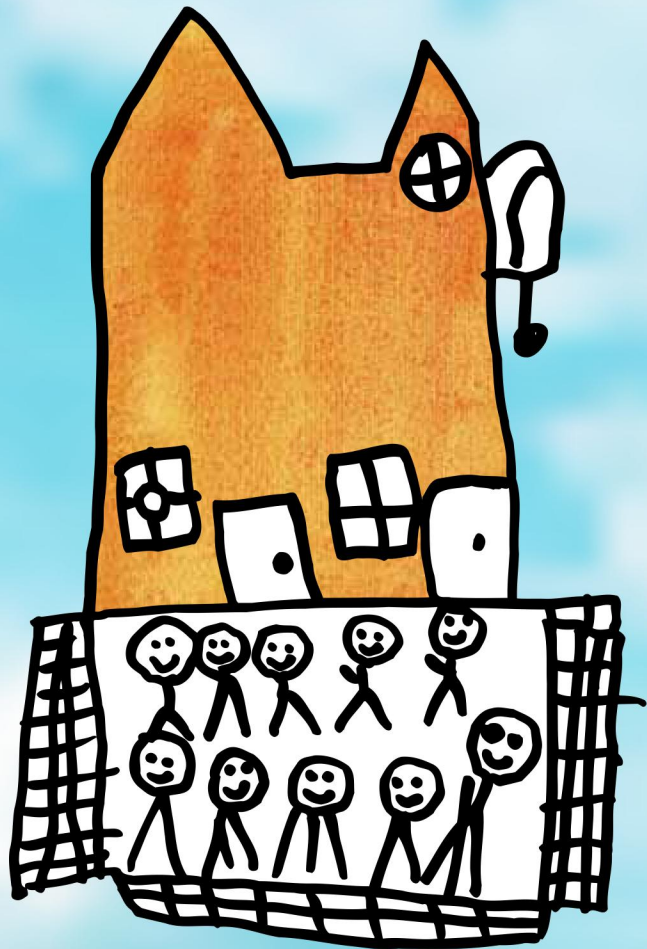
I have the right to care for living things.

I have the right...

- ✓ to have a pet
- ✓ to have a birdhouse and food for the birds
- ✓ to care for plants







I have the right  
to be safe, secure,  
and healthy.

*I have the right...*

- ✓ to hold my mom's hand
- ✓ to go to the dentist
- ✓ to be protected from toxins
- ✓ to help people who are living in poverty
- ✓ to live in a smoke-free neighbourhood, in a world with no more cigarettes
- ✓ to have a safe environment to go home to, where there is no violence, drug abuse, or neglect
- ✓ to feel safe walking down the street
- ✓ to have more food banks
- ✓ to have medicine and doctors



I have the right  
to be free from  
discrimination.

*I have the right...*

- ✓ to equal opportunities regardless of how much money my parents make
- ✓ to not be picked on because of my height and size and to be able to do more activities
- ✓ to not be judged on how I look
- ✓ to have equal treatment and be included regardless of race, religion, sex





I have  
the right  
to rest.

*I have the right...*

- ✓ to have a comfy bed to sleep in
- ✓ to have a stuffed toy, blankets

And I have the right  
to be proud of  
who I am.

*I have the right...*

✓ to be proud of my work and accomplishments







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# Participatory Responsibilities

**I have the right to be heard.**

**Children** are responsible for listening to others and respecting their opinions.

**Adults** are responsible for asking children for their opinions on all matters that affect them, and seriously considering their views.

**I have the right to live in a home, in a neighbourhood.**

**Children** are responsible for helping to take care of the place where they live.

**Adults** are responsible for making sure our community is providing good quality affordable housing, in neighbourhoods that have access to green space and that support our citizens.

**I have the right to live with and be cared for by family.**

**Children** are responsible for respecting and caring for their family. **Adults** are responsible for respecting and caring for children and families in their diverse forms, and responding to children's right to feel loved in their family.

**I have the right to have friends.**

**Children** are responsible for caring for, respecting, and including others.

**Adults** are responsible for making it possible for friends to feel welcome and included, and to respect children's ability to settle their own disagreements.



**I have the right to good food, and warm, clean clothes.**

**Children** are responsible for learning about and eating healthy food, and helping to care for their clothing.

**Adults** are responsible for ensuring that children are aware of healthy and ethical food choices, of where and how food and clothing are produced, and that healthy food and suitable clothing are available to all children and their families.



**I have the right to a healthy earth to live on.**

**Children** are responsible for caring for their environment and reducing waste.

**Adults** are responsible for supporting and nurturing children's relationship with the natural environment and working to provide a healthy environment through fixing what is wrong, protecting what is right, and making good decisions for the future of our environment, to build capacity to think in terms of "forever."

**I have the right to play.**

**Children** are responsible for including all children in active exploration, enjoyment of movement, and imaginative play at appropriate times.

**Adults** are responsible for providing both structured and unstructured time and environments for children to play with friends and trust children to take some risks.

**I have the right to learn more things.**

**Children** are responsible for being curious and thoughtful about what is around them, making the most of learning opportunities and respecting the abilities of others. **Adults** are responsible for nurturing children's curiosity, supporting their learning by respecting their interests and ways of learning in all contexts, thoughtfully reflecting on their own interventions in children's explorations, actively removing / reducing barriers to full participation in learning, providing stimulating materials and experiences for learning, and building communities that recognize children's competence and intelligence.

**I have the right to express myself, my personality and thoughts without judgement.**

**Children** are responsible for communicating respectfully, and appreciating the ways others express themselves. **Adults** are responsible for providing children with opportunities to express themselves fully, to engage in creative activities, and to stay silent if they choose.



**I have the right to privacy.**

**Children** are responsible for respecting the privacy of others. **Adults** are responsible for respecting children's belongings, spaces, and need for time alone.

**I have the right to make choices.**

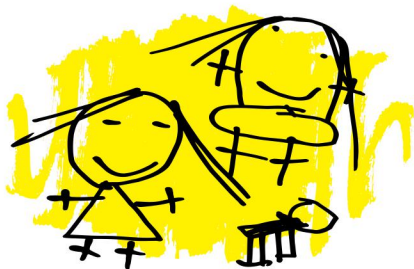
**Children** are responsible for considering their decisions carefully. **Adults** are responsible for seeking out and seriously considering children's views on all matters that concern them, to help them to make informed decisions, and to recognize the importance of relationships and making a meaningful contribution to their own financial security and independence.

**I have the right to special help like a wheelchair if I ever need it.**

**Children** are responsible for including and helping children who need support. **Adults** are responsible for working with children to define what meaningful participation is for them, and to accommodate and reduce barriers to full participation for all children.

**I have the right to know about and practice my culture.**

**Children** are responsible for respecting other people's language and celebrations. **Adults** are responsible for modelling respect for people of all backgrounds, supporting learning about diverse cultures and learning how to listen in many ways.



**I have the right to care for living things.**

**Children** are responsible for caring for animals and contributing to community gardens. **Adults** are responsible for supporting children's empathy and care for all living beings and making meaningful contributions to gardens using sustainable methods.

**I have the right to be safe, secure, and healthy.**

**Children** are responsible for caring for themselves and others by taking steps to reduce hazards and by avoiding dangerous situations. **Adults** are responsible for supporting children's assessment of risk, refusing to inflict pain or emotional harm on children, protecting and strengthening our social safety net, and building communities that are safe for all citizens.

**I have the right to be free from discrimination.**

**Children** are responsible for respecting and being empathetic to others. **Adults** are responsible for building inclusive communities that welcome and support all people.

**I have the right to rest.**

**Children** are responsible for learning about and taking care of their bodies. **Adults** are responsible for ensuring a child's time is not over-scheduled, and that they have a place to rest.

**I have the right to be proud of who I am.**

**Children** are responsible for working to the best of their ability. **Adults** are responsible for recognizing children's efforts without comparing them to others, and cultivate spaces where children are able to demonstrate their particular competence.

These rights and responsibilities shall apply to all children and youth under the age of 18, without discrimination according to race, colour, gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, ethnic origin, religion, neighbourhood, economic status. This Charter of Rights for Children and Youth does not replace the law.



Hamilton

Hamilton  
**Best Start**★

Hamilton  
**Meilleur départ**★

Special thanks to:

The Hamilton Children's Charter Working Group  
The Parent & Family Engagement Committee  
The Hamilton Best Start Network  
Culture for the Kids in the Arts  
Art Forms Youth Arts Studio & Centre 3

For more information go to:

[www.hamiltonbeststart.ca](http://www.hamiltonbeststart.ca)

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