Equal rights for children

For truly universal suffrage
Give children the vote!
Support children’s liberation

There’s obviously something wrong with the idea that children totally lack rationality until they leap out of bed on their 18th birthday. As they grow up, children are increasingly able to make decisions about their own lives. They progressively develop the maturity, autonomy and responsibility that they need to function well as adults.

You can’t expect young people, who have been kept in line by fear of punishment, to be able to act as responsible moral agents all of a sudden. Since children gradually develop rationality and moral awareness, they need increasing degrees of freedom to practice responsibly exercising adult rights.

Yes, responsible political expression takes practice, just as ballet dancing or neurosurgery takes practice. And yes, the practice is risky - but that’s a condition of learning from experience.

Let’s not forget that children also respond to adults’ expectations of them. When adults show that they trust children to make their own wise choices, children rise to the occasion.

Young people are the experts on their lives, so we must listen to their voices on issues that affect them. Above all, young people deserve the power to elect representatives who truly speak for them and their interests.
**Fight injustice: End the discrimination!**

Plain and simple: it’s unjust to treat people differently on account of their ages. Until children are granted equal rights, they will continue to be unfairly treated, manipulated, and discriminated against.

Children are unfairly assumed to be unthinking and passive, while adults are assumed to be rational and highly motivated. The differences between adults and children have been way overstated by those who support the double standard.

The rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities of adult citizens should be available to any young person who feels ready to use them.

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**Ignore the oppression of children at your peril!**

Too often the views of children are not taken into account at all, or not taken seriously enough, or quickly forgotten.

Children’s ideas contribute to the vitality of our society and are as worthy of consideration as anyone’s.

*If we silence children, all of society suffers.*

References


