

# Children's rights



## About this free course

This free course provides a sample of Level 1 study in Sociology

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# Introduction

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This course will help you understand the general issues of children's rights as well as exploring childhood and children's needs. It is also possible to link these ideas to the wider issue of the social construction of difference and power. The materials are primarily an audio file, originally 28 minutes in length and recorded in 1998.

This OpenLearn course provides a sample of Level 1 study in [Sociology](#).

# Learning Outcomes

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After studying this course, you should be able to:

- define the broad issue of children as citizens.

# 1 Children's rights: general issues

The audio file in this course considers the general issues of children's rights, and the possibilities and implications of imagining children as citizens. Within the discussion, ideas about childhood and children's needs are explored. Although the programme focuses specifically on children it is possible to link to the wider issue of social construction of difference and power. Some examples are given in these notes.

This audio file was recorded in 1998 and related to a TV programme on children's rights. It is not necessary to have seen the original TV programme to gain an insight into the discussion presented in the audio file.

You can also use this audio file to help you further develop a range of study skills, such as: Identifying competing arguments and the evidence used to support them. This is a skill that is also related to the OpenLearn course: D218\_4 How arguments are constructed and used in the Social Sciences.

Participants in the audio programme were:

- **Esther Saraga** Social Sciences Staff Tutor in the Open University's London region;
- **Mary McLeod** Director of Policy and Research at Childline;
- **Ann Phoenix** Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Birkbeck College, University of London.

## Activity 1

Try to identify for yourself, and note down, the various arguments that Mary McLeod and Ann Phoenix make about children and childhood.

The following questions will help you to structure your notes, and to make links with concepts of 'welfare', 'power' and 'diversity' and the theme of citizenship.

- 1 What different constructions of children and childhood are described?
- 2 What points are made about the power relations between adults and children in relation to children's rights?
- 3 What does Ann Phoenix mean when she says that 'childhood is differentiated'? What aspects of difference are discussed, and what are the main points made in relation to each of these? Reflect on how these issues are related to processes of differentiation in compulsory education *and processes of inclusion and exclusion*.
- 4 Ann Phoenix suggests that, in relation to the TV programme, 'the children were engaging as active citizens'. How does she argue for the proposition and what evidence does she cite from the programme?
- 5 Mary McLeod and Ann Phoenix have different views on 'children as citizens'. Can you identify each of these arguments? How effectively do you think each makes her case? What points of continuity and change can you identify with nineteenth century concerns with education for citizenship?
- 6 Finally, what points are made about the implications for welfare provision, of thinking of children as active citizens rather than future citizens?

Children's rights part 1 (10.5 minutes 5 MB)

Audio content is not available in this format.

[Children's rights part 1](#)

Children's rights part 2 (8.5 minutes 4 MB)

Audio content is not available in this format.

[Children's rights part 2](#)

Children's rights part 3 (9 minutes 4 MB)

Audio content is not available in this format.

[Children's rights part 3](#)

## Conclusion

This free course provided an introduction to studying Sociology. It took you through a series of exercises designed to develop your approach to study and learning at a distance and helped to improve your confidence as an independent learner.

## Keep on learning





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