



CHILDREN IN PEACEKEEPING CONTEXTS

Department of
Peacekeeping Operations

Module

1

Learning Outcomes



Be able to explain who is a child and why children are most at risk during armed conflict and in post-conflict situations



Be able to describe the impact of conflict on children, including the six grave violations and other forms of violence/abuses against children



Be aware of gender concerns and the different vulnerabilities of boys and girls during armed conflict



Who is a child?

Who is a child?

According to the
Convention on the Rights of the Child:

**“a child is every
human being under
eighteen years of age”**

Who is a child?

In the event that you have to interact with a child it is important

to pay attention to the level of development and maturity of each child, which is unique to him or her.





What are the different aspects of a child's development?

Aspects of a child's development

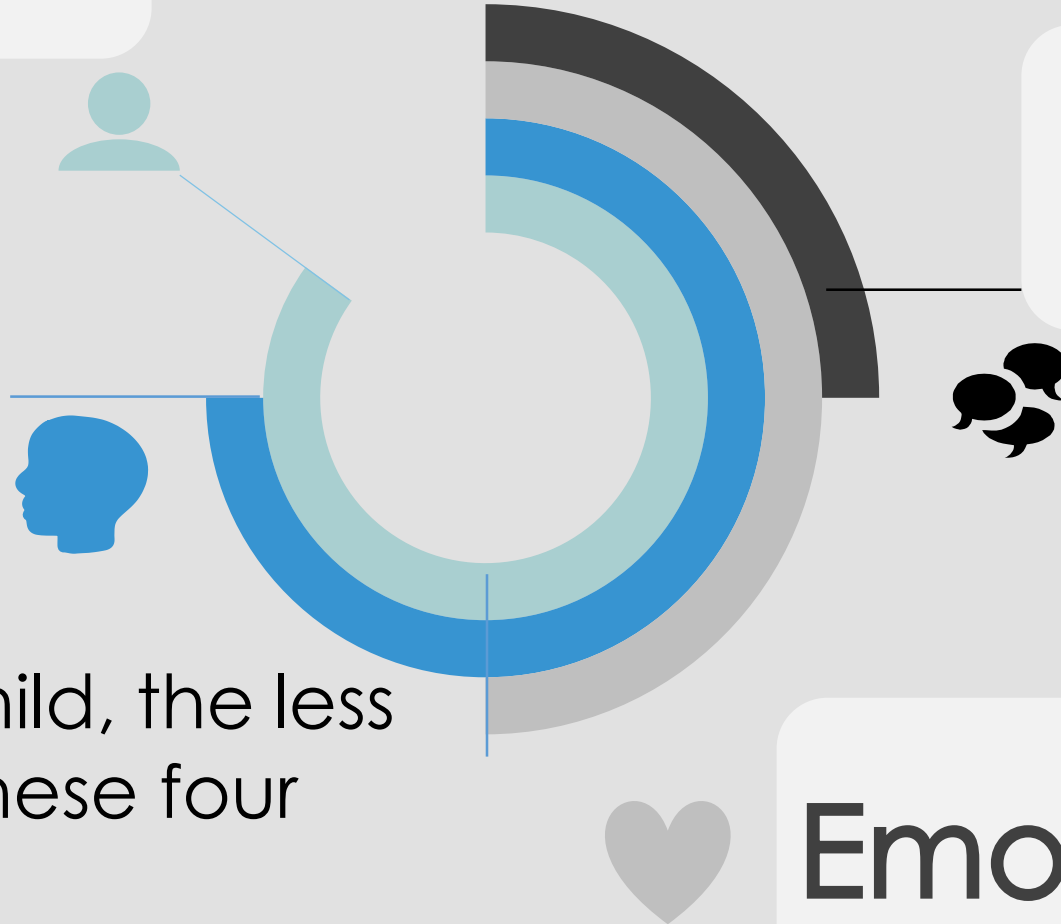
There are four aspects of a child's development:

Physical

Mental

Social

Emotional



The younger the child, the less developed it is in these four aspects.

Aspects of a child's development



What is needed for a child to attain his or her full development?

Aspects of a child's development

- 1 The development of children is based on the input they receive from their families, friends and the environment that surrounds them.
- 2 The interaction of the police with children should correspond to the stages of the child's development and not only to the “outer appearance” of the child.
- 3 It is the duty of the police, within the limits of their mandate, to protect the rights of children and provide sufficient protection for them



Why are children more vulnerable
than adults?



Why are children more vulnerable than adults?



1

Children are still in the process of growing up and their development is not completed.

2

Children can be more easily influenced and may not fully understand the consequences of their actions.

3

Children depend on their family, community and government structures for protection and care.



What are the categories of children in contact with the law?

Children in contact with the law

01

Child
victim of
abuses or
a criminal
act

02

Child
witness of
abuses or
a criminal
act

03

Child
accused or
convicted
of a
criminal act

04

A child can
belong to all
these three
categories at
the same
time



What is Child Protection?

What is Child Protection

Definition:



Child Protection is defined as the prevention of and response to all forms of violence against children.

Child protection concerns all children without distinction. This means that each child deserves protection, regardless of his or her age, origins, ethnic group, geographical situation, gender, religion or any other consideration.

Six Grave Violations

Of particular focus in peacekeeping settings are
“the six grave violations” as described in Security
Council Resolution 1612 of 2005:



- ➊ **Killing and maiming of children**
- ➋ **Recruitment or use of children**
- ➌ **Sexual violence against children**
- ➍ **Attacks against schools or hospitals**
- ➎ **Abduction of children**
- ➏ **Denial of humanitarian access**

All UN personnel contribute to reporting on these violations, as we will further discuss in module 5.

Other violations

Other violations of children's rights during armed conflict and in post-conflict contexts include:

**Arbitrary
and
prolonged
detention**

**Torture
and ill
treatment**

**Displacement
and
separation
from
caretakers**

**Exploitation,
Forced Labor
and
Trafficking**

**Denial of
education
and other life
opportunities**



Violations against Children in detention

- Ill treatment of children including beatings and sexual abuse
- Arbitrary and prolonged detention of children
- Denial of legal counsel and due process for child perpetrators
- Denial of access to justice for child victims
- Discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, religion or nationality
- Lack of separate detention facilities for children, and for boys and girls
- Lack of special procedures for children in line with international standards



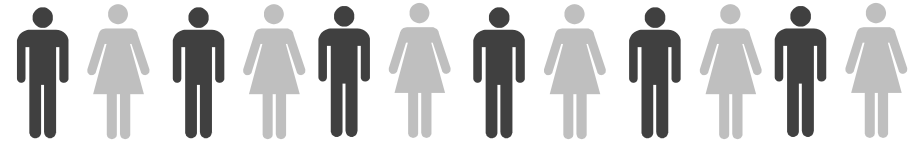
* Often, these violations are exacerbated in post-conflict contexts as, for example, the national justice system may be partially dysfunctional as a result of the conflict.

Gender Considerations

Violations of children's rights will affect boys and girls differently:

In situations of armed conflict, girls are especially vulnerable as they are targeted for sexual violence. Girls who have been raped often face stigma and discrimination in their families and communities.

Boys are also vulnerable as they are often targeted to be used as combatants which increases the risk of being maimed or killed.



Even though violations of children's rights will affect boys and girls differently:

It is important to understand that girls are also used as combatants and that boys are also victims of sexual violence.



Child Protection and UN Police

UN Police have a crucial role to play in child protection:

- ❑ They are deployed to conflict and post-conflict areas where violations of children's rights are prevalent;**
- ❑ They mentor and train host state police; contribute to the establishment of the rule of law and reform of the security sector;**
- ❑ They interact with the civilian population, including children, and have a mandate to protect;**
- ❑ They have a duty to report violations of children's rights.**



Child Protection and UN Police

“Protecting children from the effects of armed conflict is a moral imperative, a legal responsibility and a question of international peace and security.”



Questions?

Key Messages

- 1. The definition of a child: anyone under the age of 18.**
- 2. The development of a child is a key consideration when protecting children– each child is different.**
- 3. Children in contact with the police include victims, witnesses and perpetrators. Oftentimes, children belong to more than one category at the same time.**

Key Messages

- 4. Armed conflict and emergencies increase vulnerabilities and justify additional protective measures for children.**
- 5. Many forms of violations of children's rights exist during armed conflict, including the six grave violations.**
- 6. Boys and girls experience conflict differently, some violations of children's rights have a different impact depending on the gender of the child.**