Children before players
Protecting and realising children’s rights: A guide for professional football clubs
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FOREWORD

Millions of children play football every day across the world. For some, this is purely for recreation and fun. For others, football may be their chosen future career, as talented players, coaches, or officials. All children have the right to participate in sport in a safe and enjoyable environment.

The global enthusiasm for football, together with its economic significance, has inevitably meant that children around the world dream of joining the ranks of professional football players – a dream which many parents or caregivers will share. This ambition will be realised for only a small fraction of these children.

Efforts by professional football clubs to identify and attract the very best in football talent have led to a global market for young football player recruitment.

Well-organised academies can offer children a valuable opportunity to develop their sporting abilities and acquire professional skills and training. They can also offer professional football clubs the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to child wellbeing and to disseminate this value in society in general.

On the other hand, academies and training programmes that fail to take adequate steps to protect the rights of children can present a serious risk to the wellbeing of children and potentially compromise the reputation of the professional football clubs associated with them.

Children before Players: A guide for professional football clubs, is UNICEF’s first document of this kind, developed to support football clubs to learn from good practice, with guidance on how to make your own academies more child centred.

I would like to thank all the individuals and organisations from the world of football that joined the many stakeholder consultations that helped shape this guidance. A special thank you also goes to our UNICEF colleagues in the Private Partnerships and Public Partnerships Divisions, Program Division colleagues and our colleagues in the field in regional and country offices, whose inputs have been so critical to make this guidance child-rights focused.

We hope that you are inspired by the great work that is already happening around the world, and take the steps needed to fully respect the rights of child football players everywhere.

Andrés Franco
Public Sector Partnerships UNICEF
1 Introduction
UNICEF’s ‘Children’s Rights in Sport Principles’ rightly states that “Sport has the important power to promote children’s sound and well-rounded growth and to convey a wide and active message to the world through its vast influence.”

Yet the last two decades has seen growing interest and research on the topic of children’s rights and safeguarding in football. This is due to concerns that the commercial structures and practices within the football industry are often at odds with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – a situation that is creating a precarious environment for children aspiring to enter the professional game, and exposing them to emotional, physical and financial abuse when they do.iii

The United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) make it clear that professional football clubs have a responsibility to respect human rights and that this is non-negotiable. In the case of the children recruited into their clubs, this responsibility should be informed by the UNCRC and related children’s rights instruments. While many people involved in professional football would agree with these statements, the challenge for most people lies in how to turn these statements into actions that are central to their daily activities and inform their strategic planning.

This report therefore provides simple but practical examples of how professional football clubs can protect and realise children’s rights. The guidance builds on longstanding research conducted by UNICEF highlighting risks to children’s rights in professional football. It involved studying examples of good practice collected directly from professional clubs located across FIFA’s confederations, specifically the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), Confederation of African Football (CAF), South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL) and Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). This approach allowed for the generation of examples of good practice considerate of geographical and cultural differences, as well as varying levels of resources and experience.

The identification and inclusion of examples of good practice was informed by engagement with the UNCRC’s core principles of Non-discrimination (article 2); Best interest of the child (article 3); Right to life survival and development (article 6); and Right to be heard (article 12). These core principles broadly fall under the following three themes, which reflect how football clubs understood and approached children’s rights and provide a structure for the report. These themes point to the importance of viewing children’s rights as more than a way to keep children safe from harm. They are also a way to empower children by protecting, realising and promoting their rights.

1. Protecting children from exploitation and abuse
2. Realising children’s rights to education, health and family life
3. Promoting the best interests and voice of the child
2 Mainstreaming children’s rights
The focus of this report is on professional football clubs, but the guidance below on good practice is underpinned by a belief that children’s rights, as articulated through the UNCRC and related instruments, should be mainstreamed in all clubs (and the football industry more generally).

Mainstreaming can be summarised by the following principles:

- The protection and promotion of children’s rights should be embedded in all processes and practices, rather than an isolated topic of concern for a few individuals (i.e. all activities).

- No decision should be thought of as either too high level, or too mundane, for its effect upon children to be considered (i.e. all levels).

- Protecting and promoting children’s rights should not be the sole preserve of those with a specific remit in relation to children. Instead all club personnel should have appropriate training and expertise to play a role in delivering on children’s rights duties (i.e. all actors).

On the following pages are four recommendations to support the mainstreaming of children’s rights within your club. These recommendations were developed following extensive research and consultation with the world of football.

Answer the accompanying questions to gauge your clubs’ current position on children’s rights.

WORDS OF WISDOM: Everyone feels responsible

It used to be the case that if a kid is crying, you call the psychologist; if a kid is out of school, call the social worker; if a kid is eating badly, call the nutritionist. Now, everyone at the club feels responsible. The nutritionist recently told the coaches to stop drinking soda to set a positive example for the kids. Either you are helping, or you are a part of the problem.”
2.1 Adopt a clear and coherent children’s rights policy

Clubs should develop and operationalise a children’s rights policy, which provides clear guidance on roles and responsibilities, processes, and lines of communication. The club should engage and comply with relevant national and/or international systems and legislation, with precedence given to whichever provides the best protection for children’s rights.

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<tr>
<th>YOUR CHECKLIST</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have a children’s rights policy? If not, please take time now to develop one.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Now answer the remaining questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your children’s rights policy provide clear guidance on roles and responsibilities, processes, and lines of communication?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your children’s rights policy explicitly incorporate children’s rights, needs and welfare, according to the principles of the UNCRC, at all stages and at all levels and by all actors?</td>
<td><img src="https://via.placeholder.com/150" alt="Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does your children’s rights policy engage with and comply with relevant national and/or international systems and legislation? (with precedence given to whichever provides the best protection for children’s rights)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is your children’s rights policy publicly available?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have staff at the highest level officially endorsed the children’s rights policy and are they managing its implementation and adherence?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Was your children’s rights policy created through consultation with and input from children?</td>
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2.2 Embed respect for and promotion of children’s rights

Clubs should adopt a child centred approach that explicitly recognises children as rights-holders. This should be embedded in the club’s culture and practices, and inform decision-making. Clubs should be proactive in anticipating threats to children’s rights and allocate sufficient resources to minimise these threats.

**YOUR CHECKLIST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you adopt a child centred approach that explicitly recognises children as rights-holders?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are children encouraged to have fun and play at your club?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are children’s rights protected, respected and promoted at your club regardless of ethnicity, gender, race, religious background and/or if the child is disabled?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are all staff (including contractors and volunteers) made aware of and asked to sign up to the club’s children’s rights policy as a condition of their involvement with the club?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you provide regular training on children’s rights and safeguarding for all staff (including contractors and volunteers), children and parents/guardians?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you participate in annual events (national and international) that raise awareness of and celebrate children’s rights? (These events should be open to staff, players, parents and the local community)</td>
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2.3 Identify, evaluate and monitor children’s rights risks

Clubs should be proactive in continuously trying to identify children’s rights risks associated with recruitment and participation in the football industry and not wait for violations to occur. The identification and evaluation of potential children’s rights risks should be part of an on-going monitoring of compliance alongside the club’s children’s rights policy.

YOUR CHECKLIST

- Are there systems in place to regularly identify, evaluate and monitor any potential adverse impact on the rights of children?
- Do you hold regular dialogues with children and create an environment where it easy for them to discuss and report on issues that affect their rights? (If you answered yes, what makes it effective?)
- Do you provide all staff, contractors, volunteers and other relevant actors (including children and parents) with training on how to identity risks to children’s rights and to report concerns?
- Are you open to external audits that assess the effectiveness of the club’s monitoring and evaluation systems and do you respond to guidance on how to improve these systems?
2.4 Provide clear grievance mechanisms and access to remedy

In addition to seeking to prevent children’s rights violations occurring, effective grievance mechanisms should be in place to redress harms that do occur.

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<th>YOUR CHECKLIST</th>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have effective grievance mechanisms in place to redress harm to children’s rights that takes place at or through association with your club?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you provide access to remedy in a way that is straightforward and transparent?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can children participate in remedy and grievance handling channels meaningfully?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you have clear guidance on the consequences for behaviour that contravenes your children’s rights policy?</td>
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3 Lessons from the world of football
The following section highlights some of the challenges to children’s rights in football. The section also provides recommendations to address these challenges based on the good practices taking place in the case-study clubs.

Before outlining these challenges, recommendations and practices, it is important to highlight a common perspective that was present across all the participating clubs. This perspective is best described as a **child-centred culture**, where protecting, promoting and realising children’s rights was understood as crucial to empowering children, so they can thrive, both now and in the future.
3.1 Protecting children from exploitation and abuse

**Article 19: Protection from violence**
Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

**Article 32: Protection from harmful work**
Every child has the right to be protected from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education.

**COMMON CHALLENGES**

- **Clubs are often keen to protect children from exploitation and harm. But their knowledge of the UNCRC and children’s rights more generally is typically limited.**

- **Clubs are conscious of and dedicate resources to protecting children from sexual and physical abuse. There is notably less consistency and mechanisms in place to protect children from mental harm and mistreatment that can occur in pressurised sporting environments.**

- **Protecting children from economic exploitation is increasingly being made difficult by the actions of parents/guardians who are seeking to gain financially from a child’s participation in football.**

- **Parents in a range of contexts, but especially in low-income areas, are susceptible to approaches from dishonest people who offer short term financial incentives to obtain the long-term economic rights of a young player. These arrangements can leave the child at risk of being exploited economically.**

- **Women’s amateur and professional football is growing in popularity. There is a lack of knowledge about variations in the potential risks and actual violations of children’s rights taking place in the girl’s versions of the game.**

Research has found evidence to support concerns raised by our case study clubs that criminals are using football and the promise of trials with professional clubs to fraudulently extract money from parents of hopeful young players. This is also linked to concerns about child trafficking in and through football. The following account is from a 16-year-old who was tricked by someone posing as a football intermediary:

> “My mother ended up selling most of the family land to pay to send me to Europe. They paid the agent €3,500 plus €1,000 as pocket money. He said it was for the plane tickets and everything. When I first came it wasn’t [REDACTED] proper I was in the suburbs, the agent put me in a hotel and he would come and visit everyday to make sure I was okay. The room was in his [agent’s] name and he had my passport, my papers from the football federation, papers from my education and my pocket money, everything. The agent told me that on January 14th I was going to [Redacted] to try out for some academies but after the 13th he stopped coming. I waited through to the night of the 17th and when the agent didn’t come the manager of the hotel said I had to go.”
Examples of good practice

**DEFENCE**

**Defending** children from harm.

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**WORDS OF WISDOM:**

"On one occasion, the club social worker got in touch with a player’s mother [because they wanted to sign them]. The mother didn’t even know where the kid was, because he had left home with an agent 3 months previously and had been travelling around the country looking for a team. When the social worker called, the player’s mother was very happy to hear news about her son."

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**TIP 1**

You should create and implement formal systems of children’s rights and safeguarding compliance even where there is limited legislative or cultural pressure for you to do so. This should include clear grievance and remedy mechanisms. Creating children’s rights and/or safeguarding systems can be daunting. FIFA has recently created a Child Safeguarding Toolkit for Member Associations: FIFA Guardians, that also incorporates the protection and realisation of children’s rights through the lens of the UNCRC. You can access this and similar content online free of charge.

**TIP 2**

If your finances enable you to, provide children at your club with access to in-house counselling and mental health and wellbeing support. This can help children to alleviate and deal with the pressures of being in what are often high-pressure environments. Regular meetings with counselling and mental health and wellbeing support staff should be incorporated into each child’s routine at the club, alongside an open-door policy. In contexts where resources do not allow for this support to be provided in-house, you should make children aware of local, national and international organisations, external to the club, that they can contact. This information should be located in an accessible but private location, especially in contexts where there is a stigma attached to mental health and wellbeing conditions. Staff should also endeavour to remind children about how they can access these services and support them in their efforts to do so.
You should establish a process whereby children, parents and guardians are required to report any approaches made by intermediaries in person or electronically to a designated person, for example the club’s Safeguarding Officer. In some contexts, particularly in Latin America and Africa, clubs are raising concerns about cases where parents have signed guardianship rights to an intermediary representing their child. In this situation you should try where possible to include someone known to the child in an independent capacity during your communications with the child and their guardian/intermediary about their career prospects and opportunities.

WORDS OF WISDOM:
Create safe spaces

“The families don’t know how the system works. If the agent has a good car, or pictures with famous players, they think he is legitimate. So now we don’t allow agents inside the club. That’s a rule.”

Provide annual training sessions/workshops for young players and their parents to educate them about regulations on working with intermediaries. Separate training and guidance should also be provided to teach players financial literacy and empower them to make responsible decisions about their spending and investments. In some cases, this should include how to manage financial arrangements with friends and family members.

WORDS OF WISDOM:
Communication is key

“Parents and players can contact the dedicated child protection officer directly or a coach if they are unhappy about any aspect of the players’ experience. Typically 90% of issues that arise are raised through the coach.”
3.2 Realising children’s rights to education, health and family life

**Articles 9 & 10: Family life**
Every child has the right to stay in contact with their family, unless separation is in their best interest.

**Article 24: Health, water, food and environment**
Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in.

**Article 28: Access to education**
Every child has the right to an education.

**Article 31: Rest, play, culture and arts**
Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

**COMMON CHALLENGES**

коло вдохновляются

Children at the most elite levels of the game often have access to the best facilities and opportunities, but this can be undermined by a ‘win at all costs’ ethos that gives sport precedence over a child’s studies.

Children are dropping out of school to focus on their football career and therefore leaving without formal educational or vocational qualifications. Teenage pregnancies are also a concern. Both issues can occur in any part of the world but are considered more of a pressing issue in parts of Latin America and Africa.

Children at less well-resourced clubs and who have limited access to affordable medical care struggle to get treatment for and recover from injuries. This not only impacts their playing career but quality of life outside of the game.

Children who attend residential academies are prone to suffer from mental health and wellbeing issues if the accommodation is not considerate of their personality and needs. This is a more acute issue for children who migrate internationally without their parents or guardian.
Examples of good practice

**CENTRE**

Putting children’s rights at the centre.

**TIP 5**

If children at your club are studying at a school external to your academy, you should make regular contact with the school to receive updates on the child’s attendance and performance. Furthermore, you can adopt a policy where a child’s place in the team is linked to maintaining a school attendance rate of at least 95%. This should take into consideration a child’s medical conditions and history. The policy should not however penalise children for their academic performance. Instead, if a teacher raises concerns about a child’s academic performance, efforts should be made to provide additional support if resources permit, e.g. through additional tuition. If resources are limited, you can try to consult with the child’s school and local educational providers about opportunities to provide further support.

**TIP 6**

You should emphasise and create a culture where children understand that rest and leisure time are just as, if not more important than, time spent training intensively. You could introduce regular ‘free training sessions’. These are scheduled training sessions where no physical activity takes place, instead the child can use that time to do an activity of their choice. At some clubs this has included art and creative activities such as painting and photography, or it can be used to rest. The point is that you will be encouraging children to realise that it is important to schedule and make time to relax, play and be creative. Although more difficult at residential academies, this approach can be particularly effective if the child is able to spend this time away from the training ground environment.
You should schedule formal meetings with the child’s parents/guardians at least two times per calendar year to discuss matters concerning the child’s education, health and well-being. Where possible this should be complemented with home visits. Home visits can be a useful way for you to gain a better understanding of the child’s needs and enhance the provision of personalised pastoral support. These meetings should be in addition to regular informal conversations in person or by telephone.

WORDS OF WISDOM: Personalized accommodation

“When a player is recruited internationally they are located with host families. There are currently several host families who receive quarterly training on good practice. The recruitment of the families typically occurs through word of mouth initially. The process then involves meetings, references, disclosure and barring checks, and training for the families. After a trial period a decision is made whether to continue.

The club works in very close partnership with the host families who need to feel part of the club. The player and their family are involved in deciding which host family is the best match based on the child’s personality. The re-location is managed with close consultation with the family. Regular dialogue is maintained with families through online platforms or telephone. Families also receive the host family’s contact details so they can keep in touch directly. The contracts that young international players have, include flights home and flights for the family to come over through the year.”

WORDS OF WISDOM: Continuous personal development

“An annual programme of educational workshops is delivered. Some of these are mandatory as dictated by UEFA (Gambling and Match fixing, Doping in Sport, Laws of the Game and Anti-racism) and others have been developed because the club recognises the need for them. The workshops are presented by a range of different expert stakeholders. Players also undertake media and social media training. All players undertake a cooking course in order to educate them about diet and nutrition which is specifically tailored to being a footballer.”
3.3 Promoting the best interests and voice of the child

**Article 3: Best interests of the child**
The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

**Article 12: Respect for children’s views**
Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child’s day-to-day home life.

### COMMON CHALLENGES

- Children are increasingly placed under pressure to be competitive and succeed at all costs, which results in them resorting to practices that are not in their best interests, e.g. doping, injuries from overtraining and inappropriate dietary habits linked to body image concerns.

- The release of a young player from a club is often made more difficult for the child and their family by a lack of prior planning and poor communication.

- A child's right to be heard in all decisions affecting them, and to have these views accorded due weight according to their age and maturity, is significantly undermined by the ban on international transfer of minors found in Article 19 of FIFA's Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP).

Research has shown that on a personal level a child’s release from a club can be emotionally challenging and deeply disappointing. For example, some children speak about being ‘miserable’, feeling ‘blown away’, and as having their ‘dream shut down’. One respondent from such research who lost his academy place because of injury articulated their feelings in the following way:

“I felt very down, because I was thinking there would be no opportunity for me again. I was like, I am finished, because where do I get this chance again. If you don’t pass through the academy, it will be really difficult for you to move outside the country.”
You should employ and/or provide children with access to a range of qualified and vetted professionals covering both physical and mental well-being. This should be complemented with regular meetings involving external speakers to provide guidance on non-sport related health issues that may not appear to relate directly to the development of their footballing attributes; such as sexual health and family planning, personal hygiene, social media training, and internet addiction and bullying. Guidance should also be provided to teach players financial literacy and empower them to make responsible decisions about their careers – including agreements with families on remittances and financial support in the event of a successful professional career. If resources are limited, you should work with the child’s school and or a local educational partner to see if this guidance and be provided through other channels.

TIP 8
You should employ and/or provide children with access to a range of qualified and vetted professionals covering both physical and mental well-being. This should be complemented with regular meetings involving external speakers to provide guidance on non-sport related health issues that may not appear to relate directly to the development of their footballing attributes; such as sexual health and family planning, personal hygiene, social media training, and internet addiction and bullying. Guidance should also be provided to teach players financial literacy and empower them to make responsible decisions about their careers – including agreements with families on remittances and financial support in the event of a successful professional career. If resources are limited, you should work with the child’s school and or a local educational partner to see if this guidance and be provided through other channels.

TIP 9
You should reduce deselection at the first point at which players are eligible to sign professional contracts. Discussions concerning their progress and prospects of a career in football should take place regularly (e.g. informal weekly meetings and formal meetings every 6 months). Both approaches should be part of a long-term commitment to the child’s personal and professional development.

WORDS OF WISDOM:
Create exit packs

“Whenever someone is told they are not going to progress in the academy it shouldn’t come as a shock. When a decision is made that a player will not continue with us, the club will continue to commit to the player for the remainder of their contract. But they are also supported to find another club and in 99% of cases players do find another club. All released players receive an exit pack that includes game time video footage, coach’s reference and sports science scores. The club sends the exit pack to all other clubs and this gives the player the best chance of finding another club. There are examples of players who have gone on to succeed elsewhere. We are delighted when we get it wrong.”
You should provide children with opportunities to share feedback and concerns with staff. They should be able to speak to their coach, but also have the opportunity to speak to other people too. It may appear obvious, but each child will have their own preference for communicating. Opportunities for them to do so should therefore be in a mixture of formal and informal, and individual and group settings. An ‘open door policy’ where children are encouraged to approach staff with any issues, should be complemented by a clearly designated contact person, other than their coach.

Children on a pathway to a career in professional football may experience challenging situations. This research has identified how football clubs across the world are putting in place measures that mainstream children’s rights and support them to secure their rights in a range of areas. By putting their rights as children ahead of their role as players, we can all make a lasting difference to the experience children have in professional football. But it is also important to note that most children involved in football will never have any direct involvement with professional football clubs. The few who do make it in professional or even semi-professional football are drawn from the same wider talent pool as those who do not make it. Professional football clubs therefore have an opportunity and responsibility to use their resources and leverage to help to protect all children involved in the sport, not just those signed to their club.

**TIP 10**

**WORDS OF WISDOM:**
**Use technology**

“All young players use an app on their mobile phone. Every morning players are expected to complete a wellbeing questionnaire on the app that monitors their wellbeing using 5 simple questions e.g. How did you sleep? Do you feel ready to train? If the player’s score is below a certain level the club automatically get an email to alert them that this player is not feeling well. This enables the club to monitor the player and investigate if the trend continues.”

**WORDS OF WISDOM:**
**Shifting thoughts of the future**

“Two things are challenging; the kids who think they are already pros, and those who think if they don’t become professionals, their life will end. I try to shift that thought. They do homework about which careers they might be good at, and we help them choose careers and expand their horizons.”
5 Children’s Rights in Sports Principles
The guidance and recommendations above, and the ethos of ‘Children before Players’ resonates with UNICEF Japan’s ten ’Children’s Rights in Sport Principles’.


2. Consider Balanced Growth of Children through Sports. Help children achieve holistic and comprehensive personal development by considering how to balance sport with other non-sporting activities including rest, time spent with family, leisure and recreation and learning.

3. Protect Children from the Risks of Sports. Protect children from risks such as violence and abuse and ensure an environment in which children can play sports safely.

4. Protect the Health of Children. Protect the physical and mental health of children, including protecting them from doping.

5. Develop Governance System to Protect the Rights of Children. Develop a governance system to effectively implement Principles 1 to 4.

6. Ensure Understanding and Engagement by Adults Involved with Children and Sport. Promote understanding and dialogue among all persons involved in order to ensure effective implementation of the Principles.

7. Incorporate Children’s Rights in Sponsorship Decisions. In deciding whether to sponsor a sport organization, consider the state of the sport organization’s efforts in respecting and supporting the rights of children as set out in Principles 1 to 6. Where appropriate, require the sport organization to make explicit commitments to respect and support the rights of children, in accordance with Principles 1 to 6, as a condition of sponsorship.

8. Engage with the Organizations who are Sponsored. Ask sports organizations who are sponsored to explain their efforts to respect and promote the rights of children, as stipulated in Principles 1 to 6, in accordance with their specific risks, and use leverage to encourage them to implement any measures which have not been fully implemented.

9. Approach and Hold Dialogues with Stakeholders. Children are often placed in a position that makes it difficult for them to speak out on issues that negatively affect their rights and those of other children, due to their vulnerabilities, expectations, and pressure from others, as well as the extent of their ability to articulate their concerns. Those adult athletes who may have had a similar experience, and can represent or support children or share their concerns, should be encouraged to work with other stakeholders to support children.

10. Support the Healthy Growth of Children through Sports. Parents and guardians of children should support the sound and balanced growth of their children, taking into account the important role they play in providing children with physical and mental support, their role in communicating the power and opportunities of sport, and the ways in which they can support the activities of sports organizations.
The Convention on the Rights of the Child, or UNCRC, is the basis of all of Unicef’s work. It is the most complete statement of children’s rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history.

The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights.

Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

Unicef is the only organisation working for children recognised by the Convention.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
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