



What the UNCRC defines as good education for children – (Mary Joy Pigozzi, UNICEF, New York).

Curriculum, or what happens in the classroom, plays a central role with regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Here curriculum is defined to include the **knowledge, skills, values, and processes that constitute primary education**. Each of these will be discussed giving illustrative examples

Knowledge. Every child has a right to primary education. That is to language (reading and writing), mathematics, and basic science, which includes natural science, social science, and life skills. All children should also learn their rights and the associated responsibilities in very simple and practical terms. For example, children must know when work becomes hazardous and exploitative, they must understand what substance abuse is and why it is to be avoided, they must be comfortable with their bodies and understand that they have a right not to have their bodies sexually exploited by anybody.

Skills. Every child must learn basic skills such as numeracy and literacy, which serve as the basis for much other learning. In addition, children must learn social skills including demonstrating respect for others and how to resolve conflict. Although life skills were mentioned above, particularly with regard to science, they also must be considered under social skills. Examples might include how to handle money with regard to the local banking system or answering the telephone.

Values. There are some core values that are global in nature. For example, every child must understand what is meant by human rights and how these can be described and acknowledged in simple language using examples that are common in that child's daily life and experience. Among these values is the importance of respect, which must be obvious in peer interaction, for example. Other global values include honesty and responsibility. Another key value is the right to privacy, which must be understood by children and respected by teachers and other educational leaders.

Processes. **How** knowledge, skills, and values are transmitted is as important a part of curriculum as **what** about these is learned. Because, in fact, the process is part of what is learned. Learning should be child-centred, using approaches that are appropriate to and build on the developmental level and abilities of children.

But the processes are much more than this. Within the learning environment children must be able to express their views, thoughts, and ideas--to participate fully; to associate freely; and to feel comfortable about who they are, where they come from, their gender, and what they believe in. They need to be given dignity. Without this kind of a learning environment, children will not develop the self-esteem that is essential for decision-making throughout life. Educational processes can also help children develop a sense of self-discipline that will help them pursue their goals throughout their lifetimes. The learning environment must also recognise that children have a right to joy, to play, to leisure.