

## DECLARATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

As a children's advocate, Janusz Korczak spoke of the need for a Declaration of Children's Rights long before any such document was drawn up by the Geneva Convention ( Korczak: 1924) or the United Nations General Assembly ( Korczak: 1959). The Declaration he envisaged-not a plea for good will but **a demand for action - was left uncompleted at the time of his death. These are some of the rights compiled from his works "How to Love a Child", and "The Child's Right to Respect."**

**The child has the right to love.**

*"Love the child, not just your own."*

**The child has the right to optimal conditions in which to grow and develop.**

*"We demand: do away with hunger, cold, dampness, stench, overcrowding, overpopulation."*

**The child has the right to live in the present.**

*"Children are not people of tomorrow; they are people today."*

**The child has the right to be himself or herself.**

*"A child is not a lottery ticket, marked to win the main prize."*

**The child has the right to make mistakes.**

*"There are no more fools among children than among adults."*

**The child has the right to fail.**

*"We renounce the deceptive longing for perfect children."*

**The child has the right to be taken seriously.**

*"Who asks the child for his opinion and consent?"*

**The child has the right to be appreciated for what he is.**

*"The child, being small, has little market value."*

**The child has the right to desire, to claim, to ask.**

*"As the years pass, the gap between adult demands and children's desires becomes progressively wider."*

**The child has the right to have secrets.**

*"Respect their secrets."*

**The child has the right to "a lie, a deception, a theft".**

*"... A child has the right to lie, to outwit someone, to coerce, to steal. This doesn't mean that he always has the right to lie, outwit, coerce and steal..."*

**The child has the right to respect for his possessions and budget.**

*"Everyone has the right to his property, no matter how insignificant or valueless."*

**The child has the right to resist educational influence that conflicts with his or her own beliefs.**

*"It is fortunate for mankind that we are unable to force children to yield to assaults upon their common sense and humanity."*

**The child has the right to protest an injustice.**

*"We must end despotism."*

**The child has the right to respect for his grief.**

*"Even though it be for the loss of a pebble."*

**The child has the right to die prematurely.**

*"The mother's profound love for her child must give him the right to premature death, to ending his life cycle in only one or two springs . . . Not every bush grows into a tree."*

**The child has the right to a Children's Court where he can judge and be judged by his peers.**

*"We are the sole judges of the child's actions, movements, thoughts, and plans.. I know that a Children's Court is essential, that in fifty years there will not be a single school, not a single institution without one."*