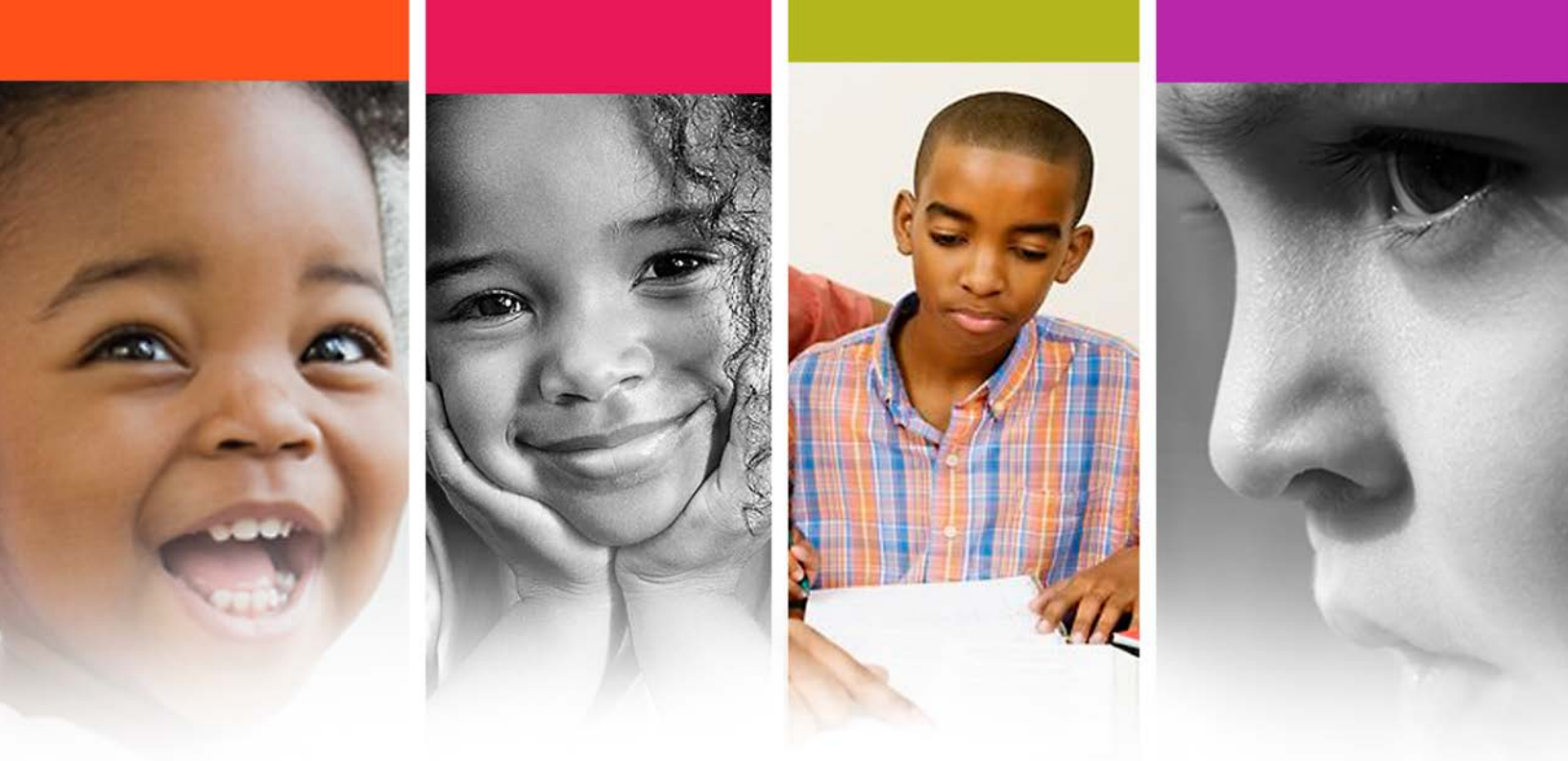




OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A
Guide
for
Caribbean
Practitioners





Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Preface: Media – Partners In Protecting Children’s Rights	6
Foreword: Manifesto For Our Children In Our Media	9
How To Use This Guide	11
Guide To Ethical Reporting	12
Our Principles: The Administrator Code Of Ethics	12
Principles Of Reporting On Children And Children’s Issues	13
Basic Guidelines For Interviewing Children	14
Basic Guidelines For Reporting On Children	14
Checklists For Reporters, Editors & Programme-Makers	16
Children With Disabilities	17
Children And Discrimination	18
Children And The Family	19
Children’s Health And Welfare	20
The Child’s Identity	22
Children Expressing Their Opinions	23

Children In Care	24
Education	25
Children And Crime	26
Sexual Abuse And Exploitation Of Children	27
The Responsibilities Of The State	28
Child Labour	29
Briefs On Issues	30
Brief: Children With Disabilities	31
Brief: Children And Discrimination	32
Brief: Children And The Family	33
Brief: Children’s Health And Welfare	34
Brief: The Child’s Identity	35
Brief: Children Expressing Their Opinions	36
Brief: Children In Public Care	37
Brief: Children And The Media	38
Brief: Education	39
Brief: Children And Crime	40
Brief: Sexual Abuse And Exploitation Of Children	41
Brief: The Responsibilities Of The State	42
A Caribbean Children’s Broadcast Code	43
Why A Caribbean Children’s Broadcast Code?	44
How The Code Can Be Used	45
Scheduling: The Watershed For Adult Content	45
Ratings, Scheduling And Advisories At A Glance	46
Rating	47
Scheduling	52
Advisories	53
Children And The Law	58
Sourcing Legal Information	59
At A Glance: The Convention On The Rights Of The Child	62
Index	65

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work presented here is the result of the contributions of a number of individuals and institutions.

Patrick Knight, Communications Specialist for UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area, for originally initiating this collaboration of agencies and individuals.

Sonia Gill, Secretary General of the Caribbean Broadcasting Union, the primary implementer of the project under which this guide is produced, and who, in her previous capacity as assistant executive director of the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica, authored the framework children's programming code that has been adopted and adapted here.

Wesley Gibbings, President of the Association of Caribbean Media Workers, for his own documentary contributions and his association's efforts at leveraging improved training and advocacy for rigorous and vigorous journalism on such issues as child rights and gender-based violence, beginning in 2007 with the ACM's Information for Action workshop on child rights reporting.

Project manager on behalf of ACM Steve Maximay for his firm hand and steady eye.

Hazel Thompson-Ahye, one of the foremost authorities on the law and children in the Caribbean region, for contributing thought-provoking analysis and sound information.

Further acknowledgement must be made of the contribution of the International Federation of Journalists and UNICEF/MediaWise UK (www.presswise.org.uk) of original documents adapted for our use in this guide.

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to give credit where it is most due.

While it is traditional for an editor to accept with magnanimity full responsibility for whatever deficiencies remain in the document thus created, he believes the greater blame lies ultimately with those who, having read this document, intend never to so alter, improve upon or even begin their work necessary to preclude the more egregious, visible and long-lasting failures this document was created to avert.

JULIUS GITTENS
Editor

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:
A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



PREFACE

MEDIA – PARTNERS IN PROTECTING CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

The way in which the media represents, or even ignores, children can influence decisions taken on their behalf and how the rest of society regards them. The media often depict children as silent victims or charming innocents.

But by providing children and young people a platform to speak for themselves, about their hopes and fears, their achievements, and the impact of adult behaviour on their lives, media professionals can unleash the creative power of children and young people.

The media act as the eyes, ears and voices of the public, drawing attention to abuses of power and human rights. Through their work, the media can encourage governments and civil society organizations to effect changes that will improve the quality of people’s lives

Journalists, photographers, producers, cameramen and programmers frequently expose the plight of children caught up in circumstances beyond their control, or abused or exploited by adults.

Several key articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child’s deal with the media and children. The Committee on the Rights of the Child also identified three main areas for consideration:

1. Ways to improve the image of the child through media reporting
2. Encouraging children to participate actively in the media
3. Protecting children from harmful influences in the media

Even as we reflect on these areas, we also need to confront some sobering realities. In 2014 UNICEF commissioned a review of the media’s treatment of children’s issues in six countries in our sub region.

The review highlighted some unfinished business which requires our urgent and collective attention. Of particular concern the assessment found that in many cases - up to four in every 10 reports involving children in some countries - the way in which stories were reported violated the rights of children. This included:

1. Naming children caught up in violent situations, not considering the negative impact of reports on children
2. Interviewing children in the absence of parents or caregivers and
3. General gaps in awareness of basic human rights of children.

These challenges are not unique to the Caribbean region. Indeed, other regions are also grappling with the same issues. Given the critical role of the media, it is important to ensure that journalists and editors and other key stakeholders are equipped to report on children's issues guided by sound and context specific Code of Ethics.

The media in the Caribbean region has been pivotal in breaking the silence around violence and abuse of children as part of the Break the Silence initiative. Greater awareness of child rights deprivations and violations in this region is in part due to increased media focus on these issues.

But after the slogans wear away from memory, the public service announcements stop running or the money for the next campaign moves on to another pressing priority, will a problem that touches at least one-fifth of the lives of those who watch, read and listen to our news reports and programmes simply go away? What is the responsibility of a mature media industry in maturing democracies to their audiences and to help them deal with the things that truly matter to them?

It is our sincere hope that this guide may provide some if not all the answers. At the very least it should begin to point us towards asking the right kinds of questions.

This is why we are confident that this Guide for Journalists and Broadcasters will build the capacity of the media executives and professionals in traditional and new media institutions to institute and implement policies governing reporting on children's issues.

UNICEF welcomes this opportunity to support the Association of Caribbean Media Workers and the Caribbean Broadcasting Union to produce this Guide for Journalists and Broadcasters. It is a code which is grounded in the Caribbean reality, owned and led by Caribbean media people.

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



CARIBBEAN BROADCASTING UNION

Throughout the English-speaking Caribbean the number of state-owned and privately-held media outlets is testament to the vibrancy and resilience of the sector despite local and global challenges

As in the rest of the world, Caribbean broadcast media are subject to greater levels and forms of state regulation, in comparison to print media, not only of access to spectrum, but also of all forms of content.

While traditional print and broadcast media houses may have capacity to institute content standards policies, challenges arise when considering content provided through social media. In addition material originating in social media space may later become available via traditional media outlets.

Governments in the region were early signers of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, (CRC) and most have passed domestic legislation which provides for child care and protection from various forms of harm. However there is very little provision in most state law, or policy, or sector-self-regulation as it relates to reporting on children's issues.

Recent high-profile events have brought the matter back to the fore, including social media coverage of a child being physically punished in Trinidad and Tobago, and criminal charges brought against Barbados' leading newspaper for its publication of a photograph of children participating in sexual acts in a school classroom.

The Caribbean Broadcasting Union (CBU) is a grouping of the region's broadcasters and media institutions, established in 1970 to promote regional integration through programme sharing, The CBU's nearly four dozen Full and Associate members include broadcasters in twenty-three (23) countries and territories of the English, Dutch and Spanish-speaking Caribbean. As an industry association, the Union facilitates

indigenous programme production and sharing; capacity-building of media institutions and professionals; joint negotiation of rights for programming; and advocacy in regional and international forums on policy and technology issues.

The CBU is therefore uniquely placed to ensure engagement with media institutions and other critical stakeholders to facilitate the success of the project. The project which produced this manual was conceived as a joint venture to build the capacity of media executives and professionals in traditional and new media institutions in the Caribbean to institute and implement policies governing the reporting of child issues.

Critical to the CBU is the sustainability of this effort, and for this it pays tribute to the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM) for its vision in partnering with the CBU. The CBU is particularly grateful to the international development agencies active in the region who have provided the much needed tangible support to make this manual a reality, UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Office, OECS Commission Juvenile Justice Project, supported by USAID, and the Suriname office of UNDP.





FOREWORD

A MANIFESTO FOR OUR CHILDREN IN OUR MEDIA

Children and the issues facing them demand reporting and broadcasting that is not only better informed and more professionally rigorous but also ethically sound.

Caribbean editors and reporters alike say these human rights issues are not readily recognised by reporters. This may be due in part to a lack of knowledge of the national and international frameworks for acknowledging and dealing with human rights infringements, including contraventions of the rights of the child.

Human rights news coverage is episodic and often limited to such events as extra-judicial killings. Issues of human rights violations are too often considered by journalists to be irrelevant to the Caribbean reality.

Although state-owned media remain a dominant feature of the Caribbean media landscape, they are generally not inclined to pursue human rights stories for fear of painting negative images of the government and country in the eyes of foreign audiences. This is particularly the case for countries that rely on tourism as a significant national income earner.

Until now, there have been no regionally accepted editorial standards for reporting on human rights issues generally and none relative to the ethical coverage of children's issues.

Media houses need to be aware of the need to protect the identities of children and develop a good track record on such issues as child sexual abuse, neglect, trafficking, education, development and social advancement.

These guidelines are based on ethical principles which should be rigorously applied when it comes to identifying child sources, securing the informed consent of parents and guardians for interviews with children, systematically employing editorial briefings to reinforce such guidelines and ensuring there is proper follow-up on stories related to the rights of children.

As journalists, we ought to be more investigative in our approach to covering children and their issues, focus on the needs of the children involved but resist the temptation to become emotionally involved or exploit the emotions of our readers, viewers and listeners.

There may often be a need to explore more creative avenues to protect the identities of children, especially in the context of television coverage.

There is also a need for stories that reflect the joy and potential of childhood, beyond the usual, seasonal stories of elite academic achievement. Here, too, the rights of the child are being upheld, with stories that give voice to children themselves and in both news content and broadcasting that offers them as much time and space as they need to the vitally important segment of the society that they are.

Most of the region's newsrooms are tiny, some with a mere handful of reporters or less, but this is no excuse for not widening the scope for developing greater capacity for informed coverage of human rights issues generally. This requires journalists necessarily to acquire a "human rights sensibility" that would serve to add such a context to a wide range of subjects.

We operate in inter-connected islands and coastal states, so our reporting ought not to be insular. These guidelines should encourage journalists and broadcasters to fulfil the long-held desire to build regional media networks around the subject of children and children's rights. Media employers and managers ought to embrace and encourage these mutually beneficial connections.

We accept that many media organisations in the Caribbean do not operate entirely independently; it is possible that there may be institutional constraints to more comprehensive coverage of what could be culturally sensitive issues.

These guidelines offer the opportunity for consensus among employers and editors to co-operate, with clearer direction on how such issues are covered.

None of this should compromise the professionalism of journalists. The pursuit of truth should be paramount.


It is hoped that this guide, and by extension, the rights of the child will be integrated fully into codes of ethical conduct and editorial style among individual media houses to help our media be truthful to and for our children.

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN MEDIA WORKERS

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners





“Child sexual abuse rates are between 20 and 45 per cent – meaning at least one in five precious children are affected. Most are girls who have no choice but to live close to their attacker.

They desperately need our help.”

– Ban Ki-moon

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide, based on international handbooks and drawing from our own experience in the Caribbean is unique insofar as it intends to serve three distinct purposes:

- (1) Improve the quality of news reporting, programme-making and online content-creation on a significantly under-reported and mis-reported area of human rights.
- (2) Guide the media towards serving the particular audiences at the heart of the story with care, ethical conduct and strong desire to contribute neither to their exploitation nor the further denial of their human rights as a result of what we write, print and broadcast.
- (3) Specifically for broadcasters, a framework children's programming code contained herein is available for adoption in both principle and policy in Caribbean stations and countries.

The guide takes a checklist approach: first, a checklist to help journalists and programme-makers all along the editorial process of reporting on the real people who will be touched these stories and programmes, sources and audiences alike, and; secondly, briefs on these and other issues are set up and evidence provided to generate stories and programme ideas, linked to the relevant articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At the very heart of this document, are four main guiding documents –

- ◆ The Convention of the Rights on the Child, a universal bill of rights and responsibilities for children, caregivers and authorities, signed and ratified by every Caribbean nation over a quarter of a century, beginning in 1989.
- ◆ The ACM Code of Ethics, which provides the grounding for decisions in journalism generally and in specific cases of reporting on children
- ◆ A guide for media practitioners on reporting on key issues
- ◆ A framework Caribbean Children's Programming Code

Where appropriate, reference will be made to relevant articles in the Convention, in addition to a brief guide to this document.

GUIDE TO ETHICAL REPORTING

Reporting on children and young people can often have unintended consequences, exposing to greater risk of harm, exploitation, retribution, or stigma and discrimination. This is why journalists must exercise great care in reporting stories about children in an age-appropriate and with sensitivity. As with any ethical guidelines for journalists, these guidelines find their basis in the greater cause of serving the public interest without diminishing the rights of those about whom they report.

However, nothing in these guidelines should be taken to mean that children should neither be seen or heard merely because they are children or simply under the guise of protecting their rights. This is not a recipe for self-censorship. Take into account their desire, however it is expressed, to tell their story in their own way.

OUR PRINCIPLES: THE ACM CODE OF ETHICS

Members of affiliated organisations of the ACM and individual members commit to the belief that ethical journalism provides a foundation for ensuring the free exchange of accurate, fair and thorough information.

We subscribe to the principles that require journalists to seek truth and report it, minimise harm, act independently and be accountable and transparent.

Ethical journalism should be accurate and fair and journalists should be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information. Journalists should, at all times, fight the tendency towards subjectivity, and be professionally fair in all aspects of their work.

Journalists should:

1. Verify information before releasing it and use original sources whenever possible;
2. Refrain from engaging in self-censorship to suppress information that the public has the right to know;
3. Identify sources clearly but, when anonymous sources are cited, explain why anonymity is necessary in that instance and maintain the integrity of secret sources of information;
4. Resist and refuse bribery of any kind;
5. Diligently seek subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing;

6. Seek to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open, and that public records are open to all;
7. Avoid stereotyping;
8. Never deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information;
9. Balance the public's right to know against the need to minimise harm;
10. Consider those who may be affected by news coverage, particularly when children, victims of sex crimes and other vulnerable groups are involved;
11. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity and salacious detail;
12. Resist favoured treatment of organisations or individuals including politicians, business interests or advocacy groups to influence coverage;
13. Respond quickly to questions about accuracy, clarity and fairness and acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and appropriately;
14. Be transparent in their work and expect to be held to the same standard as others, and oppose unethical conduct within the fraternity;
15. Never plagiarise.

Revised October 4, 2015

PRINCIPLES OF REPORTING ON CHILDREN AND CHILDREN'S ISSUES

1. Respect the dignity and rights of every child at all times and in every story or programme.
2. Pay special attention to a child's right to privacy and confidentiality, to have their voices heard, to take part in the decisions that affect them and to be protected from either actual or potential harm and retribution.
3. Protect the best interests of a child even at the cost of a story.
4. Take into account the child's right to have their views expressed with due regard their age and level of maturity.
5. Consult with those in best position to assess a child's circumstances and closest to their situation on the likely political, social and cultural impact of any reporting.
6. Do not publish a story or an image which might reasonably put the child, siblings, relatives, peers or community at risk of retribution or harm even when identities are changed, obscured or not used.

Codes of Practice are useful guides to ethical conduct. They may be applied by national media organisations or introduced into style guides and editorial manuals in individual media houses. The following guide to journalists on reporting on children is found in Jamaica's code of practice for Jamaican journalists and media organisations, adopted by the Press Association of Jamaica and the employers' body, the Media Association of Jamaica:

Journalists shall not:

- a. Interview or photograph children under the age of 18 on a subject involving the personal welfare of the child, in the absence of and without the consent of a parent or other adult who is responsible for the children (except under special circumstances when it is clearly in the interest of the child).
- b. Report on the private life of a child based solely on the family's notoriety or the status of the child's parents or guardians.
- c. Approach, photograph or interview children at school without the permission of the school authorities.
- d. Photograph or interview children at crime scenes or at protest demonstrations unless due care is taken to avoid any exploitation of the children.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWING CHILDREN

1. **Do no harm** to any child: avoid questions, attitudes or comments that make judgements, are insensitive to cultural and personal values, place that child in danger, expose that child to harm or retribution, or cause a child to relive pain and suffering from trauma.
2. **Do not discriminate** in choosing children to interview based on sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.
3. **Do not stage:** Do not ask children to tell a story or perform an action that is not part of their own history. Do not place them in hazardous or toxic environments for purposes of recording their environment.
4. **Do not mislead or deceive;** let a child or caregiver know they are talking to the media. **Always explain** the purpose of the interview and its intended use before it is conducted.
5. **First obtain permission** from the caregiver, and then from the child for any interviews, videotaping and photography. It is always best practice to have this permission in writing, particularly for documentary work and programmes that may be rebroadcast multiple times. No child should be coerced, cajoled, bullied or threatened in order to obtain an interview. They, however, should be made aware that they are part of a story that might be transmitted locally, regionally and indeed globally. Permission should be obtained in the main language of the caregiver and child, or with an adult trusted by the child.

6. **Always pay due regard** to where and how a child is interviewed:
 1. Limit the number of interviewers and photographers.
 2. Make children feel comfortable and able to tell their story without pressure, including from the interviewer.
 3. In video and film interviews, communicate with and film children at their eye-level, and certainly never standing above them at an adult POV.
 4. In any media interview, be mindful of the background scene or sound atmosphere and the implications of that choice for the the child and her or his life and story. Do not conduct interviews with children without reasonable precautions for their safety. Be sure that the child would not be endangered or adversely affected by showing their home, community or general whereabouts.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ON CHILDREN

1. Do not further stigmatize any child; avoid categorisations or descriptions that expose a child to negative reprisals - including additional physical or psychological harm, or to lifelong abuse, discrimination or rejection by their communities.
2. Always provide an accurate context for the child's story or image.
3. Always change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as:
 - a. A victim of sexual abuse or exploitation,
 - b. A perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse,
 - c. HIV positive, or living with AIDS or other stigmatised condition/disease, unless the child, a parent or a guardian gives fully informed, written consent,
 - d. Charged or convicted of a crime.
4. In certain circumstances of risk or potential risk of harm or retribution, change the name and obscure the visual identity of any child who is identified as:
 - a. A current or former child combatant,
 - b. An asylum seeker, a refugee or an internal displaced person.

5. In certain cases, using a child's identity - their name and/or recognizable image - is in the child's best interests. However, when the child's identity is used, they must still be protected against harm and supported through any stigmatization or reprisals.

Some examples of these special cases are:

- a. When a child initiates contact with the reporter, wanting to exercise their right to freedom of expression and their right to have their opinion heard.
 - b. When a child is part of a sustained programme of activism or social mobilization and wants to be so identified.
 - c. When a child is engaged in a psychosocial programme and claiming their name and identity is part of their healthy development.
6. Confirm the accuracy of what the child has to say, either with other children or an adult, preferably with both.
 7. When in doubt about whether a child is at risk, report on the general situation for children rather than on an individual child, no matter how newsworthy the story.

Adapted from The Media and Children's Rights, UNICEF/Mediawise



CHECKLISTS FOR REPORTERS, EDITORS & PROGRAMME-MAKERS

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

- ▶ Is the focus of your story the young person or the disability? Have you introduced your subject by name first? Have you allowed the subjects of your story to speak for themselves? Have you asked the children if and how they want their disability mentioned? If you have mentioned a child's disability, is it strictly relevant? For example if children with disabilities are campaigning for access to a building their disabilities may be relevant, but not if they are campaigning to save a wildlife habitat, or raising money for an unrelated cause.
- ▶ The words we choose to use about people with disabilities can help to change attitudes and understanding OR perpetuate prejudice and ignorance. Have you used language in a negative or figurative way, which may be open to misinterpretation, or cause offence to people with disabilities? Have you used correct, specific terminology, or relied upon 'popular' terms or stereotypes which may be insulting or insensitive? If in doubt, consult an expert (including children with disabilities). There is a difference between drawing attention to social inequities that put children with disabilities at an unfair disadvantage, and using emotive language merely to excite pity.
- ▶ Remember, a disability may be caused by a disease but it is not a disease, and disabilities are not contagious. Children with learning difficulties are not the same as children with mental illnesses; sight and speech impairments take various forms; people use wheelchairs for different reasons; cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome, even severe autism - all different conditions. Not all people with disabilities are chronically ill; many do not regard themselves as helpless victims; some consider disability as a concept imposed by a society which does not cater for the needs of all its citizens.

CHILDREN AND DISCRIMINATION

- ▶ Journalism is about specifics and facts – but often relies upon generalisations unsupported by evidence. Have you fallen into this trap, or have you challenged claims implying that children of a particular community are entirely responsible for 'crime waves' or damaging social stability? Generalisations are rarely valid and encourage discrimination against minorities.
- ▶ Have you mentioned a child's race, ethnic origin, religion or disability? Is it strictly relevant to the story?

- ▶ Have you made sure the terms you have used about members of minority groups, or girls and young women, are not gratuitously insulting or perpetuate stereotypes?
- ▶ Have you made assumptions about a child's cultural, ethnic, or religious background? Check your facts before publishing.
- ▶ Have you ever studied the publications or programmes produced by and for minority ethnic groups, or talked to the journalists working on them?
- ▶ Have you checked the accuracy of claims made by racist, political or nationalist groups, and sought balancing views from the people under attack — including the children?
- ▶ Have you double-checked 'official' allegations about children or young people from other minority ethnic groups? Have you sought the views and responses of the children?
- ▶ Is your story about HIV-positive children or those living with AIDS medically accurate and backed up by the facts? Speculative or sensational stories encourage prejudice or make it worse.

CHILDREN AND THE FAMILY

- ▶ Does your story help people to understand how new government policies are likely to affect families? Are you providing information that will enable members of the public to assist children in need of care and protection, or obtain the necessary help from state or non-governmental bodies?
- ▶ Does your story help to explain how the family law system works? For example when covering divorce proceedings where children are involved, does your story make clear what rights children have when alimony is being set, or decisions are being made about which parent they will live with?
- ▶ Is your report of a custody battle fact-based and accurate?



Have you avoided naming or using emotionally exploitative pictures of the children? If you are reporting an acrimonious ‘celebrity divorce’, have you considered the consequences of the coverage for their children? Have you raised this with the parents and lawyers involved?

- ▶ When writing about children placed in public care — a children’s home, boarding school, foster family or hospice — have you checked the rules about identification, and discovered whether the children can still see their parents if they want to? Where possible have you asked the children, and included their views?
- ▶ Where children are not in a position freely to offer an opinion, did you follow the procedures for obtaining permission to talk to the children or young people involved? Is their right to express an opinion respected by the authorities?

CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND WELFARE

- ▶ Is your story thoroughly researched and accurate? Unsubstantiated health ‘scare stories’ can do more harm than good, by encouraging unwarranted distrust of medical professionals, for example, as well as the media — and even causing public panic.
- ▶ Have you applied the World Health Organization Guidelines for journalists covering health stories? (See next page)
- ▶ Will your coverage help people to understand childhood disease, preventative measures and treatment procedures? Have you identified sources of information and help about the specific medical condition in the news?
- ▶ Have you obtained sufficient and reliable information from the authorities? Does your story help people to make sense of reports and statistics about child health?
- ▶ If you are seeking to raise young people’s awareness about HIV/AIDS, have you included their own accounts of the decisions they face, as well as clear information on ‘safe sex’, not sharing needles, and other preventative measures?
- ▶ Does your material encourage understanding or incite prejudice about diseases and conditions (such as HIV/AIDS)? Balanced, well-informed coverage can put pressure on the authorities to provide the best treatment possible.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION GUIDELINES FOR COVERING HEALTH ISSUES

- ◆ First, do no harm.
- ◆ Get it right. Check your facts, even if deadlines are put at risk.
- ◆ Do not raise false hopes. Be especially careful when reporting on claims for “miracle cures”.
- ◆ Beware of vested interests. Ask yourself “who benefits from this story?”
- ◆ Never disclose the source of information imparted in confidence (unless compelled to do so under national law).
- ◆ When dealing with individuals who may be sick or handicapped, and especially with children, be mindful of the consequences of your story. They will have to live with it long after you are gone.
- ◆ Never intrude on private grief.
- ◆ Respect the privacy of the sick, the handicapped and their families, at all times.
- ◆ Respect the feelings of the bereaved, especially when dealing with disasters. Close-up photography or television images of victims or their families should be avoided wherever possible.
- ◆ If in doubt, leave it out.

Adopted by the WHO European Health Communications Network in 1998.

THE CHILD’S IDENTITY

- ▶ How have you recorded the child’s identity in your coverage? Did you check with the children and their parents about how they want to be described?
- ▶ Have you been fair and even-handed in coverage of stories about children or their parents who are challenging the state on identity issues — like the right to practice the religion of their choice, or to protect their cultural values?
- ▶ When reporting claims made about the political intentions of cultural or minority groups, have you considered the views and motives of all parties involved, and especially the impact of the controversy on the lives of the children concerned? Producing stories from the perspective of the children may be a revealing way of examining such problematic issues.
- ▶ Is your story likely to encourage discrimination or incite hatred, or is it more likely to generate understanding and accommodation among different ethnic, cultural or religious groups? Are the best interests of children — their safety and security — served by your story? Is the story presented in a rational and balanced way?

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



- ▶ When producing material about children from minority groups with their own language, what efforts have been made to ensure that they can understand what is being said about them? For example translation/subtitles/sharing material with ‘mother tongue’ publications.

CHILDREN EXPRESSING THEIR OPINIONS

- ▶ Can your publication/programme assist children to express their opinions, and contact others who share their views, interests and aspirations?
- ▶ Do your stories exploit children’s vulnerability or seek to impose upon them values and attitudes which they may not understand?
- ▶ Has your publication/programme considered ways of illustrating cultural diversity among children — through guest columnists/presenters, competitions or sponsored events, for example?
- ▶ Has your publication/programme given coverage to those (including children and young people) who promote the rights and opinions of children?
- ▶ Have you covered stories about children organising things for themselves — including school councils, street children’s groups, trades unions and campaigning groups as well as clubs devoted to arts, sports and leisure pursuits, and enterprises (commercial/artistic)?
- ▶ When reporting on children’s protests, have you ensured that you are not exposing the children involved to risks of imprisonment, violence or other forms of retaliation?
- ▶ Have you reported on the impact of children speaking out — for instance, the support they have received, the changes they have managed to achieve, the reactions of public figures?

CHILDREN IN CARE

- ▶ Does your story help to explain how the residential care system works? Is it clear what legal rights children (and their parents) have to challenge the system?
- ▶ Have you made sufficient enquiries to establish why and how children came to be in care? If children have been abandoned and/or taken to crime, it’s not necessarily their fault.

- ▶ Have you included positive ‘angles’ to avoid the risk of alienating the public from the plight of abandoned children, and perpetuating negative stereotypes? Does your story identify or patronise children who are at risk, and lay them open to public antipathy?
- ▶ Have you reported on opportunities for children in public care to join clubs and make links with other young people? Positive reporting about opportunities for children in care to become reintegrated within mainstream society can help to reduce ignorance and prejudice.
- ▶ Have you made the most of opportunities to give children in public care a presence and a voice in the media?
- ▶ Have you incorporated information about organisations that can help young people facing difficulties at home or in institutions? Are there organisations that specialise in assisting children brought up apart from their biological parents? Have you checked the credentials of groups claiming to support those seeking to trace their origins?

EDUCATION

- ▶ Are you familiar with how your country’s education service is supposed to work? Have you made yourself aware of current problems, changes or positive initiatives in the education system by visiting educational institutions?
- ▶ Does your media organisation have or need a specialist education unit? Who produces the material it publishes – specialist reporters, educationalists, teachers? How are children and young people encouraged to contribute?
- ▶ Did you include the perspective of the students as well as that of headteachers and principals? Have you obtained comments from parents, school governors, and classroom teachers and their unions?
- ▶ Have you made sure children are aware they may be quoted, and checked that your story won’t cause them problems they hadn’t thought about?

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



- ▶ What can you do to help children understand the role of the media in society? Has your media company considered ways of producing information in accessible forms that might attract children and even assist teachers in their work with children?
- ▶ How does your media organisation use the Internet? Has it investigated the uses children make of the world wide web? Does it produce material that children will want to access electronically? Has it considered positive ways of engaging young people in news, current affairs and media production by developing interactive links with schools?

CHILDREN AND CRIME

- ▶ Violent and anti-social behaviour by children invariably has its roots in adult violence and attitudes towards them. Does your coverage imply that young offenders are deserving of fewer rights than other people?
- ▶ Have you avoided the unnecessary use of the names and images of young law-breakers? Gratuitous identification may put them at extra risk, by encouraging a sense of notoriety, for instance, and reducing their chances of rehabilitation. It is also a denial of their rights.
- ▶ Have you made sure that children who are the subject of allegations by the public or the authorities are given a chance to respond? Don't assume that children are involved in criminal activity just because they are homeless.
- ▶ Have you followed up your report on the arrest or charging of children? Are they safe? If they are in custody, what are conditions like? Are they incarcerated with other children or with adults? Do they have access to appropriate services, such as legal advice and counselling?
- ▶ Is your coverage of drugs and drug abuse accurate and supported by scientific evidence? False and sensational claims do not help to produce sensible strategies to assist drug abusers or convict drug traffickers. Have you investigated those who supply children with drugs? Many members of the public rely upon the media for basic information — have you considered running features with clear factual information for children and parents about the different effects of different drugs, for instance, or treatment procedures?

SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

- ▶ Is your story about the sexual abuse or commercial sexual exploitation of children scrupulously accurate? Has its 'shock value' been exaggerated — even if it exposes criminal activity or official neglect?
- ▶ Have you portrayed abused or exploited children as victims, criminals or as human beings with rights and dignity? Was it possible or appropriate to give the children space to speak for themselves? Might your words or pictures inadvertently reveal the identity of abused children? Does your story supply information on how to gain access to vulnerable children?
- ▶ Did the children agree to be photographed or recorded? Did you also obtain the consent of a responsible adult? Was the adult present? Do the images and soundbites used to illustrate your story appear to sexualise children, or give the impression that a child is a willing participant in abuse or exploitation? What arrangements have been made to ensure that improper use cannot be made of the children's images?
- ▶ Does your story glamorise 'sex tourism', pornography, or any other form of child exploitation? Have you made sure that it will not appear in the context of sexually explicit material or material promoting sexual services?
- ▶ What is the likely impact of publication on the children involved? Have support systems been set up to protect them? Is there a confidential helpline to deal with responses for people wishing to report other examples of abuse or exploitation? What support is there for reporters who may be traumatised by covering such stories?

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE

- ▶ Do your stories improve public understanding about children's rights, and the role of your government's policies in promoting and protecting them?
- ▶ Journalists are ideally placed to demand action by the state to honour its international obligations. Are there campaigns your programme/publication could initiate to improve awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child among both public and politicians?
- ▶ Have you talked to experts, child rights activists and children themselves, to inform yourself about the problems facing children in your country?
- ▶ Have you sought explanations from local and central government about shortcomings in the provision of services for children, and the defence of their rights? See Children and the Law.
- ▶ Have you made space for the voices of children to be heard by the government and civil society?
- ▶ Have you checked the claims of non-governmental organisations and drawn attention to their successes and any shortcomings?
- ▶ Have you considered ways in which your media organisation might co-operate with non-governmental organisations to produce information and advice materials for interested members of the public who respond to your features?

CHILD LABOUR

- ▶ What exactly does the law in your country say about an official minimum age for work? Have you considered the longer-term consequences, for the children and for society, if some children are excluded from educational opportunities and exploited because of their age, size, gender or dexterity?
- ▶ Have you publicised cases of employers who are prosecuted for employing young children, or penalised for the conditions in which they expect young people to work? Have you sought statistics on injuries and fatalities among working children?
- ▶ Have you considered safe ways of including the views or voices of working children as part of your story?

- ▶ Have you drawn attention to the most obvious forms of child labour — street-sellers, car and shoe cleaners, messengers, etc — and found out why they are working, who they work for, and what they are paid? Does your story highlight the hazards working children face, and identify those guilty of coercing or exploiting them?
- ▶ Have you consulted NGOs (including trade unions) as sources for stories of commercial exploitation? They may also be able to identify useful international contacts, and markets, for your stories.
- ▶ Does your coverage show the difference between safe and imaginative and unsafe play areas and leisure facilities? Have you stressed the importance of proper maintenance and supervision? Have you explained what should happen if a child is hurt at a play area? Have you asked sports/showbusiness stars about their experiences of play as children?

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners







BRIEFS ON ISSUES

BRIEF: CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

- ◆ Investigate the legal and social status of disabled children. Do they lack equal opportunities because there are no laws about their rights, or because of prejudice? Do attitudes and opportunities vary according to the disability? Talk to children about where prejudice comes from. They can help to dispel myths and misrepresentation about people who are 'different' by describing their own experience.
- ◆ Can the parents of a disabled child get advice, financial assistance and practical help? Is it free or 'means-tested'? Report about self-help and other organisations working with disabled children and their families.
- ◆ Many disabled children fail to achieve their potential because adults think they have none. Are they provided with support and encouraged to participate in civil society? Are they consulted about their special needs: education, transport, access to public buildings, leisure facilities, town planning, etc? What support is available when they encounter discrimination?
- ◆ Disabled children face practical problems because their special needs are ignored by designers, builders and manufacturers. Report about products and services that result from a collaborative design process, in your country and elsewhere. How is the state improving access to public buildings, transport etc?
- ◆ Expose ill-treatment in institutions for disabled children — especially if the children have no-one to speak for them. Who runs them, and how do they get their funds? Report about positive techniques for treatment and care in your country and elsewhere. What do the children think of them?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 6, 19, 24, 27-28, 31-32, 34-36

BRIEF: CHILDREN AND DISCRIMINATION

- ◆ Is discrimination common in your country, against ethnic or other minorities for example? Explore the reasons and the effects — especially upon children. Give children who suffer as a result of discrimination opportunities to tell the public how it affects them and what it feels like.
- ◆ Is a government or non-governmental agency collecting and publishing data on children in your country? Does the data identify discrimination against boys/girls, rich/poor, rural/urban, able-bodied/disabled, ethnic groups, etc?
- ◆ Does the recognition of equal rights for all extend to girls and young women, refugees, non-nationals, and immigrants? How are children from minority groups treated by the health, education or employment services? What part does discrimination play in bullying among children?

- ◆ Investigate the state’s priorities, targets or affirmative action programmes to reduce discrimination. How are they monitored, and by whom? Report on the work of state agencies implementing non-discrimination policies, and those NGOs working to overcome prejudice against minorities.
- ◆ Report on the measures adopted by your government to ensure that legislation, policies and service delivery are non-discriminatory, including the strategies they adopt to tackle any problems uncovered by, for example, non-governmental organisations or the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- ◆ Report on the state’s efforts to help vulnerable or disadvantaged children — those living in poverty or with HIV/ AIDS. Do children feel such efforts are making a difference?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 2, 22-23, 27, 30

BRIEF: CHILDREN AND THE FAMILY

- ◆ How is ‘the family’ defined in law in your country? Does it include the extended family or just nuclear families? Are your family laws and divorce procedures fair and in the best interests of children? Do children have a say about what happens when the courts or welfare authorities intervene in their lives?
- ◆ The survival strategies adopted by single-parent families can make compelling human interest features if handled sensitively. They are also a good barometer of the effectiveness of social policies, such as child-care provision. Find ways of reporting on children brought up in unconventional family settings, without putting them at risk. Report on pressure groups that are trying to improve things.
- ◆ Investigate teenage pregnancy and parenthood. How do young mothers cope? How did their families and friends react? What difference do they think their age will make to their children’s lives?
- ◆ Is the effect on children considered before parents are imprisoned? Can imprisoned mothers keep their babies with them? Report on research about the impact on their children, and campaigns to improve facilities.
- ◆ How does the state deal with applications from families wishing to enter or leave the country? Report on the efforts by families to stay together when faced with the prospect of being separated by circumstances or officialdom. Ask the children about their feelings and experiences.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 5, 9-11, 18

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



BRIEF: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELFARE

- ◆ Keep an eye on official reports and statistics about child health in your country. For example, mortality rates at birth, deaths before the age of 5, and levels of immunisation for, and incidence of, preventable childhood diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, tuberculosis and diphtheria. Seek explanations from acknowledged experts. Look for patterns of discrimination in statistics.
- ◆ Investigate childhood epidemics and their causes, including environmental issues and the impact/adequacy of state health services. Are there mass immunisation programmes? How does the state manage child health care? Compare levels of funding with other public services.
- ◆ Use 'human interest' features to explore maternity and paediatric services. Is there a high incidence of birth problems? How efficient and child-friendly are hospital services for children? Investigate the availability for children of advanced treatments, such as transplants and correcting congenital defects.

Are there long waiting lists for essential operations?

- ◆ How are children with HIV/AIDS treated and accommodated? What support systems exist? Investigate the effectiveness of health education campaigns in helping children make informed decisions about their lives, especially about their diet and sexual behaviour.
- ◆ Investigate the environment in which children live, learn and play. What is being done (in schools, for instance) to improve awareness about healthy lifestyles (diet, drugs, pollution, recreation, road safety, sexual behaviour, smoking, sport)?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 6, 24, 26-27

BRIEF: THE CHILD'S IDENTITY

- ◆ Report analytically on your country's nationality laws, and their impact on children. When and how can children make autonomous decisions about their preferred nationality? How do they get their names? Do their names have special meanings? What official records are kept about their lives, and can children or their parents gain access to such records?

Under what circumstances can they correct errors, or change their name?

- ◆ Investigate formal and informal adoption and fostering systems. Do they protect or discriminate against a child's national, ethnic and religious identity? Examine the rights and identity problems of orphans, displaced, fostered or adopted children. Do they have the right of access to all available

information about their origins? Can they establish their parentage – by genetic testing or other means? Can they speak freely to the media?

- ◆ To what extent can children enjoy their preferred culture, religion and language? Are minority schools recognised and resourced by the state? How do they operate and what is ‘different’ about them. Do children attend by choice or because of community pressure? Can they transfer between mainstream and minority schools?
- ◆ Report objectively about groups that exist to rebuild identities at risk of dilution or extinction. What impact do they have on the children involved, and what role do children play in them?
- ◆ Investigate foreign organisations seeking to attract young people away from local cultures. What are their motives? How are they funded?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 7-8,13-14,16-17,20-21, 23,28-30

BRIEF: CHILDREN EXPRESSING THEIR OPINIONS

- ◆ Include children and young people when seeking opinions about local and national government policies. Publicise their views, especially about welfare, education or infrastructure projects which directly affect them in the short-term. Encourage them to express their opinions about plans for the future.
- ◆ Investigate children’s access to information, including the reasons behind restrictions on their access to material. How easy is it for children to get hold of films, publications or games depicting violence, or those which are sexually explicit? At what point does seeking to protect children from harm turn into unjustifiable censorship?
- ◆ Do schools run classes on citizenship and how the political process operates? How do children make use of their right to express their opinions — for example, by producing their own publications, making films, using the Internet, keeping private diaries, running mock elections, etc?
- ◆ Investigate what happens to young people if they refuse to comply with a legal obligation to take part in military or other forms of public service. Can young people under the age of 18 be conscientious objectors?

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



- ◆ Investigate children's rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly. Report about children making use of these rights. Make sure they are able to speak for themselves.
- ◆ Produce features on youth clubs and other associations for young people, especially if they are run by children. How and why were they set up? How do they operate? How are they funded? What difficulties have they encountered?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 12-15, 17, 29-31

BRIEF: CHILDREN IN PUBLIC CARE

- ◆ What is being done to improve conditions in institutions in which children live and learn? Is the trend towards smaller, more intimate residential units? How are staff trained and monitored? Is corporal punishment prohibited, and is the prohibition effectively enforced? How is abuse in children's homes checked and prevented? Do children have a secure means of raising complaints and concerns about all aspects of their lives? Are there effective and independent systems of investigation and follow up?
- ◆ How many children are in public care, and why? How reliable are the figures? How many are adopted/fostered? Do many run away? What happens to them when they outgrow public care (academic/employment prospects, life expectancy)? Talk to those who have come through the residential care system. Where are they now? How did their experience affect their lives? How do they think things could be improved?
- ◆ What happens about adoption and fostering in your country? Are the children's views and rights taken into account? Do adopted/fostered children with disabilities live with able-bodied children? Media coverage can help to improve systems and public awareness, especially where information is scant or unreliable.
- ◆ Is the transfer of children to another country for adoption regulated or monitored? What choice are children given? How are they protected from abuse and exploitation? Are children who have been taken away from home willing to describe their new lives? Do parents who have given up a child for adoption regret their decision? Were they tricked in any way? Have they been able to remain in contact with their child?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 9-10, 18-21, 24-26

BRIEF: CHILDREN AND THE MEDIA

◆ Visit schools/youth clubs to talk with children about your work. Ask if they share the views of children around the world who dislike the way they are represented in and by the media:

— being treated as a joke or made to ‘perform’ like animals;

— *the use of ‘cute’ or distressing images of children just to evoke emotional responses;*

— *being ‘shown up’ as ignorant or spoken down to, or adults speaking for them even when they know about a subject;*

— *being treated as homogeneous groups instead of as individuals and the use of ‘teenagers’, ‘adolescents’ or ‘youths’ to denote problems/trouble.**

* SOURCE: Interviewing Children: a guide for journalists and others, Sarah McCrum & Lotte Hughes, Save the Children UK, 1998, ISBN 1 899120 71 8

◆ Talk to children from different social and ethnic groups. They can be excellent sources for stories, and provide fresh insight on subjects that affect them directly: education, health, play, culture, politics, bullying and other forms of abuse.

◆ Monitor the activities of the Ministry or Authority dealing with children’s issues. Do children feel they adequately represent them? Contact non-governmental organisations that may be able to put you in touch with young people who have interesting stories to tell — but remember that all such organisations have their own agendas to promote.

◆ Investigate children’s use of photography and information technology, the Internet, chat rooms, mobile phones, etc. Do they know how to protect themselves from harmful material?

Have they ever experienced inappropriate approaches from adults or commercial organisations?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 12-14, 17, 31

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



BRIEF: EDUCATION

- ◆ Investigate the real extent of equal opportunities for all children within the education system: for example girls and boys; rural and urban; those with disabilities and members of minority communities.
- ◆ Can the students influence rules and discipline procedures through school councils? Can children choose what lessons they attend? Discover whether and how parents can influence the curriculum and education services. What role do they have in school management?
- ◆ Compare the different types of educational establishments — pre-school, primary and secondary, state and private. Do some children miss out because tuition fees are too high?
- ◆ Look into teacher/pupil ratios. What difference does class size make? What resources are available to teachers? Do children have access to up-to-date equipment? Investigate the safety of school buildings.
- ◆ Are 'alternative' approaches to education permitted? How do teaching methods, attendance, discipline and results compare with mainstream schools?
- ◆ How do schools deal with 'naughty' children? Are punishments fair or harsh? Is corporal punishment still used by teachers? When excluded or expelled from school do children have a right of appeal? What happens to them next? How do schools deal with bullying? Is there a problem of violence against teachers, and if so what are the causes?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 12-13, 17, 28-29

BRIEF: CHILDREN AND CRIME

- ◆ Keep stories about children and crime in perspective. Young people are more likely to be victims than perpetrators of crime. Highlight the human stories behind the statistics. Alert children to ways they can protect themselves from harm.
- ◆ Does the law treat children and young people differently to adults? How are young victims of crime perceived and treated? How are the rights of young offenders/suspects protected and monitored? Are judges, lawyers, police and prison warders trained about children's rights? Are children more or less likely to be believed than adults? See Children and the Law.
- ◆ How do children perceive the police? How do the police treat children, especially homeless children and those they arrest?

- ◆ Are children being used by adults of instruments of crime? Studies in the Caribbean have revealed that adults use children mostly to commit property offences: housebreaking and larceny and robbery; and in drug offences as couriers, ‘mules’ and peddlers, and increasingly for sex crimes. Investigate whether police are vigorous or slack in their investigation and prosecution of adults who procure children for criminal activities.
- ◆ Investigate restrictions on press reporting of children in the justice system: court cases, detention and aftercare. Are they appropriate? Are there laws to prevent the disclosure of the names of children who are accused of breaking the law? What is the relevant law in your jurisdiction? See Children and the Law.
- ◆ Does the justice system focus on rehabilitation, diversion or retribution? Is corporal punishment still used within institutions or as a sentence for crime? Investigate the number and conditions of children in all forms of welfare and penal custody. Are custodial sentences used only as a last resort? Are probation and rehabilitation services for children adequate and effective?
- ◆ Investigate the use of drugs, alcohol and other addictive substances among children. Why do they use drugs? Is it easy to obtain dangerous drugs? Are they criminalised for using them or helped through therapy and rehabilitation? Are they consulted about the style and content of drugs education and rehabilitation services?

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 33, 37, 39-40

BRIEF: SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

- ◆ Report on sex education and the laws covering sexual activity involving children. How was the age of consent for sexual activity arrived at?
- ◆ Investigate the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and the taboos that surround them. Draw upon evidence from other countries about the extent of sexual abuse within families. Is accurate data collected and published? Can all children (including the disabled and detainees) safely lodge complaints about abuse within their family, school or institution? How are police, social workers, teachers and health staff trained to deal with them? How is confidentiality, protection, support and counselling for children arranged?

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



- ◆ Is it an offence to produce, disseminate or possess child pornography? Investigate the efficacy of measures to prevent child abuse and prostitution and protect children from pornography, telephone 'sex lines', and Internet pornography.
- ◆ Report on the legal procedures initiated by such complaints. Do child witnesses get protection and support? Are they treated as criminals, or harmed by the investigation process? Can citizens or residents be prosecuted or extradited for the abuse or exploitation of children in other countries?
- ◆ Conduct investigations about the sexual abuse of children with appropriate security and professional support, for both the children and reporters. The safety of children exploited commercially or domestically must be paramount.
- ◆ The travel trade has begun to alert the public to sexual abuse of children by tourists. Does your country prosecute people who abuse children in other countries?
- ◆ Investigate whether police are vigorous or slack in their investigation and prosecution of adults who procure children for criminal activities, including sex crimes. Studies have reported that increasingly in all countries, but especially in Barbados, Belize, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, there are reports of children, particularly girls, being used in sex crimes, such as pornography and prostitution.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 34-36

BRIEF: THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE

- ◆ How is your government implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child? Has it complied with the requirement to publicise the Convention's principles and provisions? Is it behind schedule on submitting its reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva? If so, what are the reasons? Has there been any public consultation?
- ◆ Has publicity been given to the response of the Committee on the Rights of the Child? What actions are planned as a result? When is the next Report scheduled? Investigate the work of the Committee. Interview the representative for your part of the world.
- ◆ Interview those responsible for supervising implementation of the Convention in your country. Challenge them about (lack of) progress. Ask children what questions they would like answered. Seek official pledges about child-friendly policies, or action on specific problems affecting children.
- ◆ How has your government involved non-governmental organisations in its efforts to improve the lives of children? Have such organisations made their own submissions to the Committee on the Rights of the Child? How accurate is the evidence they have collected, and does it call into question the government's claims?
- ◆ Report about campaigns in your country to improve the lives of children. How do children view them? Compare their lives now with the childhood of their parents.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Articles 4, 42-54

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners







A CARIBBEAN CHILDREN'S BROADCAST CODE

WHY A CARIBBEAN CHILDREN'S BROADCAST CODE?

- ◆ There is considerable documented, evidence-based research, beginning from the earliest years of the medium and mounting ever since, that proves that sustained exposure of children to broadcast images, ideas and themes have a profound and powerful influence on their behaviour, health and mental well-being, for good and for ill.
- ◆ Television's and radio's power to entertain and teach, to open vast new vistas to children, expose them to places and peoples different from their own and be exposed to ideas that they may never come across in their own homes or on their own.
- ◆ It is also important that broadcasters are aware that simply watching television too early in their lives and for long periods of time is in itself not healthy for children; it robs them of years of activities vital for their growth and development, from simply playing outside to reading to eating together as a family.
- ◆ Just as broadcast programmes with positive role models can influence young viewers and listeners to make positive lifestyle changes, some shows can have a negative effect on their behaviour, attitude, health and lifestyle. There are those programmes that were not intended for children to watch, or may have been created with the expectation that slightly older children can watch critically with their caregivers.
- ◆ This guide is intended to help broadcasters make responsible decisions in the content choices and placement, and help caregivers make informed choices to consume those products reasonably and responsibly as it is presumed their reasoned and responsible makers intended.

The purpose of this code is not to create a regime for censorship; it is prescriptive not proscriptive. It respects the rights of all viewers to view programmes and make informed choices for and on behalf of those unable to exercise those restraints on what they watch.

HOW THE CODE CAN BE USED

Broadcasters need to do three things – rate, schedule, advise - in order to meet minimal standards of responsible broadcasting for children, whether or not children are expected to be watching or listening at any given time.

1. Rate their programmes. Assess the age appropriateness of the material to be broadcast based on content – images, ideas/themes.
2. Schedule their programmes. Structure their programme lineup in such a way as to separate content intended for children and families from programmes suitable for more adult audiences. An important part of this scheduling is known as the watershed.
3. Advise audiences. Tell the audience immediately before or at the very beginning of a programme's or programme segment's suitability and likely objectionable content, so that adults make informed choices about what type of programming they and the children in their care watch or hear.

There are countries (e.g. United Kingdom) where there is no rating system but a code is observed by means of scheduling – the “watershed” - and advice to audiences only where scenes or segments contain strong language, drug and alcohol abuse and scenes or themes of a sexual nature. The purpose of this code is not to create a regime for censorship. It respects the rights of all audiences to make informed choices for and on behalf of those unable to exercise those restraints on what they watch or listen to.

SCHEDULING: The watershed for adult content

A significant feature of regulating programming in British broadcasting, the “watershed” (known in the US as “safe harbour”), is the time in the broadcast schedule after which adult programmes may be broadcast. The watershed divides the day into a morning and day-time period during which it may be safely assumed that children will form part of the audience, allowing for programmes suitable for children to be aired, and a night-time period on which adult programmes may be aired, when it assumed children should not be up to watch or listen. Adult content may be defined as images, words, references, portrayals or themes of graphic violence, horror and violent death, strong language, nudity, sexual intercourse, gambling and alcohol/drug use. These rules also apply to radio and television advertising, whether it is the content of the commercial or the nature of the advertised product.

In UK terrestrial television, the watershed is defined as between 21:00 (9:00 p.m.) and 5:30 (5:30 a.m.). Broadcasters are expected to make a gentle, gradual transition to adult content; the first hour of the

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



watershed should not consist of programmes replete with explicit language, violent and sex. In US television, the ‘safe harbour’ for adult programmes begins at 22:00 (10:00 p.m.) and ends at 06:00 (6 a.m.).

The adoption of a watershed should include widespread guidance to audiences about what they should expect to see and hear and how to regulate viewing and listening in their own homes.

RATINGS, SCHEDULING AND ADVISORIES AT A GLANCE

RATING	VIOLENCE	SEX	LANGUAGE	LOGO	WARNING
G - General Audience	—	—	—	G	—
PG - Parental Guidance	1	1	1	PG	—
(watershed, 9PM)	2	2	2	PG	YES
A - Adult	3	2	2	—	YES
(post 11-PM)	4	4	4	—	YES

RATING

Broadcasters need to be able at all times to assess the nature of material likely to be problematic for children’s viewing within all their programmes

A rating assesment should be done for all content including news bulletins, live events, movies, music videos, songs, trailers/promos and commercial advertisements.

Content Descriptors

Content should be assessed for the following images, ideas and theme and the extent and intensity of their depiction, display or portrayals:

- V - VIOLENCE**
- S - SEX**
- L - LANGUAGE**

Additionally, it may be necessary for broadcasters to flag themes or concepts in programmes that may be problematic for children unless intended for educational purposes and thus created with appropriate care and caution: racism, capital punishment, war, catastrophic natural disasters, etc.

VIOLENCE

1 - No violence

- A) The programming contains no descriptions or portrayals of violence or violent gestures involving actual persons or other representations of characters or personalities e.g. puppets or alien beings.
- B) The programming contains no express or implied encouragement of violence against persons according to any demographic characteristic e.g. gender or race.

2 - Mild Violence V1

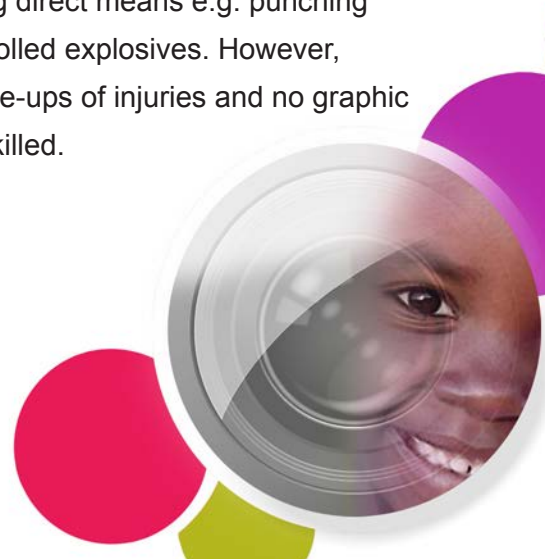
- A) The programming contains a small number of portrayals, descriptions, or discussions of violence and use of violent gestures involving actual persons or other representations of characters or personalities e.g. puppets or alien beings.
- B) There is no express or implied encouragement of violent activity against persons according to demographic characteristics e.g. gender, or race.
- C) The violent content is confined to low-intensity actions e.g. slapping.
- D) The physical consequences of the violence to characters are limited in quality and duration e.g. bruises.

3 - Medium-Level Violence V2

- A) The programming contains a greater volume, than at V1, of portrayals, descriptions or discussions relating to violence. There may also be use of violent gestures.
- B) There is no express or implied encouragement of violent activity against persons according to demographic characteristics e.g. gender, or race.
- C) The intensity of the violence is greater than at V1, whether using direct means e.g. punching with the fist, knives, or indirect means e.g. poison, remote-controlled explosives. However, it is not demonstrated in an explicit fashion i.e. there are no close-ups of injuries and no graphic descriptions of exactly how people may have been attacked or killed.

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



- D) The consequences of the inter-personal, physical conflict are also more serious than at V1 up to and including death.
- E) The programming does not portray violence as the primary means of resolving problems. It is not portrayed or described as a heroic, glamorous activity.

4 - Graphic Violence V3

- A) Violence is integral to the programming, whether it is a fictional story line, e.g. the feature film “Saving Private Ryan”, or a broadcast of an actual event e.g. a boxing match, and therefore is pervasive in the content.
- B) There may be express or implied encouragement of violent activity against persons according to demographic characteristics e.g. gender, or race.
- C) The intensity of the violence is greater than at V2, whether using direct means e.g. punching with the fist, knives, or indirect means e.g. poison, remote-controlled explosives. It is demonstrated in an explicit fashion i.e. there are close-ups, detailed discussions of wounds, slow motion shots of hitting, wounding and killing.
- D) The real, negative short, medium and long-term consequences of resorting to violence are clearly presented.

5 – Excessive Violence – V4

- A) Violence is integral to the programming, whether it is a fictional story line e.g. the feature film “Saving Private Ryan” or a broadcast of an actual event and therefore is pervasive in the content.
- B) There may be express or implied encouragement of violent activity against persons according to demographic characteristics e.g. gender, or race.
- C) The intensity of the violence is greater than at V2, whether using direct means e.g. punching with the fist, knives, or indirect means e.g. poison, remote-controlled explosives. It may be demonstrated in an explicit fashion i.e. there may be close-ups, detailed discussions of wounds, slow motion shots of wounding and killing.
- D) Violence is portrayed as the primary means of resolving all problems. It is also portrayed or described as a heroic, glamorous activity, and the real, negative consequences of resort to violence are not included.

SEX

1 - No sexual content

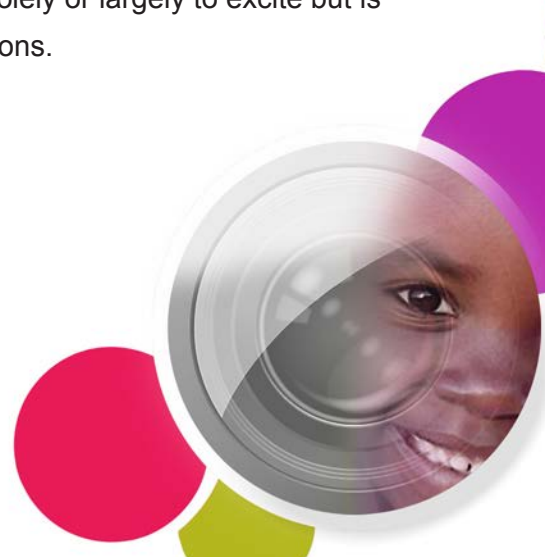
- A) The programming contains no descriptions or portrayals of sex involving actual persons or other representations of characters or personalities e.g. puppets or alien beings.
- B) There are no sexual gestures of any kind.
- C) There is no sexual dialogue or sexual innuendo.

2 - Mild sexual content S1

- A) Programming contains a small number of portrayals, descriptions or discussion of low-intensity sexual behaviour e.g. light kissing.
- B) There are no explicit sexual gestures.
- C) There may be a small amount of sexual innuendo. However, any sexual dialogue or innuendo may reasonably bear a non-sexual meaning e.g. double entendre in song lyrics

3 - Graphic sexual content S2

- A) The intensity and duration of portrayals are more significant than at S1, including but not restricted to partial nudity, depictions of foreplay and presentation of sexual paraphernalia.
- B) There may be a limited use of sexual gestures e.g. patting of the genitals or simulation of oral sex.
- C) There may be sexual dialogue, discussion or description of sexual activity and some sexual innuendo.
- D) Where there is explicit description or portrayal of sexual activity or gestures or presentation of sexual paraphernalia e.g. dildos or vibrators, it is not meant to solely or largely to excite but is presented primarily for scientific, educational or journalistic reasons.



4 - Excessive sexual content S3

- A) Sexual portrayals or discussion are highly pervasive and an integral part of the programming.
- B) There is explicit sexual content including characters simulating sexual activity, displaying frontal nudity, and description or portrayal of male and /or female genitals.
- C) The programming includes frank sexual dialogue or discussion.
- D) The portrayals, discussion or descriptions are not meant for scientific, educational or journalistic purposes but meant largely or solely for the entertainment of audience.

LANGUAGE

1 - No offensive language

- A) There is no use of obscene, sexually explicit or profane language in the programming.
- B) There are no obscene gestures depicted or described in the programming.
- C) There is no use of language to abuse or denigrate e.g. sexist or racist terms.

2 – Mildly offensive language L1

- A) The programming makes only a limited use of exclamatory terms, or sexually suggestive references
- B) The exclamatory language that is used is mild e.g. “damn”, “blast“, Christ”, “sit your backside down”.
- C) There is no use of language to abuse or denigrate including the absence of sexist, or racist terms.

3 – Graphic language L2

- A) The programming makes only a limited use of exclamatory terms or sexually suggestive references.
- B) There may be defensible use of strong exclamations, sexist, sexually explicit or racist terms e.g. “bitch”, “penis”, or “nigger”. Defensible use would include for journalistic, educational, historical or obvious literary reasons.

C) There may be limited use of language meant primarily to abuse or denigrate e.g. “go long you black bitch”.

4- Excessive language L3

A) Obscene, sexually explicit or profane language is pervasive throughout the programming.

B) Obscene gestures are depicted, described or discussed.

C) Graphic verbal expletives in either Standard English or Caribbean English are included e.g. “fuck”, “battyhole”.

D) Language is used to abuse and denigrate.

SCHEDULING

RATING	VIOLENCE	SEX	LANGUAGE	LOGO	WARNING
G - General Audience	—	—	—	G	—
PG - Parental Guidance	1	1	1	PG	—
(watershed, 9PM)	2	2	2	PG	YES
A - Adult	3	2	2	—	YES
(post 11-PM)	4	4	4	—	YES

G - General Audience - Suitable for viewing or listening by all ages and screening at any time of day. Programming does not include violence, offensive language or sexual portrayals.

PG - Parental Guidance – For transmission after 8.00 p.m. Programming may include mild violence, coarse language and mild sexual portrayals. Themes may not be suitable for younger children unless parents are present to explain.

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



- ◆ Contains all or any of the following content elements: V1 + S1 + L1

At the onset of the watershed at 9.00 p.m. programming suitable only for viewing or listening by audiences aged 14 or older will be transmitted. The programming may contain medium-level violence, a limited amount of median language, mature themes and sexually suggestive scenes, dialogue and discussion

- ◆ Contains all or any of the following content elements: V2 + S2 + L2

A - Adult - Suitable for viewing or listening only by audiences aged 18 or older and transmission after 10.00 p.m. Will likely contain graphic violence, explicit language, graphic sexual depictions or frank sexual discussions,

- ◆ Contains all or any of the following content elements: V3 + S2 + L2

NFT – Not Approved for Transmission – In breach of the regulatory standards for content that may not be transmitted on broadcast radio or television at any time and in its original form.

- ◆ Contains all or any of the following content elements: V4 + S3 + L3

However, programming that contains any of the specified content elements that would qualify it for a NFT rating may be edited to either eliminate or obscure the specific references, terms, or depictions before transmission. If the decision is taken by the media house to use an obscuring mechanism e.g. beeping of lyrics or blurring, after editing the elements must not be recognisable to the normal viewer or listener.

ADVISORIES

Broadcasters are responsible for issuing advisories for all programming it intends to transmit that qualifies for a rating of PG or A.

Television

Content – Advisories, in whatever form they are provided, must state:

- ◆ the overall rating given to the programme e.g. A
- ◆ the level of each rated content element to be found e.g. V3, S1, L2
- ◆ Advisories at the start of the programme must include a full description, in writing and as a voice-over, of the rating and the nature of the problematic content elements included in the

programme e.g. “The following programme is rated A and includes graphic violence as well as sexual content and language suitable only for adult audiences”

Presentation – Advisories are to be presented:

- ◆ visually e.g. as graphics, or superimposed script,
- ◆ aurally e.g. as voice-overs or live presentations by continuity talent
- ◆ in writing, e.g. as labels after titles in printed programme guides.

Placement - Advisories must be presented as follows:

- ◆ in all trailers promoting specific programming,
- ◆ in all other promotional material e.g. newspaper, magazine advertisements, billboards
- ◆ at the start of transmission of the programme,
- ◆ during the programme e.g. at the end of advertising breaks within the programme

RADIO

Content – Advisories, in whatever form they are provided must state:

- ◆ the overall rating given to the programme, announcement, music etc. e.g. A
- ◆ the level of each rated content element to be found e.g. V3, S1, L1
- ◆ Advisories at the start of the programme must include a full description of the rating and the nature of the problematic content elements included in the programme e.g. “The following programme is rated A and includes graphic violence as well as sexual content and language suitable only for adult audiences”

Presentation – Advisories must be presented:

- ◆ aurally e.g. as voice-overs or live presentations by continuity talent
- ◆ in writing, e.g. as labels after titles in printed programme guides.

Placement - Advisories must be presented as follows:

- ◆ in all trailers promoting specific programming,
- ◆ in all other promotional material e.g. newspaper, magazine advertisements, billboards
- ◆ at the start of transmission of the programme,
- ◆ during the programme e.g. at the end of advertising breaks within the programme

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



CABLE TELEVISION

Rating

G – (General)

1. Suitable for viewing or listening by audiences of all ages: Programming does not include any obscene or abusive language, graphic violence, explicit sexual portrayals or themes suitable for adult audiences.
2. Rating of individual programmes on the channel will be TVY, TVY7, TVG or TVPG
3. Includes some of the channels labelled as “family-oriented”, “family-friendly”, “for kids”, “for children”. Also may include channels within the following programme service categories: *Animals/Pets, Arts/Culture/History, Business/Finance, Children, Education/Learning, Family, Games, Health/Fitness/Self-Help, Hobbies, Home Shopping/Infomercials, Information/News, Nature/Outdoors, Public & Civic, Religion, Science/Technology and Sports.*

PG – (Parental Guidance)

1. Suitable for viewing or listening by children under the supervision of adults:

Programming may contain some problematic content, but does not contain pervasive amounts of offensive language, graphic violence or portrayals of explicit sex.

2. Ratings of individual programmes on the channel may be as high as PG13 and TV14.
3. PG 13 and TV 14 rated programming will appear at times of the transmission day when adults may be assumed to be available to supervise the exposure of children under the age of 13 to this material.
4. Also may include channels within the following programme service categories: *Arts/Culture/History, Business/Finance, Children, Education/Learning, Entertainment, Family, Games/Gaming, Health/Fitness/Self-Help, Hobbies, Information/News/Talk, Music/Music video, Nature/Outdoors, Science/Technology and Sports.*

A – (Adult)

1. Suitable for adult audiences only: Programming contains significant amounts of obscene and/or abusive language, graphic violence, explicit sexual portrayals or themes suitable for adult audiences.
2. Rating of individual programmes on the channel will include PG 13, TV 14, R and TVMA
3. PG 13, TV 14, R and TVMA will appear throughout the transmission day, including times when adults may not be assumed to be available to supervise the exposure of children under the age of 13 to this material.

X – (Encrypted)

1. Suitable for adult audiences specifically interested in viewing programmes which “depict or display sexual organs or conduct in an explicit manner”.
2. Rating of programmes on the channel will be TV MA, X, XX or XXX. Includes channels in the programme service categories: Adult Content and Pay-per-view.

Advisories

Advisories must be presented for all programming channels that are rated PG, A or X.

Content – Advisories must state:

- ◆ the overall rating given to the programming channel e.g. A
- ◆ the nature of the problematic content elements included in the channel e.g. “The channel is rated A and includes feature films and dramatic series including graphic violence as well as explicit sexual content and language suitable only for adult audiences”

Presentation – Advisories are to be presented:

- ◆ in writing, e.g. as labels after channel names in printed programme guides.


Placement - Advisories must be presented as follows:

- ◆ to all new subscribers upon sign-up for the subscriber television service,
- ◆ to all existing subscribers if there is an upward movement in the rating of the channel e.g. from PG to A

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners





Although signed and ratified by Caribbean Community member states beginning in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is not itself on the statute books of member states and is not directly enforceable in law.

There is no single consolidated and comprehensive national law for children in Commonwealth Caribbean nations, whether independent or dependent territories.

It is unclear whether the law courts in the region rely on the Convention to guide their interpretation of the law or in the creation of case law where statutes are silent.



CHILDREN AND THE LAW

SOURCING LEGAL INFORMATION

Although signed and ratified by Caribbean Community member states beginning in 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is not itself on the statute books of member states and is not directly enforceable in law. In most cases, national domestic legislation was enacted to enshrine the CRC's provisions in law. It is unclear whether the law courts in the region rely on the Convention to guide their interpretation of the law or in the creation of case law where statutes are silent. The constitutions of CARICOM states all contain various provisions that specifically address the rights of children as part of their general bill of rights for their citizens.

There is no single consolidated and comprehensive national law for children in Commonwealth Caribbean nations, whether independent or dependent territories. So you will have to do a little digging for legislation relating to children's welfare to back up your story. This section is intended to aid in those investigations by providing databases and lists.

Eastern Caribbean

The University of the West Indies Law Faculty contains a searchable database of all laws on children and young people in the UNICEF Eastern Caribbean Area: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos Islands. The database - www.cavehill.uwi.edu/lawlibrary/unicef-database/countries.aspx - is currently valid as of mid-2012.

Guyana

There are three main pieces of legislation relating to children, all enacted in 2009: the Status of Children Act, the Protection of Children Act and the Childcare and Protection Agency Act . Other legislation relating to children include:

- ◆ The Criminal Law Offences Act No. 16 of 2005
- ◆ The Adoption of Children Act No. 18 of 2009
- ◆ The Prevention of Crimes (Amendment) Act No. 11 of 2008
- ◆ The Occupational Safety and Health Act No. 32 of 1997
- ◆ The Sexual Offence Act No. 7 of 2010
- ◆ The Marriage Act 2005
- ◆ The Amerindian Act 2006
- ◆ The Persons with Disabilities Act 2010

Jamaica

There is no single all-encompassing Children's Act in Jamaica but much of the legislation governing children may be found in the Child Care and Protection of Act of 2004.

The following are main national laws dealing with Jamaican children.

- ◆ The Child Care and Protection Act 2004
- ◆ The Domestic Violence Act 1996
- ◆ The Trafficking in Persons (Prevention Suppression and Punishment) Act 2007
- ◆ The Sexual Offences Act 2011
- ◆ The Offences Against the Person Act 1864
- ◆ The Children (Guardian and Custody) Act 1957
- ◆ The Children (Adoption of) Act 1958
- ◆ The Early Childhood Act 2007
- ◆ The Status of Children Act 1976
- ◆ The Education Act 1965 and the Education Regulations 1980
- ◆ The Inheritance Provision (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1993

Other countries

Child Rights International Network's legal database - <http://www.crin.org/en/library/custom-search-legal> - is searchable by country and by the following subject areas:

- ◆ Case law
- ◆ Constitutions
- ◆ Declarations, resolutions and advisory opinions
- ◆ International and regional standards
- ◆ Laws establishing children's ombudsmen
- ◆ National laws
- ◆ Treaties and protocols

Searches can also be filtered along the following themes:

- ◆ General principles
- ◆ Violence
- ◆ Sexual exploitation and abuse
- ◆ Children in vulnerable situations
- ◆ Justice
- ◆ Family and alternative care
- ◆ Education and cultural rights
- ◆ Health and welfare
- ◆ Economic rights
- ◆ Armed conflict

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



Caribbean Legal Issues

At the dawn of the new millenium, Caribbean legal experts called for a complete review and reform of national legislation to ensure compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Following concerns expressed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, in commenting on Reports of Caribbean States Parties, a regional symposium on juvenile justice, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad, in September 2000 made a series of recommendations which became the the Caribbean 2000 Consensus on Juvenile Justice. A key recommendation was that all States should review and reform their legislation to ensure compliance with the CRC and related instruments.

Age of criminal responsibility and *doli incapax*

One area identified for reform was the age of criminal responsibility. The concept of criminal responsibility originates in the common law rule of *doli incapax* – a form of defense that renders a child incapable of criminal intent on the basis of their age - if they had not reached an age of criminal responsibility at the time of the offence. Increasing levels of responsibility are thereafter set down by age and the type of offence committed.

There is no uniformity in the age of criminal responsibility in the Caribbean. Some jurisdictions have set no statutory age of criminal responsibility, such as Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada and the Bahamas; it remains at the common law age of 8 years, a position England abandoned as far back as 1933.

Turks and Caicos Islands, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Anguilla have all adopted the 1933 English position of 8 years, which England itself increased in 1963. In Belize, the age of criminal responsibility is set at 9; it is at age 10 in Guyana, Montserrat, Suriname, and the British Virgin Islands; and Barbados, age 11.

The Caribbean 2000 Consensus recommended that in all States of the Caribbean, legislation be enacted to the effect that the age of criminal responsibility shall not be less than 12 years of age. Dominica and Jamaica are two jurisdictions which have followed this recommendation.

The CRC does not set an age for criminal responsibility, but recommends “the establishment of a minimum age below which children are presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law”.

Other recommended reforms

The Caribbean 2000 Consensus also recommended all jurisdictions to ensure that by law all children under the age of 18 years be afforded the full protection of the juvenile justice system. This conforms with

the principle that children do not stop being children when they commit an offence; they are often in need of help rather than punishment for their actions.

Another important recommendation was made for diversion of juveniles from the criminal justice system. Juvenile diversion redirects youths away from formal processing in the law courts and towards programmes such as alternative treatment or therapy, or warn-and-release solutions, while still holding them accountable for their actions. Diversion is applied particularly to first-time offenders and is intended to keep children away from going through a criminal justice system's 'revolving door' that may include criminal records, confinement and a culture of criminality. Depriving a juvenile of liberty is considered to be a last resort.

Across the region, the juvenile justice system remains in need of adequate physical, human, financial, administrative resources in order to function effectively and in the best interests of the child.

A complete database on the statutory age of criminal responsibility and *doli incapax* rules in the Americas region may be found at the Child Rights International Network website - <https://www.crin.org/en/home/ages/Americas>

CRC Country Reports

The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires State parties to issue national reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – a body of 18 Independent experts that monitors the CRC's implementation of the Convention. More details on the UN CRC Committee may be found at the main page (for all countries) -

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx>

CRC Committee country reports for the 12 Eastern Caribbean Area countries:

Antigua & Barbuda

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=ATG&Lang=EN

Barbados

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/BRB/CRC_C_BAR_2-5_6418_E.doc

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



Dominica

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=DMA&Lang=EN

Grenada

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGRD%2f2&Lang=en

Saint Kitts & Nevis

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=KNA&Lang=EN

Saint Lucia

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=LCA&Lang=EN

Saint Vincent & the Grenadines

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=VCT&Lang=EN

Trinidad & Tobago

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=TTO&Lang=EN

UK Overseas Territories (Anguilla, Montserrat, Turks & Caicos Islands, British Virgin Islands)

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx?CountryCode=GBR&Lang=EN

AT A GLANCE: THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

1. Definition of a child

All people under 18, unless by law majority is attained at an earlier age.

2. Non-discrimination

All rights apply to all children without exception, and the state is obliged to protect children from any form of discrimination. The state must not violate any right and must take positive action to promote them all.

3. Best interests of the child

All actions concerning the child should take full account of his or her best interests. The state is to provide adequate care when parents or others responsible fail to do so.

4. Implementation of rights

The state is obliged to translate the rights in the Convention into reality.

5. Parental guidance and the child's evolving capacities

The state has a duty to respect the rights and responsibilities of parents or the extended family to provide appropriate direction and guidance to children in the exercise of their rights.

6. Survival and development

The child has an inherent right to life, and the state must ensure the maximum survival and development of the child.

7. Name and nationality

Every child has the right to have a name from birth and to be granted a nationality.

8. Preservation of identity

The state is obliged to protect and, if necessary, re-establish the basics of a child's identity (name, nationality and family ties).

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



9. Separation from parents

Children have the right to live with their parents unless this is incompatible with their best interests; to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both; and the right to be informed by the state of the whereabouts of their parents if such separation is the result of action by the state.

10. Family re-unification

Children and their parents have the right to leave any country and to enter their own in order to be reunited or to maintain the child/parent relationship.

11. Illicit transfer and nonreturn

The state is obliged to try to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention of children in another country by a parent or third party.

12. The child's opinion

The child has the right to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

13. Freedom of expression

Children have the right to obtain and make known information and to express their views, unless this would violate the rights of others.

14. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

The child has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance and national law.

15. Freedom of association

The child has the right to meet with others and to join or set up associations, unless doing so violates the rights of others.

16. Protection of privacy

Children have the right to protection from interference with their privacy, family, home and correspondence and from libel/slander.

17. Access to appropriate information

The media has a duty to disseminate information to children that is of social, moral, educational and cultural benefit to them, and which respects their cultural background. The state is to take measures to encourage the publication of material of value to children and to protect children from harmful materials.

18. Parental responsibilities

Both parents jointly have primary responsibility for bringing up their children and the state should support them in this task.

19. Protection from abuse and neglect

The state is obliged to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence perpetrated by parents or others responsible for their care, and to undertake preventive and treatment programmes in this regard.

20. Protection of children without families

The state is obliged to provide special protection for children deprived of their family environment and to ensure that appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement is made available to them, taking into account the child's cultural background.

21. Adoption

In countries where adoption is recognised and/or allowed, it shall only be carried out in the best interests of the child, with all necessary safeguards for a given child and authorisation by the competent authorities.

22. Refugee children

Special protection is to be granted to children who are refugees or seeking refugee status, and the state is obliged to cooperate with competent organisations providing such protection and assistance.

23. Disabled children

Disabled children have the right to special care, education and training designed to help them to achieve greatest possible self-reliance and participation to lead a full and active

24. Health and health services

The child has the right to the highest level of health and access to health and medical services, with special emphasis on primary and preventive health care, public health education and the reduction. The state is obliged to work towards the abolition of harmful traditional practices. Emphasis is laid on the need for international cooperation to ensure this right.



25. Periodic review of placement

A child placed by the state for reasons of care, protection or treatment, has the right to have all aspects of that placement evaluated regularly.

26. Social security

Children have the right to benefit from social security.

27. Standard of living

Children have the right to benefit from an adequate standard of living. It is the primary responsibility of parents to provide this and the state's duty to ensure that parents are able to fulfil that responsibility. The state may provide material support in the case of need, and may seek to ensure recovery of child maintenance costs from absent parents or guardians.

28. Education

The child has the right to education and the state has a duty to ensure that primary education, at least, is made free and compulsory. Administration of school discipline is to reflect the child's human dignity. Emphasis is laid on the need for international co-operation to ensure this right.

29. Aims of education

The state must recognise that education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents, preparing the child for active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and developing respect for the child's own cultural and national values and those of others.

30. Children of minorities or indigenous people

Children of minority communities and indigenous people have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.

31. Leisure, recreation and cultural activities

Children have the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

32. Child labour

The state is obliged to protect children from engaging in work that constitutes a threat to their health, education or development, to set minimum ages for employment, and to regulate conditions of employment.

33. Drug abuse

The child has the right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs and from being involved in their production or distribution.

34. Sexual exploitation

The child has the right to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

35. Sale, trafficking and abduction

The state is obliged to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

36. Other forms of exploitation

The child has the right to protection from all other forms of exploitation not covered in articles 32, 33, 34 and 35.

37. Torture and deprivation of liberty

The prohibition of torture, cruel treatment or punishment, capital punishment and life imprisonment. Arrest and any form of restriction of liberty must be used only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time. Children have the right to appropriate treatment, separation from detained adults, contact with their family and access to legal and other assistance.

38. Armed conflicts

States are obliged to respect and ensure respect for humanitarian law as it applies to children. No child under 15 years of age should take a direct part in hostilities or be recruited into the armed forces, and all children affected by armed conflict should benefit from protection and care.

39. Rehabilitative care

The state is obliged to ensure that children damaged by armed conflict, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.





40. Administration of juvenile justice

Children alleged or recognised as having committed an offense have the right to respect for their human rights and, in particular, to benefit from all aspects of the due process of law, including legal or other assistance in preparing and presenting their defence. Recourse to judicial proceedings and institutional placements should be avoided wherever possible and appropriate.

41. Respect for existing standards

If any standards set in national law or other applicable international instruments are higher than those of this Convention, it is the higher standard that applies.

42-54. Publicising and implementing the Convention

The state is obliged to make the rights contained in the Convention widely known to adults and children

INDEX

A

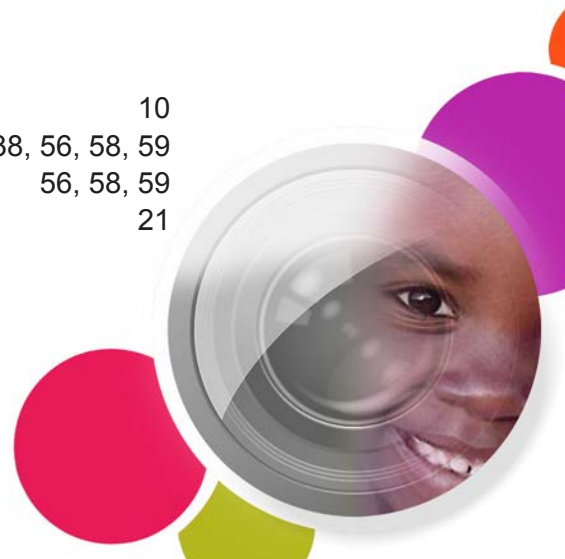
abduction	65
abuse	5, 8, 10, 15, 24, 25, 34, 35, 37, 38, 43, 48, 49, 57, 63, 65
abuse and neglect	63
abusive language	52, 53
accuracy	13, 16, 19
acknowledgements	3
ACM	3, 7, 11, 12
adolescents	35
adoption	11, 32, 34, 44, 56, 57, 63
adult audiences	43, 51, 52, 53
adult behaviour	4
adult content	43, 53
adult programmes	43, 44
adult violence	24
advertising	43, 51
advisories	44, 50, 51, 53
aftercare	37
age of criminal responsibility	58, 59
AIDS	15, 19, 20, 31, 32
aims of education	64
alcohol	37, 43
alimony	19
allegations	12, 19, 24
allegations about children	19
allegations of wrongdoing	12
Amerindian Act, Guyana	56
Anguilla	56, 58, 60
anti-social behaviour	24
Antigua and Barbuda	56, 58
appropriate treatment	65
arrest	24, 36, 65
Association of Caribbean Media Workers	3, 5, 7, 9
audiences	5, 8, 11, 43, 44, 50, 51, 52, 53
autism	18

B

Ban Ki-moon	10
Barbados	6, 38, 56, 58, 59
Barbuda	56, 58, 59
bereaved	21

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



best interests	13, 16, 21, 31, 59, 61, 62, 63
bill of rights	11
birth	32, 61
blurring of images	50
boarding school	20
brief: children and crime	36
brief: children and discrimination	30
brief: children and the family	31
brief: children and the media	35
brief: children expressing their opinions	33
brief: children in public care	34
brief: children with disabilities	30
brief: children's health	32
brief: education	36
brief: sexual abuse	37
brief: sexual abuse and exploitation	37
brief: the child's identity	32
brief: the responsibilities of the state	39
British Virgin Islands	56, 58, 60
broadcast code	42
broadcast schedule	43
bullying	30, 35, 36

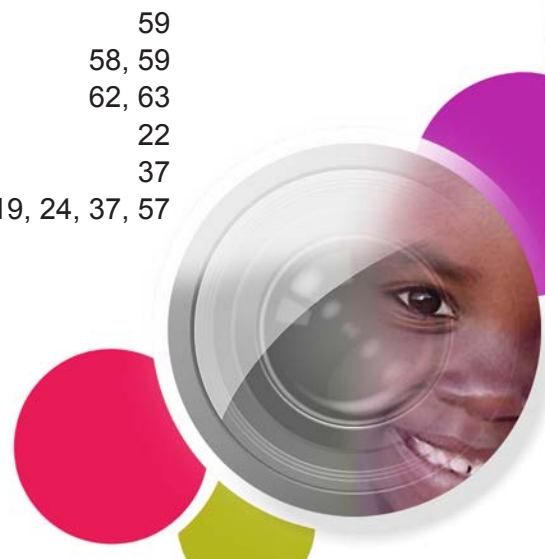
C

Caribbean 2000 consensus on juvenile justice	58
Caribbean Broadcasting Union	3, 5, 6
Caribbean children's broadcast code	42
CARICOM	56
CBU	6, 7
checklists for reporters, editors & programme-makers	17
child maintenance	64
child care	6, 57
child exploitation	25
child health	20, 32
child labour	26, 64
child rights	3, 5, 26, 57, 59
Child Rights International	57, 59
child rights reporting	3
child sexual abuse	8, 10
child sources	8
child witnesses	38
child-care provision	31
child-friendly	32, 39
childhood	9, 20, 32, 39, 57
children and crime	24, 36
children and discrimination	18, 30
children and families	43
children and parents	24

children and reporters	38
children and the law	26, 36
children and the media	35
children and the state	63
children and their families	30
children and their parents	62
children and young people	4, 12, 22, 23, 33, 36
children as silent victims	4
children exploited commercially	38
children in care	22, 23
children of minorities or indigenous people	64
children placed in public care	20
children under the age of 18	14
children with disabilities	18, 30, 34
children with drugs	24
children with HIV	32
children with HIV/AIDS	32
children's health	20, 32
children's home	20
children's images	25
children's issues	4, 5, 6, 8, 13, 35
children's ombudsmen	57
children's programming	3, 11
children's rights	4, 9, 16, 26, 36
children's vulnerability	22
children's welfare	56
child's identity	16, 21, 32, 61
child's opinion	62
child's parents	14
child's race	18
Committee on the Rights of the Child	4, 31, 39, 58, 59
Commonwealth Caribbean	54, 56
compulsory education	64
Convention on the Rights of the Child	4, 26, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 54, 58, 59
courts	31, 54, 56, 59
CRC	6, 58, 59, 60
crime scenes	14
criminal justice	59
criminal responsibility	58, 59
cultural background	62, 63
cultural diversity	22
custodial sentences	37
custody	19, 24, 37, 57

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



D

diphtheria	32
disability	18, 30
discrimination	12, 15, 18, 21, 30, 32, 61
discussions of wounds	46
diseases	20, 32
displaced person	15
diversion of juveniles	37, 59
divorce	19, 20, 31
documentary work	14
doli incapax	58, 59
domestic legislation	6, 56
domestic violence act	57
Dominica	56, 58
Down's Syndrome	18
drugs	24, 32, 37, 65

E

Eastern Caribbean	3, 7, 56, 59
education	8, 23, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 52, 57, 63, 64
employment	30, 34, 64
epidemics	32
ethnic origin	18
excessive language	49
excessive violence	46
expletives	49
exploitation	11, 12, 14, 15, 25, 27, 34, 37, 38, 57, 65
eye-level	15

F

follow-up	8
foster family	20
fostered children	34
fostered children with disabilities	34
fostered or adopted children	32
freedom of association	62
freedom of expression	62
freedom of thought	62

G

gambling	43
games	33, 52
gender	26, 45, 46
gender-based	3
gender-based violence	3
graphic sexual content	47
graphic verbal expletives	49
graphic violence	43, 46, 50, 51, 52, 53

graphics	51
Grenada	56, 58, 60
Grenadines	56, 58, 60
grief	21
guardian	15, 57
guardians	8, 14, 64
guidelines	8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 20
Guyana	56, 58

H

harm	6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, 33, 36
hazardous or toxic environments	14
hazards working children face	27
health and lifestyle	42
health and welfare	20, 32, 57
health communications	21
health education	32, 63
health services	32, 63
hitting	46
HIV-positive children	19
HIV/AIDS	15, 20, 31, 32
homeless	24, 36
horror	43
hospital services for children	32
human interest	31, 32
human rights	4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 64
humanitarian law	65

I

identity	15, 16, 21, 25, 32, 61
ill-treatment	30
illicit transfer	62
immunisation	32
impact of reports on children	5
implementation of the convention	39, 59
imprisonment	22, 65
incapable of criminal intent	58
incapax, doli	58, 59
indigenous people	64
innuendo	47
institutional placement	63
interference	62
internal displaced person	15
International Federation of Journalists	3

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



international instruments	66
interviewers, number of	15
interviewing children, guidelines for	14
interviews	8, 14, 15
intrusion on private grief	21
investigations	38, 56

J

Jamaica	3, 14, 57, 58
journalism	3, 11, 12, 18
judicial proceedings	66
juvenile diversion	59
juvenile justice	7, 58, 59

K

Ki-moon, Ban	10
kidnapping	62
kissing	47

L

labour	26, 64
language	14, 18, 22, 33, 43, 44, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 64
language, graphic	50, 52, 53
language, mature	50
law	3, 6, 19, 21, 26, 31, 36, 37, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 65, 66
law and children	3
law courts	54, 56, 59
lawyers	20, 36
legal database	57
legal information	56
legal procedures	38
legislation	6, 31, 56, 57, 58
leisure	22, 27, 30, 64
libel/slander	62
logo	44, 49
low-intensity actions	45, 47
Lucia, St.	38, 56, 58, 60
lyrics	47, 50

M

maintenance	27, 64
maltreatment	65
manifesto for our children in our media,	A 8
marriage	56
mass immunisation	32
measles	32
media coverage	6
media employers	9

media houses	6, 8, 9, 14
media organisation	23, 24, 26
medical condition	20
medical professionals	20
medical services	63
minimum age for work	26
minimum ages for employment	64
minorities	18, 30, 31, 64
Montserrat	56, 58, 60
mortality rates	32
mumps	32
music	44, 51, 52

N

name	15, 16, 18, 32, 61
naming children	5
national	8, 21, 32, 33, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62, 64, 66
national law	21, 54, 56, 62, 66
nationality	32, 61
neglect	8, 25, 63, 65
Nevis	56, 58, 60
NGOs	27, 31
non-discrimination	61
non-governmental organisations	26, 31, 35, 39
non-nationals	30
nudity	43, 47, 48

O

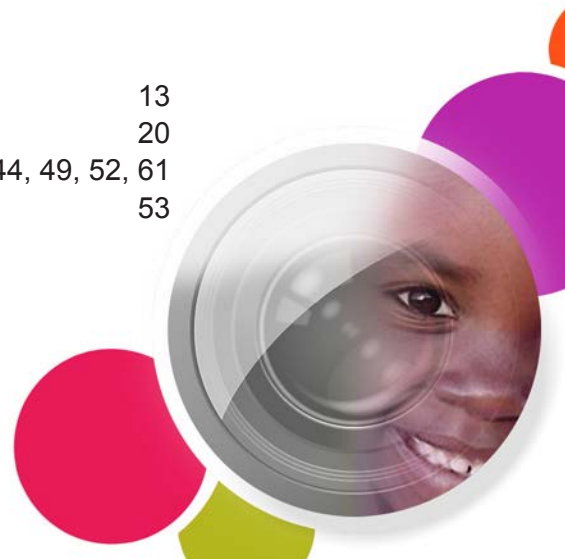
obliged to cooperate with competent organisations	63
obliged to protect children	61, 63, 64
obliged to provide special protection	63
obscene or abusive language	52
obscene, sexually explicit or profane language	48, 49
obscenity	48, 49, 52, 53
obtaining permission	20
occupational safety and health act	56
ombudsmen	57
opinion	16, 20, 62

P

pandering	13
panic	20
parental guidance	44, 49, 52, 61
pay-per-view	53

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



permission from the caregiver	14
permission of the school authorities	14
perpetrator of physical or sexual abuse	15
perpetrators of crime	36
photography	14, 21, 35
pornography	25, 38, 65
portrayals	43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52, 53
preservation of identity	61
presswise.org.uk	3
Prevention of Crimes (Amendment) Act	56
primary education	64
primary responsibility	63, 64
principals	23
privacy	13, 21, 62
privately-held media	6
probation	37
proceedings	19, 66
profane language	48, 49
programme-makers	11, 17
prohibition of torture	65
prosecution of adults	37, 38
prostitution	38, 65
protection from interference	62
protection of children	56, 63
protection of children act	56
protection of privacy	62
protest demonstrations	14
psychotropic drugs	65
public figures	22
public interest	12
punishment	34, 36, 37, 44, 57, 59, 65
puppets or alien beings	45, 47

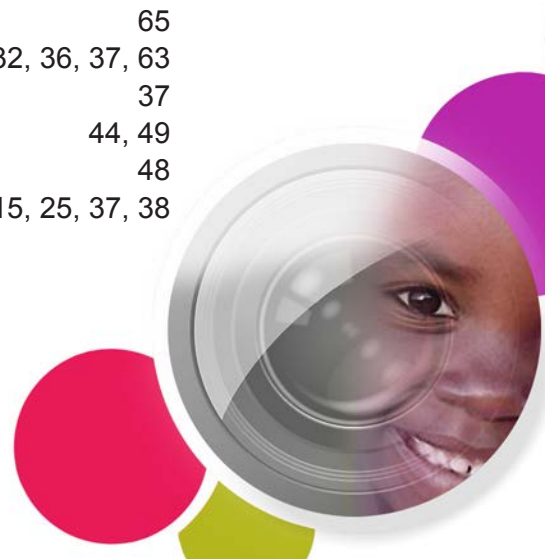
R

racism	44
racist terms	48
radio	43, 50, 51
rating of programmes	53
rating system	43
rating violence	44, 49
ratings, scheduling and advisories	44
recreation	32, 64
refugees	30, 63
rehabilitative care	65
reintegration	65
relationship	62
religion	14, 18, 21, 33, 52, 62, 64
reporting	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 31, 37

representations of characters	45, 47
respect	13, 21, 61, 64, 65, 66
responsibilities of the state	26, 39
responsibility and doli incapax	58, 59
responsible broadcasting	42
right to appropriate treatment	65
right to be informed	62
right to education	64
right to express an opinion	62
right to freedom of thought	62
right to have a name	61
right to know	12, 13
right to leisure	64
right to practice the religion	21
right to privacy	13
right to protection from interference	62
right to special care, education	63
rights and dignity	25
rights and gender	3
rights and identity	32
rights and responsibilities	11, 61
risk of harm	12, 15
risk of retribution	13
rubella	32
S	
safe harbour	43, 44
safety	15, 21, 32, 36, 38, 56
salacious detail	13
scenes	14, 43, 50
scheduling	43, 44, 49
school	6, 14, 20, 22, 23, 36, 37, 64
school councils	36
school discipline	64
security	21, 38, 64
self-censorship	12
self-reliance	63
sensitivity	12
separation from detained adults	65
services	24, 25, 26, 30, 32, 36, 37, 63
sex education	37
sex, rating of	44, 49
sexist terms	48
sexual abuse	8, 10, 15, 25, 37, 38

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners



sexual activity	37, 47, 48
sexual behaviour	32, 47
sexual content	47, 48, 51, 53
sexual depictions	50
sexual exploitation	25, 57, 65
sexual gestures	47
sexual innuendo	47
sexual intercourse	43
sexual offences	57
sexual organs	53
shock value	25
sight and speech impairments	18
simulation of oral sex	47
single-parent families	31
slander	62
social inequities	18
social media	6
social reintegration	65
social security	64
social workers	37
song lyrics	47
speech impairments	18
sports	22, 27, 52
Standard English	49
standard of living	64
state-owned media	8
states parties	58
statutes	54, 56
statutory age	58, 59
stereotypes	18, 19, 23
stigma and discrimination	12
stigmatization	16
students	23, 36
suggestive references	48
suggestive scenes	50
Suriname	7, 58
survival	31, 61
survival and development	61

T

teachers	23, 24, 36, 37
television advertising	43
television content	50
television coverage	8
television images	21
television, the watershed	43
television, the 'safe harbour'	44
terrestrial television	43

Thompson-Ahye, Hazel 3	
Tobago	6, 38, 56, 58, 60
torture	65
tourism	8, 25
trafficking	8, 57, 65
treatment procedures	20, 24
treatment programmes	63
Trinidad and Tobago	6, 38, 56, 58
tuberculosis	32
Turks and Caicos Islands	56, 58
TVG	52
TVMA	53
TVPG	52
TVY	52
U	
UNICEF	3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 56
V	
videotaping	14
Vincent and The Grenadines, St.	56, 58, 60
violence	3, 5, 22, 24, 33, 36, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 57, 63
violence, rating of	44, 49
violent activity	45, 46
violent content	45
violent death	43
violent gestures	45
violent situations	5
voice-over	50
W	
warn-and-release	59
watershed	43, 44, 49, 50
welfare	14, 20, 31, 32, 33, 37, 56, 57
wheelchairs	18
witnesses	38
women	19, 30
wounding	46
wounds, discussion of	46
wrongdoing, allegations of	12

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:

A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners





Y

young mothers	31
young offenders	24, 36
young people	4, 12, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 26, 33, 34, 35, 36, 56
young victims	36

OUR CHILDREN, OUR MEDIA:
A Guide for Caribbean Practitioners







Published by the

**UNICEF Office for the Eastern
Caribbean Area**

First Floor
UN House
Marine Gardens, Hastings
Christ Church
Barbados

Tel: (246) 467 6000
Fax: (246) 426 3812
Email: bridgetown@unicef.org
Website: www.unicef.org/barbados
[www.facebook.com/
UNICEFeasterncaribbean](http://www.facebook.com/UNICEFeasterncaribbean)
www.youtube.com/UNICEFeastcaribbean

and

Caribbean Broadcasting Union

Suite 1B, Building #6A
Harbour Industrial Estate
St. Michael

Office: 1-246-430-1007
Fax: 1-246-228-9524
Email: cbusg@caribsurf.com
Web: www.caribroadcastunion.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/caribbeanbroadcastingunion