



Children's Day Around the World

Background to Children's Day around the world

In 1954 the United Nations General Assembly recommended that all countries around the world should set aside a day to celebrate children. The aim was that Children's Day would be seen as a symbol of worldwide fraternity and understanding, and also be an opportunity to promote the welfare of children.

The Assembly suggested that Children's Day be observed on the date which each country considers appropriate.

The 20th of November – International Children's Day – marks the day in which the Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

If you have experienced Children's Day in New Zealand or another country we would love to hear about it. Send us an email (givingtime@childrensday.org.nz) and tell us about your experience.

Children's Day around the world

Country	Date celebrated	Themes	Organisational Structures	Characteristics
Samoa	Second Sunday of October	White Sunday	Church-based	Parents give special honour to their children. Children dress in

				white and parents serve them National holiday on the following Monday
Tokelau Islands	Second Sunday of October	White Sunday	Church-based	Children dress in white and parents serve them
Niue	Second Sunday of October	White Sunday	Church-based	Children dress in white and parents serve them
Tonga	First Sunday in May	White Sunday (Fakame) follows Mother's and Father's Days, which are also held in May	Church-based	
Cook Islands	June	White Sunday		
Australia	Children's Week, last week of October	Focus national attention on the chosen theme, e.g. 'A Caring World Shares'. National Council sets common goals	National Secretariat local State committees community groups like schools, libraries, relevant Government Departments etc	State committee support local organisations to run activities to benefit children
Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island	4 August	Different themes each year to draw attention to the needs of and issues facing these children e.g. child poverty, access to education	Challenges organisations and individuals to think about the example they set children	
Canada	20 November, matching UN Convention on the rights of the Child	Respect Children	National Child Day is a mechanism to help communities and families pay tribute to children	National Child Day Act
United States	First or second Sunday of June	Celebrate children as the hope of the nation	Proclamation from president calls for appropriate ceremonies and activities for children	Also celebrates Family Week
Ireland	First Sunday in October	Draws attention to children deprived of a happy life Theme: 'children are doing it for themselves'	National recognition Community organisations celebrate Children's Day	Children of Ireland Awards
Norway	17 May	Links Norway's	National Structure	

	(Norway's National Day)	Declaration of Independence, Children's Day and Spring Great Spring Festival has characteristics of a children's festival	Schools and communities organise	
Italy	18 June		Family-based	
Germany		Draws attention to lives of children who are less fortunate	National publicity Decentralised community celebration	
Turkey	23 April (National Sovereignty day)	Focus on Children 'Peace at home and abroad' 'Children are a new beginning of tomorrow'	National celebrations include children taking over places of govt for the day	National holiday
Russia	2 June		Community celebrations in libraries, parks, etc Children and families	
Hungary	Last Sunday in May		Children and families	
China	1 June		Government encourages celebrations Local districts (some combine) organise concerts, competitions and events	Holiday from school (not all)
Taiwan	4 April	'Bring joy to children' 'Strengthen bonds between parents and children'	Government sponsors Local civic organisations run parent-child activities	'King for a Day' Honour 'model students'
South Korea	5 May	'Dignity of children' 'Love, care, respect'	Government makes it a national holiday Local community celebrations in parks, zoos, exhibitions	National holiday

Japan	5 May	'Respect character of children' 'Promote children's happiness and health'	Government makes it a national holiday Local community celebrations in Parks, koi windsocks, carp streamers, exhibitions Traditional food	National Holiday
India	14 November (to commemorate Nehru's birthday)		Government recognition with a function Local community celebrations in festivals, dances School-based	
Pakistan	20 November	'Rights of the child'		Universal Children's Day
Thailand	1st Saturday of January	'Duty to nurture and cherish children'	Government agency and private enterprise celebrations Activities and parties	Commemorative stamp
South Africa	16 June	'Rights of Children'	Federal Government and Ministry of Culture support Local community celebrations in festivals, dances, sport	African Charter on Children Mock parliament for children Aids talks
Chile	Second Sunday August	'Time for adults to spend time with children'	Government backing Community celebration	

Common Themes of Children's Day

Theme	Countries
White Sunday	Samoa, Niue, Tokelau Islands, Tonga, Cook Islands
Respect children	Canada South Korea Japan
Children as our hope	United States Turkey

Recognise child deprivation/poverty	Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island Ireland Germany
Parent-child bonds	Taiwan Chile
Rights of the child	Pakistan South Africa Canada
National holiday	Turkey South Korea Japan
Awards for children	Ireland
Children take adult roles e.g. king/government	Taiwan Turkey

Practical ideas for community celebrations

Traditional food Cooking classes	Performances Art displays Choral concert Storytelling Talent show
Parades with children, bright colours and flags Children's Day banners Create a Children's Day mural and display for your community Favourite Toy Day Clean Up Day Kite flying Cultural activities Celebrate diversity, celebrate me Tell stories, read from a book, play charades Kids on radio Cultural Sharing Day 'Care and Share' Day Adopt a Buddy Day	Schools hold day-long programmes to celebrate children Museums, zoos, amusement parks, movie theatres – have an arrangement for free admission for children/caregivers Research surrounding the rights of children Speeches from children on children's rights and issues Build a Poetry Tree Debating – Children's Parliament Guest speakers Quiz Day
Traditional no cost games Sports activities and demonstrations Children's Olympics Everyday situations of adult and child role reversal Health/fitness activities Adventure trails Observation walks	Have a family picnic lunch, barbeque, hangi or umu Badge-making and design Family Music Making Day

Organisational Structures

Type	Countries
National/Federal Government recognition with devolved local community celebration	Australia Canada United States Ireland Norway Germany China Taiwan South Korea Japan India Thailand New Zealand South Africa Chile
Families only celebrate	Italy and Russia