



Our cities. Our lives. Our future.

Child Friendly Cities Child & Youth Manifesto

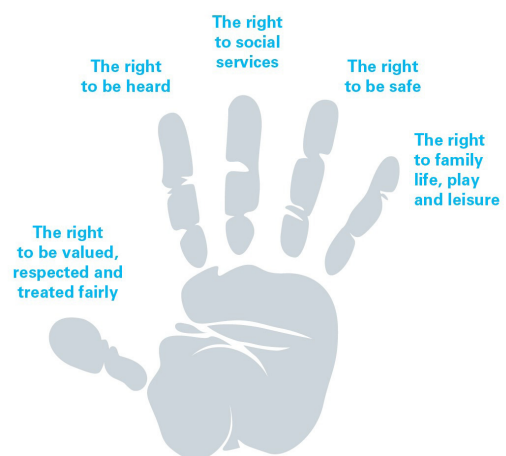
What would child-friendly cities look like, if children were mayors? Over the course of the nine months leading up to the Child Friendly Cities Summit in Cologne in October 2019, more than 120,000 children and young people from 167 countries shared their perspective on this question. The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) Child and Youth Advisory Board, consisting of almost 70 children and young people from around the world, shared this Manifesto and their recommendations with mayors and local leaders at the Summit on 18 October 2019.

This Child Friendly Cities Manifesto reflects the words and expressions of the children and young people. The children also guided the design of the Manifesto. This is what they have to say to mayors and local leaders.

Children and young people are valued, respected and treated fairly

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

- All people respect each other and the rights and dignity of children and young people.
- Inclusion, diversity, solidarity and hospitality are fundamental values.
- Politicians, teachers, adults, young people and children trust, listen to and try to understand each other.
- Children and young people do not have to face danger, violence or discrimination. We are all equal.
- Children have concrete opportunities to enjoy their rights, develop and grow without worrying about their health being ruined by pollution or hazards caused by climate change.



- People work together to create economic opportunities and security for all children, young people and their families.
- Children, young people and their families are offered good education and health services.
- It is safe to play and walk outside.
- Child labour is forbidden and children are protected from dangerous work environments.
- The 2030 Agenda is incorporated into municipal policies and the Sustainable Development Goals are promoted.
- There is peace, love, respect and fun.

All children are included

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

55 per cent of young people have experienced discrimination and feeling excluded in their city.

Child Friendly Cities U-Report poll, June 2019

- All children and young people can participate in all activities and access all services without discrimination. Particular attention should be paid to children with disabilities, migrant and refugee children, sexual and gender minorities, homeless people, etc.
- Migrant and refugee children and their families are included in all ways of life in the city or community, receive protection and reception services and are assisted with communication (interpretation, translation, mediation).
- Children and young people with disabilities are included in all ways of life in the city of community. Public transport must be accessible, architectural barriers removed, parks, squares and sidewalks adapted for wheelchair users, and more services and aid are available for children with disabilities and their families. There is sound at each traffic light.

“If I were a mayor, I would emphasize children’s needs, because they cannot influence their own or their guardians’ financial situation.”

- No children live in poverty. The city offers social housing, affordable food and canteens, free activities for children, free school materials and meals and increased and allocated budgets for children and young people.
- Girls and boys are treated as equals and gender equality is promoted through awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality and respect for gender diversity, also addressing the role of media.

Children have a voice and are listened to

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

- Adults have positive attitudes to children’s participation and take children and young people seriously.

- Adults listen to children and young people and use words that they can understand.
- Adults don't make empty promises.
- There are school and youth councils to establish more fluid and frequent communication between children, school boards and politicians.
- Children and young people can give feedback and express their views and concerns (through complaints mechanisms) and receive feedback on how the activities and projects they have proposed are developed.

48 per cent of young people don't believe decision-makers in their city or community listen to young people's opinions.

Child Friendly Cities U-Report poll, July 2019

"I can't vote, so it's hard for me to make my voice heard. I feel that young people are often pushed to the sidelines in decision making."

- Technological and other less traditional platforms are used for communication with children and young people.
- Engagement with children and young people is more proactive.
- Children and young people receive all necessary information to make decisions on all matters that affect them.

"Decision-makers never seem to listen to young people. They promise young people not to cut funding from education but cut anyway. When young people participate in school strikes for climate, they are told to 'plant trees to save the world' instead."

- Children and young people have the right to vote in schools and local elections.
- Children and young people have meeting points to organize their own initiatives.
- Children and young people have the opportunity to participate in the evaluation and assessment of laws, projects and programmes affecting them.

Children have good education

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

24 per cent of young people identified the lack of good education as the issue they are most worried about in their city.

Child Friendly Cities U-Report poll, July 2019

- The quality of education is improved.
- Education is free and inclusive for all.
- Children and young people can influence decisions that affect them in schools, together with teachers and their families.
- Learning and life skills are promoted through creative learning and play, and school curricula are related to job opportunities.

- Schools offer quality, healthy and sustainable school meals.
- School facilities are improved and maintained. Children and young people have access to a space where they can study, read and access computers to encourage learning.

“I would make sure that everyone feels comfortable at school.”

- Schools are kept open in the afternoon so they can be used for social, creative and sports activities.
- Schools offer information on social issues, such as bullying, racism or gender discrimination.
- Children and young people have fair and adequate duties.

Children grow up healthy

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

- Everyone has access to good quality health centres close to where they live.
- Addictions among children and young people (tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, technologies) are prevented through campaigns, group discussions and recreational activities with people that have experienced addictions. The sale of alcohol to children under the age of 18 should be more vigilant.

“I believe that health should improve in many areas and not only for children but also in general.”

- Healthy eating is promoted through information campaigns and school meals, and there is access to affordable, healthy and local food.
- Children and young people are protected from the health effects of air pollution.

Children are safe and protected

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

- There is peace. War and conflicts are avoided based on learning from good practices of non-violent behaviour. Children and young people are protected from the impact of armed conflict.
- Children and young people are protected from all forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence.

“If we were mayors, we would invest more in education and not in war – invest more in pencils instead of guns and bullets.”

- Vulnerable populations and minorities are protected, and attention is paid to hate crimes.
- Public spaces, such as schools, streets and parks, are safe and well-lit.

- Safe school pathways and awareness of the role that businesses should play are promoted: businesses should offer help to children in case of need, and let them use the toilet and the telephone in case of an emergency.
- The police are close by and trained in childhood issues and how to engage with children and young people.

Children can move around easily

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

- Public transport is safe, affordable and adapted to the schedules and needs of children and young people, including to schools, sports, social and cultural activities. Streetlamps, safe crossings and wide sidewalks are important.
- Public transport is adapted for people with disabilities.
- The volume and circulation of vehicles in the city is controlled.
- There are bicycle lanes and parking lots for bikes to facilitate transport and protect the environment.

Children grow up in a clean environment

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

- There is more green space such as parks and school gardens.
- Public buildings and public spaces are taken care of and renewed with urban art, murals, graffiti and paintings.
- People respect and care for the environment. We want campaigns to take care of and keep our neighbourhoods, beaches and mountains clean, and we contribute our small grain of sand to make a better world.
- Public spaces are cared for and respected. Everyone understands that the city is home for everyone.
- Garbage is removed from the streets.
- Harmful gases emitted into the atmosphere are reduced.
- International Day against Climate Change (24 October) and the World Environment Day (5 June) are commemorated.
- The Sustainable Development Goals, especially those related to the environment and the fight against climate change, are promoted.
- Hydraulic and solar energy are promoted, and nuclear power plants eliminated.
- Everyone recycles and reuses materials, especially earplugs and batteries. There are more bins and colored bags to identify what should be recycled.
- Schools hold competitions and reward those who recycle the most.

- No plastic bags are sold or used, only paper ones.
- The treatment of animals is improved, and there are more resources to care for abandoned pets.

Children can play and have fun

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

- There are more opportunities to play and socialize in parks, sports courts, shopping centres, outdoor cinemas, libraries and more spaces for socializing.

38 per cent of young people feel they don't have enough time or places to play and hang around with friends.

Child Friendly Cities U-Report poll, July 2019

- There are excursions for all ages.
- There are storytelling activities and spaces to play in libraries.
- There are improved outdoor leisure areas and inclusive playgrounds for all of us to play together.
- There are sporting events and greater variety of sports, with more sports activities in schools and more multi-sport and football parks, for tennis, football, water polo, acrobatics, bicycling; all are adapted for people with disabilities.

Children have time with their families

If we were mayors, we would create child-friendly cities or communities where:

86 per cent of young people would want to spend more time with their parents.

Child Friendly Cities U-Report poll, July 2019

- Children and young people can spend more time with their parents.
- Intergenerational relationships are built and strengthened.
- Money is raised for grandparents to pay for residency if they need it and for children to visit them.
- There are social venues with activities for all ages.
- Grandparents' Day is celebrated, with activities for the whole family.

On the 30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we are calling for mayors and local leaders to create cities and communities where every child can reach their full potential.

Children and young people are counting on you.



Child
Friendly
Cities
Initiative

unicef 
for every child