

I AM A CHILD

I am my own person. I am not the property of adults or of any institution. I did not ask to be born.

I am to be free from hunger, from fear, from ignorance, from abuse, from servitude, from indoctrination.

I am to be educated and encouraged to read and explore ideas other than my own. I will be allowed to make mistakes and to fail. I will learn from experience. I will become responsible for my words and actions as I grow. I will learn to tell the truth because you will not lie.

I am a free person. I will be allowed to decide about my life when I am older. You will encourage me to pursue what is in my heart.

I am not to be judged different because of my skin pigmentation, size, gender, looks, culture, or the circumstances of my life. We are all the same. You will teach me to reject prejudice of all kinds.

I am to be encouraged to pursue happiness and my own well-being, but not at the expense of others. You will teach me the value of helping others. You will teach me that accepting help is not a weakness.

I am to be taught by word and deed to respect and value all living things, including the planet.

I am to be taught by word and deed to be a good and decent person, to recognize my shortcomings, to not judge others, and to understand that life is not about me, but about all of us.

I am not to be hit. I am defenseless. Raising your hand produces fear and anger. It is not discipline. It is abuse. It teaches nothing.

I am a child. My life is in your hands. I beseech you to teach me. To encourage me. To listen to me. To be patient with me. To love me. In return I will love and honor you all my life, and I will do for my children what you have done for me.