

## CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO BENEFIT FROM HEALTH SERVICES AND HEALTH EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** *Health is a basic human right for all children. Children have the right to grow up healthy and to receive education regarding a healthy behavior. According to the World Health Organization's concept of health, a healthy and educated life is a qualitative life. Children's right to health consists of three different aspects: cultural, social and economic rights. The right to benefit from health services is regulated by a few international conventions, such as: 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', 'International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights', 'Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' (O.N.U, 1991). Access to optimum health services is necessary for good health. Health is a fundamental right for all categories of children, including children with special needs (W.H.O., 2001). This paper analyses the importance of children's right to health and the practical possibilities to improve the accessibility and addressability of children to medical health services. Conclusion: Children's health can be seen as a bio-psycho-social whole.*

**Key words:** *health services; education; medical; children's rights.*

### Introduction

Over the last five years, significant progress has been made in the process of improving the health and well-being of children and young people. However, some children and young people still fail to receive the highest standards of healthcare attainable – a right of all children as set out in Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (O.N.U, 1991). There are a couple of key points that must be taken into account when providing health care ([www.unicef.ro](http://www.unicef.ro)):

- Health professionals should always act in the best interest of the child or young person they are supporting or engaging with.
- Children and young people are not a homogeneous group and the health service must be flexible in responding to their diverse needs, backgrounds, capabilities and interests.

Participation and involvement must take place on two levels: individual involvement, with people making their own health care choices and being confident in their interaction with health professionals; and group involvement, either as a service user or member of the public (Gavrilă-Ardelean, Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2016).

The main characteristics of the right to health, after O.N.U (1991) are:

- Health is the state of physical, mental and social well-being and does not only mean an absence of illness or disease (W.H.O, 2012).
- The right to health is closely linked to other fundamental human rights, most notably access to potable water and adequate hygiene.
- The right to health includes access to health services.

## **Research Methodology**

Research methodology consists in a specialty literature review, considering human rights and children's rights for health and health education, viewed from different stages of human development: from antenatal to postnatal stages and from primary education to preschool and school stages (Cazacu, Bădescu, 1981; King, 2005).

## **Research results**

All children have the right to timely access to appropriate health services. This requires the establishment of a system that ensures access to essential medicine.

To fulfill the right to health, each country must put in place health services available in any circumstances, accessible to everyone, of good quality and satisfactory (meaning they conform to medical ethics and respect our biological and cultural differences).

However, this does not mean that every country guarantees good health to everyone. We can also see the distinction between the right to health and the right to good health.

### ***The right to health also involves prevention and awareness campaigns***

Prevention plays an essential role in maintaining public health, particularly children's health. Health education and vaccinations prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Vaccinations are efficient because they are fairly inexpensive and they protect children against the risk of death and handicaps caused by infectious diseases (tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus, leprosy, polio, whooping cough, and measles). In the long term, these vaccinations can even lead to the end of these diseases in a given country.

Vaccinating children, as well as conducting awareness campaigns, can lead to a significant reduction in health risks. Additionally, spreading basic information about hygiene, nutritional needs, as well as the circulation of simple illustrations reminding people of the fundamental rules are very efficient actions that can help people improve their healthy behavior.

In addition, it is important to inform the population about the harmful effects that child marriage or female genital mutilation have on children's health.

### ***Children's right to health***

For children, the right to health is vital because they are vulnerable beings, who face more risk to illness and health complications. Children that have been protected from diseases can grow into healthy adults, thus contributing to the development of a dynamic and productive society. It is one of children's rights to enjoy the optimal state of health.

Children require additional attention in order to enjoy the best possible health (Gavrila, 2016). This allows them to develop properly during their childhood and teenage years.

At every step of their physical and mental development, children have specific needs and different health risks. Moreover, a newborn is more vulnerable and more exposed to certain diseases than a young child or teenager (i.e. infectious disease, malnutrition).

On the other hand, teenagers, due to their habits and behaviors, are exposed to other kinds of risks (sexual health, mental health, alcohol and drug use, etc.).

Generally, a child who benefits from appropriate health care will enjoy a better state of health during the stages of childhood and will become a healthy adult.

### ***Pre- and postnatal health care***

The right to children's health also includes pre- and postnatal care for mothers.

A newborn will have a much lower chance of survival if the mother dies due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth.

The results of the specialty literature review about children’s rights is they have the right to benefit from health services and health education. The synthesis of the children’s right to health is illustrated in figure below (fig. 1).

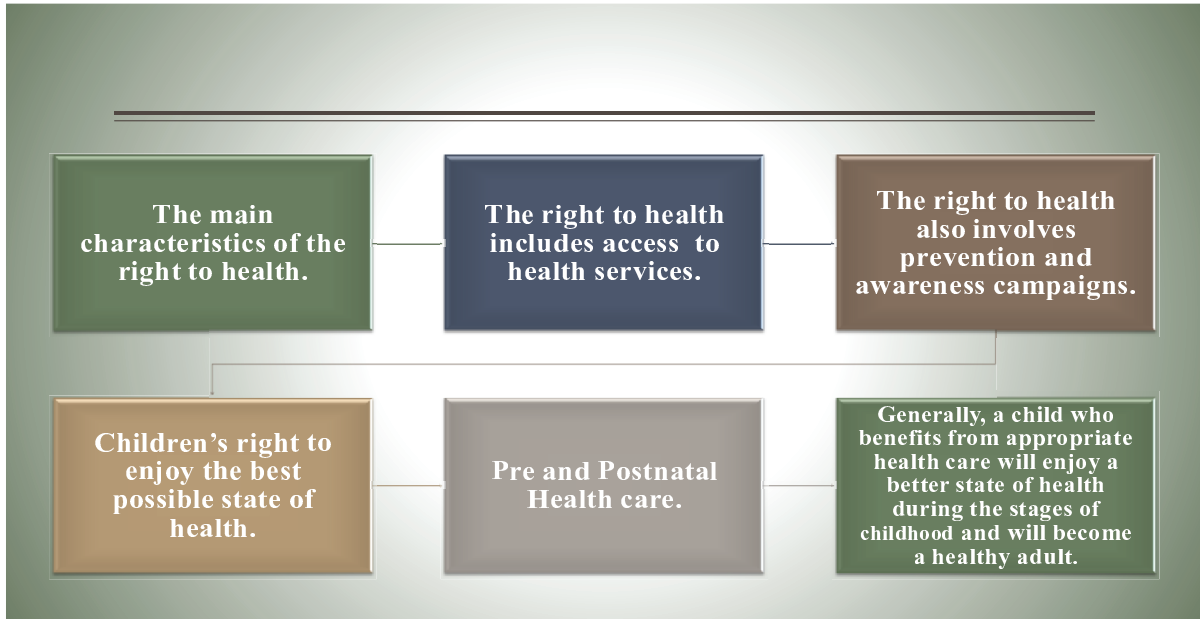


Figure 1. Synthesis of children’s right to health

***The importance of health education***

The Organization of the United Nations stipulates the importance of health education for the children’s right for health (www.unicef.ro; Kelemen, Gavrilă-Ardelean, et al., 2016; Gavrilă-Ardelean, Gavrilă-Ardelean, 2017). The significance of this issue is summarized in the figure below (fig. 2).

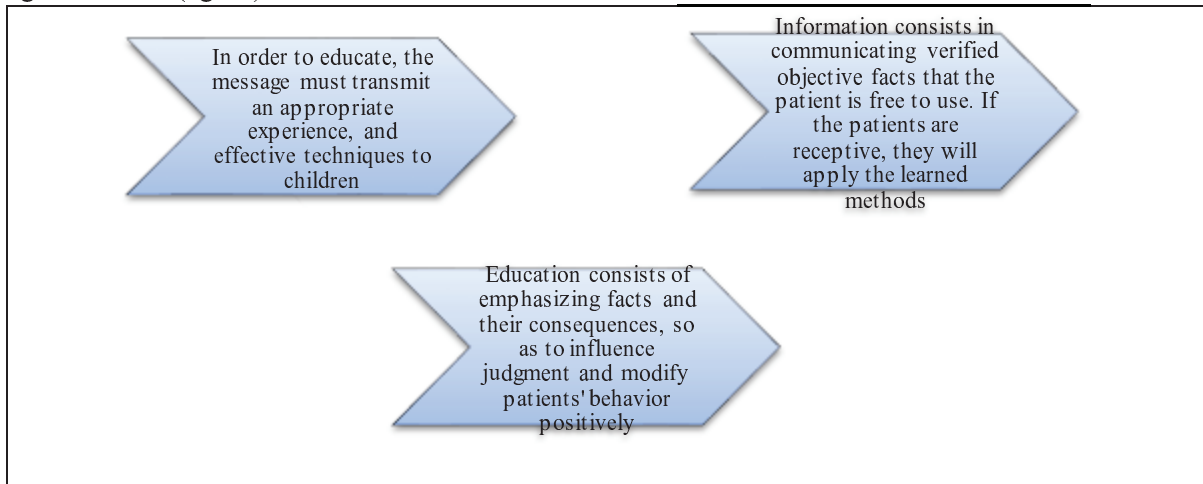


Figure 2. Importance of health education

**Conclusions**

Children’s right to health is a complex right that includes: access to health services, the right to be informed, the right to be educated for a good health behavior, access to prevention services and awareness campaigns, children’s right to enjoy the best possible state of health, the right not to be used in experimental drugs studies and the right not to be involved in medical

abuse. For children, the right to health is vital because they are vulnerable beings, more prone to illness and health complications. When children are protected from disease, they can grow into healthy adults, and, in this way, contribute to the development of a dynamic and productive society.

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