



# Violence against children with disabilities



# What is in this book

Inside this book you will read about:



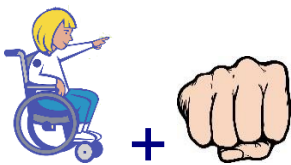
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# What this book is about



The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights wrote this book.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is called FRA for short.

FRA is an organisation.

An organisation is a group of people working together.



FRA helps to make sure everyone in the European Union can use his or her rights.

The European Union is a group of 28 countries in Europe.



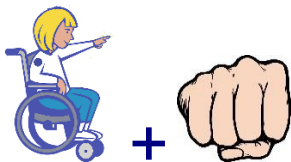
Rights are things that everyone has.

For example, the right to vote

and the right to be treated the same as everyone else.



FRA works on the rights of people with disabilities.



This book will tell you about violence and children with disabilities.

It looks at violence, where it happens, and why people are violent.



It also looks at laws to protect children from violence and what countries are doing to prevent this violence.

## Important things to remember about this book



The United Nations created two important documents. One document is called the Convention on the rights of people with disabilities. The other document is called the Convention on the rights of children.



Conventions are agreements between different countries about rights that everyone has.



Countries who agreed to the Disability Convention must make sure people with disabilities have the same rights as people without disabilities.



Countries who agreed to the Children's Convention must make sure that children also have rights like adults and these rights should be respected. Children also have their own rights because they are children and need more protection than adults.



The general idea in the Conventions is that everybody should be treated equally.



The two conventions say that:



- Children with disabilities must be protected from violence.

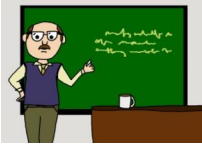


- Children and people with disabilities have the same rights to be part of society as everybody else.



- Children and people with disabilities must be respected for who they are.

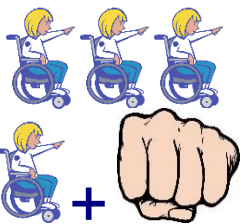
# Violence and children with disabilities



There are many people that take very good care of children with disabilities.



These include parents, teachers and organisations that help children with disabilities.



Many children with disabilities are hurt by people who should care for them.



Exactly how many children with disabilities are affected by violence is not known. The UN thinks children with disabilities are affected by violence four times more than children with no disability.

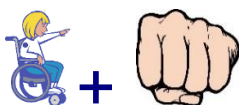
## Why are children with disabilities victims of violence?



People who do not know people with disabilities can be bad to people with disabilities. People are sometimes bad because they do not understand what disability is.



This is often because children with disabilities are not included in society. Sometimes they go to separate schools, and live in separate places only with other children with disabilities.



Another reason is that it can be easier to be bad to children with disabilities.



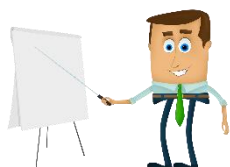
For example, children with disabilities often need help from other people. They sometimes cannot defend themselves.

Children with disabilities are often victims of sexual violence.



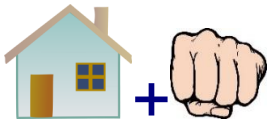
People looking after children with disabilities are also often tired because they do not get help and support to look after children with disabilities.

This can make them violent and too tired to properly take care of the children they have to look after.



People looking after children with disabilities also often have not been trained to work with people with disabilities.

## Where do children with disabilities become victims of violence?



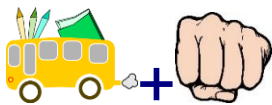
Violence often happens at home.  
Children with disabilities can also be ignored by their families.



Families can be tired because they do not get help.



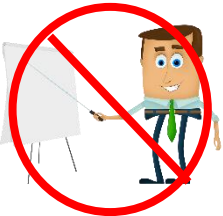
Families sometimes do not have enough money to look after children with disabilities.



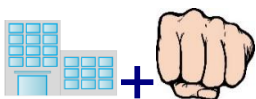
Violence also happens at school.  
Children with disabilities are often bullied at school.  
Bullied means children call other children bad names, or hit them, for example.



Some schools do not change the way they teach so that children with disabilities can learn.



Teachers also have not been trained how to teach children with disabilities.



Violence also happens in institutions for children with disabilities.





All children have a right to live with their families or with other families.  
Children with disabilities have the same right.



Children with disabilities can be put in institutions.  
Institutions are bad for children with disabilities.  
Institutions do not meet the needs of each child with a disability.



People working in institutions can also be violent towards children with disabilities.  
People working in institutions sometimes use force to give medical treatments or make children do what the workers want.



Workers are also often tired as they have too much to do and do not know how to look after children with disabilities.  
This can make them violent.



Often in institutions nobody checks what they are doing.  
This means nobody sees the problems that children with disabilities have in institutions.

## Other reasons why violence can happen



FRA looked at other reasons why violence can happen.



When people do not have a lot of money this can increase the problems.



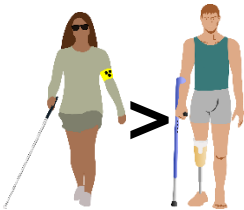
This can be made worse because a parent has to stop work to look after the child. This means they have even less money. They often do not get much money from the government to help them. All this creates stress for the family.



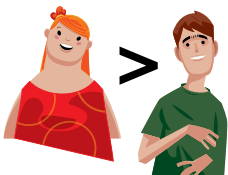
People from different ethnic groups can also treat children with disabilities differently. Ethnic groups means where they come from, for example from Europe or Africa or Asia and can have a different skin colour.



People from different ethnic groups sometimes speak another language. This can make it difficult to understand them. This can make it difficult for them to look for help.



Girls with disabilities can be victims of violence more often than boys. Sexual violence can be more common.



Girls with an intellectual disability may be more at risk.

# Laws and policies on violence and children with disabilities



Two United Nations Conventions cover violence against children with disabilities. These are the Disability Convention and the Children's Convention.



The Children's Convention covers all children. This includes children with disabilities.



The Disability Convention covers all people with disabilities. This includes children with disabilities.



All 28 EU countries signed the Children's Convention. 25 EU countries signed the Disability Convention. The three remaining EU countries are changing their laws to sign the Disability Convention.



The EU has also signed the Disability Convention. This is the first time the EU has signed a United Nations Convention. It also means all EU laws and policies must follow the rules of the UN Disability Convention.



Recently the UN said the EU must make sure its laws look at violence against children with disabilities.



Countries in the EU have also agreed to protect children with disabilities from violence.



Countries in the EU protect the rights of children and the rights of people with disabilities in different ways in their laws.



For example, not all EU countries have laws against the use of physical punishment as punishment for children. This includes spanking or using canes.



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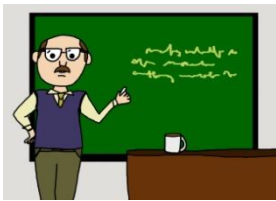
The laws in some EU countries look at age when discussing violent crime. Other countries look at disability. In some countries they look at age and disability.



There are not many laws or policies that look in detail at violence against children with disabilities.



More people with disabilities need to be told about what to do when they are victims of violence.



More professional people like teachers, social workers, need to be able to recognise when violence is a hate crime.



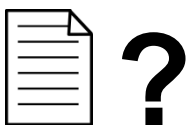
This is when someone hurts another person because of hate or because they are afraid of difference.



Sometimes the policies for children protect children with disabilities.



Sometimes the policies for people with disabilities protect children with disabilities.



Often policies do not say what exactly needs to be done to protect children with disabilities.



The way laws and policies are put into practice do not properly protect children with disabilities.



Actions to protect children with disabilities is often missing.



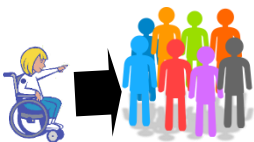
Children with disabilities need to be included in services set up by the state to protect children. Child protection services need to be accessible to children with disabilities.



Also there is not enough money or people to protect children with disabilities.



People that help often do not know how to look after children with disabilities.



It is important for children with disabilities to take part in everyday life. This will help prevent violence against children with disabilities.

## What can be done?



This section will look at different ways the EU and EU countries can better protect children with disabilities.



Protecting children without disabilities needs to be the same as protecting children with disabilities.



Protection needs to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

### Better protection



EU countries have to make sure that laws properly protect and support children with disabilities.



Child protection services have to fully support children with disabilities and the families of children with disabilities.



EU countries must also collect information about children with disabilities and about violence against children with disabilities.



Information can help EU countries and experts make better laws and policies to help protect children with disabilities.

## Better laws and policies



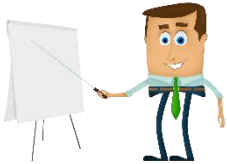
EU countries must make sure children with disabilities who are victims of violence can get help.



This means telling the police about the violence or going to court or going to places that can offer help.



These places must be accessible to all children with disabilities.



Professional people like the police, teachers or nurses must get training. This will help them learn about violence and how to identify it.



## Better coordination



The laws need to look at age and disability when looking at violent crime. There should be extra punishment for violent crimes against children with disabilities.



Many different organisations can look after the different parts of the lives of children with disabilities. For example their school, the hospital, the police and the local government.



Different organisations should all work together to better protect children with disabilities.



One person responsible for the laws and policies for children with disabilities is better. This will help make sure the laws and policies in EU countries better protect children with disabilities. This would mean two organisations do not do the same thing or organisations do nothing because they think somebody else is doing it.



The one person responsible will bring together everyone working with children with disabilities. This includes teachers, nurses, the police, social workers, lawyers. It includes children with disabilities and their families.



EU countries need to make sure all people working with children with disabilities use the same rules in their countries.

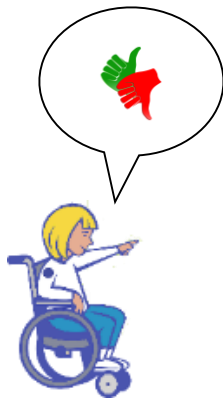
## Better understanding



People who do not know people with disabilities can be bad to people with disabilities. People are sometimes bad because they do not understand what disability is. People should know what disability is.



EU countries need to teach people about children with disabilities. This will help people understand children with disabilities better. This will help people treat children with disabilities equally.



EU countries need to teach children with disabilities that bad things cannot be done to them. Children with disabilities need to learn what to do and where to go if people hurt them or they are scared of someone.



Children with disabilities need to ring hotlines for help and advice. Hotlines need to make it easy for children with disabilities to get help.



People who answer the calls or text messages need to learn about the problems of children with disabilities and what can be done.



EU countries need to make information about bullying or about the rights of children accessible to children with disabilities.



EU countries need to make sure the voices of children with disabilities are heard in decisions that affect them.



Children with disabilities need to be part of discussions about them.

## Better help



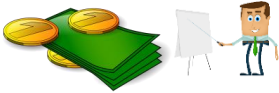
Professional people need to learn to identify risks and problems to prevent violence and to stop violence.



Professional people need to learn about children with disabilities and their needs.



EU countries need to help child protection services more.



This means giving them more money to do their work and training so they better understand children with disabilities and their needs.



Child protection services need to better help children with disabilities and their families. Parents need to be told about what help they can get.



This means giving information, and training families so they can help children with disabilities.



Child protection services need training so they can prevent violence against children with disabilities by identifying risks.

## Better care homes



EU countries need to stop putting children in institutions.



EU countries need to provide money to help move children with disabilities out of institutions and into families.

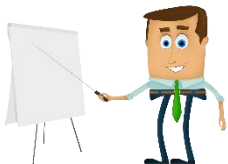


EU countries need to look at the care in institutions. EU countries need to make sure children with disabilities are taken care of and are not being badly treated.

## Better schools



EU countries need to make sure schools are safe for children with disabilities.



Teachers need training to understand the needs of children with disabilities. Teachers need to learn how to identify and respond to violence towards children with disabilities.

# Examples of what is being done to help protect children with disabilities



This section will look at good examples of helping to protect children with disabilities.



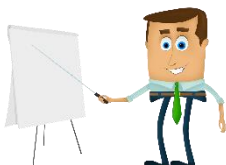
In some EU countries people are learning what disability is. This helps everyone understand children with disabilities better. This helps everyone treat children with disabilities the same as people without disabilities.



In some EU countries children with disabilities are learning what to do and where to go when people are violent to them.



In some EU countries there are rules and guides to help professionals work and understand children with disabilities.



In some EU countries there is training to help professionals work and understand children with disabilities.



In some EU countries different organisations that are responsible for looking after children with disabilities work together.

This book was developed thanks to the support of Inclusion Europe.