

IMPORTANT

- The information we provide on our rights4children website is for general guidance. It is not legal advice.
- If you need legal advice, please contact an independent advocate or a solicitor.
- Article 39 tries its best to make sure information is accurate and up-to-date. However, we cannot guarantee this. We'd appreciate you letting us know if you notice any errors or out-of-date information: info@article39.org.uk

Feeling good about yourself



- ✦ Feeling good about yourself is recognising all the nice things you do and say. Every day.
- ✦ It's knowing what you enjoy and are good at. This might be sports, reading, helping others, gaming, talking, dancing, studying. The list is endless!
- ✦ Feeling good about yourself is seeing that people like and love you. Think about the last time someone laughed or smiled around you – you had something to do with that!
- ✦ Feeling good about yourself is enjoying your life right now. As well as having things to look forward to.
- ✦ It's being able to talk through worries and get help when you need it. Everyone has tough times in their life. If bad stuff happens to you, this doesn't take away all the good things about you.
- ✦ Feeling good about yourself is knowing that you matter as a person. That you are important.

There are over 7 billion people in the world.

If you were to write that in numbers, it would be: 7,000,000,000. That's a lot of noughts!

But have you ever thought how many people in total have lived on planet Earth?

We haven't a clue how to work that one out. One thing we can be sure of is: **there is only one you!**

Your rights – general

All children and young people have rights.

Rights help children and young people to feel good about themselves.

We couldn't find a law that contains these exact words.

But feeling good about yourself is linked to all the rights you have, including to be safe, to be listened to, to be treated fairly, to have a great education, to have enough food, a warm home and clothes, to health care when you need it, to be able to play, have fun and enjoy your free time.

Sometimes children and young people need help to feel good about themselves. This is where Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (called CAMHS for short) can help. Over 300,000 children and young people at any one time ask for help from CAMHS.

Here are seven laws we really like. They all relate to you feeling good about yourself:

1. We have a law in England which says people who work in schools, hospitals, social services, prisons and lots of other places should always think about ways to stop unfair treatment and help people get along with each other.¹ We're right behind that!
2. Another says the Secretary of State for Education must promote your well-being.² That's everything that makes you feel good!
3. And another says councils must help children who have been harmed, or are at risk of being harmed.³
4. We have a law which says councils should work towards every child getting the most from their education.⁴ (Up to age 20!).
5. Then there is one which says the Secretary of State for Health must make sure there is improvement in everyone's mental and physical health.⁵ How we feel inside, and how our bodies work, are equally important.
6. We have a law which says councils must make sure there are places you can go, and things you can do, in your free time.⁶ That's got to be a good thing!
7. If you are in care, everyone involved in looking after you is required by law to have "high aspirations" for you⁷ – meaning they want the best for you. This is one of the new corporate parenting principles which came into force in April 2018. Excellent!

Let's be honest, no-one feels good about themselves all of the time.

Even people with the sunniest smiles and loudest laughter have times they feel really down about themselves.

There are all kinds of things that can make children and young people feel bad about themselves. Like things being difficult with your parents, worrying about how you look, friendships not working out, money worries, problems with your health, struggling at school and not feeling listened to. The death of someone you love can be very hard to cope with too.

Teenage years can be especially difficult. During this time, big changes take place in your body and your brain. These affect how you feel. It's normal to have very strong feelings – good and bad – during the teenage years. It is normal to doubt yourself, and to wonder if you are good enough.

In the 'Real-life stories' part of our site you can read about adults who got through tough times as children. They have shared their stories because they want to help children and young people today.

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1 This is the public sector equality duty, contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

2 Section 7, Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

3 Section 47 Children Act 1989.

4 Section 13A Education Act 1996.

5 Section 1 of the National Health Service Act 2006.

6 Section 508, Education Act 1996.

7 Section 1(1)(e) Children and Social Work Act 2017.