

# **It's a Question of Rights...**

## **Children's Right and the Swedish Sports Movement**

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### **Abstract**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child spells out the basic human rights to which children everywhere are entitled to. This also includes organised sports, in which many Swedish children take part.

Sports are traditionally regarded to be good and healthy leisure activity for children and sport has a strong position in Sweden. Nevertheless it seems like the most important element, playing for fun, gradually has become more serious. The increasing professionalism and commercialisation of sport has contributed to this seriousness. At the same time the Swedish sport federations has taken more (social) responsibility, and tried to structure the sports movement with, for instance, policy documents. People in general have also become more aware of problematic issues in sport due to research and media's interest of maltreatment of children in sports. Also several organisations and interest groups have recently put the protection of children in sports on their agendas, in order to raise the moral standard in Swedish sports. The belief that children automatically benefit and develop into good citizens just by participating in organised sport is losing its grip in the discourse, therefore this paper will discuss issues in organised children and youth sport in the light of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Do the sports movement need to do more to prevent violations against children? If so, can the UN Convention be a helpful tool? The paper investigates:

- 1) The policy document regarding children's sports that the Swedish Sport Confederation has developed.
- 2) The connection between the Sports Movement and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 3) Paradoxes in children's sport.