

DOCUMENT 4A

Outreach: Children's Rights

Stronger version using the community's direct rights-based framing, for organizations working directly in children's rights.

Re: Protecting children's rights, education, and stability as families face work-permit expiry

Dear [Organization or Name],

We are writing on behalf of the TS2023 community, families who came to Canada under the special measures introduced after the February 2023 earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria. Through those measures, many parents obtained open work permits and rebuilt their lives here. We are reaching out to your organization because the expiry of these permits raises serious concerns for the children in our community, and your expertise in child rights and child well-being would be invaluable.

Over the past three years, many children in our community have spent formative years of their development in Canada. Many have been enrolled in Canadian schools, built friendships and daily routines, and developed a sense of safety and belonging in their classrooms and neighbourhoods. A number of these children were born in Canada and are Canadian citizens, while their parents' status remains unresolved. For the past three years, Canada has served not just as a temporary shelter, but as a vital sanctuary for their emotional recovery and development.

Many of these permits are now expiring across 2026, and at present there is no dedicated transition pathway for affected families. Uprooting these children now would directly conflict with fundamental principles of international human rights and Canadian immigration law, specifically:

The Best Interests of the Child (BIOC) principle. Under section 25(1) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) and established Supreme Court of Canada jurisprudence (such as *Baker v. Canada*), the best interests of affected children must be given significant weight in immigration decisions. Forcing these children into legal limbo or displacement directly undermines their well-being.

Risk of re-traumatization. These children have already survived the severe trauma of losing their homes, schools, and loved ones in the earthquakes. They have spent three years healing within the stability of Canadian schools, sports teams, and neighbourhoods. Forcing them back to regions still recovering from disaster would trigger a severe, secondary trauma. This contradicts Article 39 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which calls on states to promote the psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims.

Cultural and educational alienation. Many of our children were either born in Canada or have spent their formative early years here, and have fully integrated into the Canadian curriculum. For many, English or French has become their primary language of communication and academic thought. Forcing them into an unfamiliar educational system in Türkiye, a country where many have never even attended school, violates their right to education (UNCRC Article 28) and threatens their sense of identity (UNCRC Article 8).

We are not asking for special treatment. We respectfully urge decision-makers to view the TS2023 community not merely through a bureaucratic lens, but through a humanitarian framework that prioritizes the rights, mental health, and future of the innocent children who now proudly call Canada home. We also note, with respect, that in the same period Canada has extended or renewed comparable temporary measures for other affected groups, including those from Ukraine, Sudan, Haiti, and Iran.

We would value your guidance and support in any of the following ways:

- Advising on accurate, responsible child-rights framing of this issue.
- Helping assess the child-specific impacts of work-permit expiry and the loss of educational continuity.
- Amplifying the issue within child advocacy networks.
- Supporting consent-based documentation of children's and families' experiences.
- Raising the issue in relevant briefings, submissions, or meetings.
- Encouraging decision-makers to consider children's best interests and educational continuity in any transition measure.

We can provide background materials, timelines, primary-source references, and families who are willing to share their experiences.

Thank you for the vital work you do for children. We would welcome a conversation at your convenience.

Sincerely,

The TS2023 Community

[Your name, email, and phone]