

OMBUDSPERSON INSTITUTION

Child-Friendly Decision Writing Guide



KAMU DENETÇİLİĞİ
KURUMU



ÇOCUK



for every child

Cover photo: © UNICEF/UN0696954/Basak Nur Yirmibesoglu

This publication has been prepared with the technical and financial support of UNICEF and within the framework of ongoing cooperation with the Ombudsperson Institution (KDK). All copyright and publication rights of this publication are owned by the Ombudsperson Institution and UNICEF. It may be quoted with proper reference. The author bears full responsibility for the content of the publication, and the statements contained herein do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF.

Not for sale.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. CHILD RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	4
A. What Is Child Rights-Based Approach?	4
B. Roadmap for Child Rights-Based and Best Interests-Oriented Decision-Making at KDK	7
- Fundamental Elements	7
- Identifying Cases That Affect Children’s Rights	8
- Workflow for the Child Unit and Other Units	10
- Checklist Questions	12
III. CHILD-FRIENDLY DECISION WRITING FOR CHILDREN	16
A. Child-Friendly Versions of Decisions	16
a. Why Are Child-Friendly Versions of Documents Needed?	16
b. What Is a Child-Friendly Version?	17
B. Preparing Child-Friendly Versions	18
C. Sample Templates for Child-Friendly Versions of Decisions	19
IV. ANNEXES	29
ANNEX 1	29
ANNEX 2: Child-Friendly Glossary	31
ANNEX 3: Child-Friendly Versions of Different Types of Decisions for Different Age Groups	32
ANNEX 4: Useful Resources	37

I. INTRODUCTION

Prepared primarily for use by the Unit under the Chief Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights (hereinafter referred to as the “Child Unit”), as well as by all other units of the Ombudsperson Institution (KDK), in cooperation with UNICEF, this guide is a continuation of the “Guide to Child-Centred Complaints Handling (2018)” series, and has been developed to support KDK staff in conducting child rights-based and child-friendly work. The content of the guide was created drawing on existing handbooks and shaped by the experiences and needs of the KDK Child Unit.

The first section provides information to support the Child Unit and all other units in ensuring that their decision-making processes are both child rights-based and child-friendly. This section, which emphasizes the obligation to uphold the best interests of the child, offers practical and guiding information for relevant personnel and units. The best interests of the child is a fundamental principle that must be given primary consideration in all decisions made to ensure the child’s physical, mental, emotional, and social development in the best possible way. Detailed guidance on how to protect and apply this principle is provided in this section.

The second section has been prepared to facilitate the creation of child-friendly versions of the decision texts that are prepared following the evaluation of applications submitted to the Child Unit, to be communicated to children and their caregivers. The section includes practical points to consider as well as concrete examples. The child-friendly adaptation of decision texts aims to enable children and caregivers to better understand these documents and participate more effectively in the processes.

II. CHILD RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

A. What Is Child Rights-Based Approach?

Child rights-based approach is a perspective that emphasizes respect for all the rights of children and the protection and realization of these rights in every aspect of children's lives. This approach is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹.

The Convention is founded on four core principles that define children's fundamental rights and needs. These four core principles form the main framework of the UNCRC, and aim to protect and promote children's rights, and improve their lives.

a. Ensuring the Best Interests of the Child

This principle highlights the priority of protecting the child's best interests in every situation and emphasizes that the child's best interests must come before all else. When making any decision concerning a child, all physical, emotional, social, and educational needs of the child must be taken into account. The interests of adults (caregivers, public officials, etc.) can never take precedence over those of the child. The best interests of the child must be the foremost priority for decision-makers. In all decisions and practices, decision-makers should first assess the potential impact on children and act in a manner that upholds their best interests. This principle is of great importance for ensuring the well-being and safety of the child.

b. Equality and Combating Discrimination

This principle underlines that no child shall be discriminated against for any reason or in any form, and that all children have equal rights. Every child shall enjoy equal rights without discrimination based on characteristics such as race, colour, gender, language, religion, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, or family status. Every child is unique and special.

c. Supporting the Right to Life, Survival, and Development

This principle emphasizes the child's right to live a healthy life and to have their physical, mental, emotional, and social development supported. Ensuring that the child lives safely, preserving their physical and emotional integrity, and supporting their full development are responsibilities shared by the State, caregivers, and society as a whole.

ç. Taking Children's Views into Account

This principle underscores the child's right to express their views on matters that concern them and to have those views taken into account. Regardless of their age, developmental stage, or maturity level, all children have the right to express their views freely. These views must be taken seriously by decision-makers, and children must be given opportunities to influence decisions that affect their lives.

Why a Child Rights-Based Approach?

The "role of Independent National Human Rights Institutions in the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child" is set out in General Comment No. 2 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee requires every State to establish one or more independent national human rights institutions responsible for protecting and promoting children's rights.

¹ For more detailed information on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, see "Guide to Child-Centred Complaints Handling (All Units)", see pp. 6–17.

As children's views are often disregarded and their access to complaint mechanisms remains limited or hindered, the existence of independent human rights institutions is all the more essential to ensuring the protection of children's rights. As an independent human rights mechanism, KDK and its Child Unit play an important role in this regard in Türkiye. To enable the Institution to fulfil its responsibility to protect and promote children's rights, it is essential not only for the Child Unit—which carries this responsibility—to operate effectively, but also for the entire Institution to internalize and implement a child rights-based approach.

The framework of the child rights-based approach is grounded in the four core principles of the UNCRC described above. KDK prioritizes these four core principles at every stage of its decision-making processes. By ensuring that these principles are upheld in all procedures, KDK fulfils its significant role in internalizing and implementing a child rights-based approach.

Uncertainties may occasionally arise concerning how to apply the principles of the best interests of the child and consideration of the child's views in decision-making processes. General Comments No. 12 and No. 14 issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child provide valuable guidance on how to implement these two principles in practice.

Since 2014, through its website www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr, KDK has been the first and only complaint mechanism in Türkiye authorized to receive applications from individuals under the age of 18 without requiring adult consent. KDK may receive applications directly from children, or from adults and civil society organizations concerning issues affecting children, without the need for a demonstrated personal interest. From the complaint stage to the decision-making stage, creating a safe environment that enables children to express themselves freely and confidently, ensuring that their views are heard and considered, and informing them that they can communicate their feedback or objections to the Institution regarding the decisions made, are all essential efforts to ensuring meaningful child participation.

GENERAL COMMENT No. 12 (2009) – The Right of the Child to Be Heard

Article 12 of the UNCRC addresses children's right to express their views and to have those views taken seriously. The General Comment explains that States must listen to children and give due consideration to their views at home/in the family, in alternative care, in healthcare services, in education and at school, in play, recreation, sports, and cultural activities, in the workplace, in the development of strategies to prevent cases of violence, in migration and asylum procedures, in emergency situations, and in both national and international contexts.

Children's participation is a process. Children require a preparation and information process, safe spaces, and supportive tools to express their views freely.

The expression of views by children alone is not sufficient for participation. Meaningful child participation can only be achieved when children's views are duly considered in decision-making processes, and when they are provided with the necessary information and feedback both during and at the conclusion of the process.

A meaningful process of child participation should be:

- Transparent and informative,
- Voluntary,
- Respectful,
- Relevant,
- Child-friendly,
- Inclusive,
- Supported by education,
- Safe and sensitive to risks,
- Accountable.

The process related to child complaints received by KDK, as well as applications directly or indirectly related to children's rights (from registration and preliminary examination to examination–investigation, decision-making, and announcement of the decision), is designed to uphold the best interests of the child, using the UNCRC as a principal reference framework.

GENERAL COMMENT No. 14 (2013) – The Right of the Child to Have His or Her Best Interests Taken as a Primary Consideration

The Committee defines the best interests of the child as a substantive right, a legal principle, and a rule of procedure. When reaching a decision on any matter, ensuring that the best interests of the child are the primary consideration among all competing interests is a fundamental right that must be guaranteed. Where a legal provision allows for more than one interpretation, the interpretation most consistent with the child's best interests should be preferred. Whenever a decision affects a child or a group of children, both the positive and negative impacts of that decision on children must be assessed.

To fully ensure consideration of the best interests of the child, the following aspects should be taken into account:

- The universal, indivisible, interdependent, and interrelated nature of children's rights, The recognition of children as rights holders,
- The global scope and nature of the Convention,
- The obligations of States Parties to respect, protect, and fulfil all rights enshrined in the Convention,
- The short-, medium-, and long-term impacts of the treatment of the child during his or her development.

The Committee emphasizes that a continuous Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) is required to prevent shortcomings in the implementation of the child's best interests principle.

A Method for Ensuring the Best Interests of the Child:

Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA)

The CRIA proposed by the Committee to ensure the best interests of the child is a systematic process designed to facilitate decision-making consistent with the UNCRC and to uphold the best interests of the child. The Committee on the Rights of the Child describes this assessment as Child Impact Assessment in paragraph 45 of General Comment No. 5 as follows:

"Ensuring that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all actions concerning children (Article 3(1)) and that the provisions of the Convention are respected in legislation, policy development and service delivery at all levels requires continuous assessment of the potential impact (of any proposed law, policy or budgetary decision) on children and their enjoyment of rights, and evaluation of the actual impact of implementation. Such assessment and evaluation processes should be built into government structures and adopted at the earliest possible stage of policy development."

A CRIA can be conducted to analyse and assess the direct and indirect impacts of any policy, regulation, practice, or decision on children. The compliance of a draft law, a planned policy, or a proposed practice with the UNCRC can be evaluated within the framework of the CRIA.

Child rights impact assessments may include analyses conducted before decisions are made, before the implementation of decisions, or after the decision and implementation. These analyses or evaluations should primarily be used to encourage decision-makers to take the child dimension of the issue seriously before

decisions or actions are taken. This enables the potential impacts of decisions on children to be anticipated and measured in advance. Thus, decisions can be reconsidered and modified within the framework of this analysis or even its implementation can be withdrawn.

B. Roadmap for Child Rights-Based and Best Interests-Oriented Decision-Making at KDK

This section presents a roadmap to ensure that the handling process of complaints submitted to KDK (Application, Registration, Preliminary Examination, Referral to the Ombudsperson's Office, Examination, Decision-Making) is child rights-based. First, this section outlines the essential elements that this roadmap should include. Next, it provides a flow to be used in identifying situations during the preliminary examination process where decisions must be made in consideration of the best interests of the child. Third, it introduces a checklist developed to support the assurance of a child rights-based approach and the principle of the best interests of the child throughout the process from preliminary examination to decision-making. Finally, the section presents a process flow designed to guide child rights-based decision-making.

This roadmap was prepared by revising and adapting the lists and flows contained in the handbooks previously developed for the Child Unit and All Other Units.

a. Fundamental Elements

The fundamental elements that must be taken into account—from the design to the implementation of the process—to ensure that due importance is given to developing decisions that uphold the best interests of the child and that are based on the UNCRC are listed below. Adoption of the following five fundamental elements and undertaking the necessary adjustments and improvements to put them into practice are essential for establishing a decision-making process that observes the best interests of the child.

1. Observing and following the UNCRC and national and international child-rights legislation:

Particular attention should be given to the four core principles of the UNCRC — namely, the best interests of the child, non-discrimination and equality, support for the child's life and development, and respect for the views of the child. Developments in national and international child-rights legislation must also be monitored and reflected in decisions. This element underscores the need to consider, interpret, and implement the UNCRC in a holistic and effective manner, affirming its indispensability.

2. Ensuring reliability:

This entails conducting all procedures for applications transparently and without discrimination, ensuring that the procedures and workflows related to decision-making are clear, precise, and applicable, effectively communicating roles and responsibilities through community outreach activities, safeguarding personal data throughout the process, setting clear procedures and rules on confidentiality, and ensuring that this transparency requirement is communicated to all parties, especially children. Transparency and accountability in all decisions are indispensable components of reliability.

3. Making adjustments for accessibility:

Recognizing that children belong to different age groups and have diverse individual characteristics and living conditions, this element creates opportunities to make adaptations that meet the special needs of both children and their representatives. In line with the principle of the best interests of the child, it allows certain flexibility in institutional procedures according to needs. Examples include diversifying complaint platforms, preparing information and application materials for different disability groups, monitoring the accessibility of complaint platforms, and making necessary modifications such as adding sign-language interpretation to videos or developing websites readable by screen readers for users with visual impairment.

4. Acting in a timely manner:

This concerns completing the decision-making process within a reasonable period to prevent any negative impact on children. Actions that can be taken to implement this element include prioritizing complaints submitted by or on behalf of children, finalizing cases affecting children as quickly as possible, addressing situations that threaten the child's life or safety as a matter of urgency, and informing the parties in the event of delays.

5. Being open to development and learning:

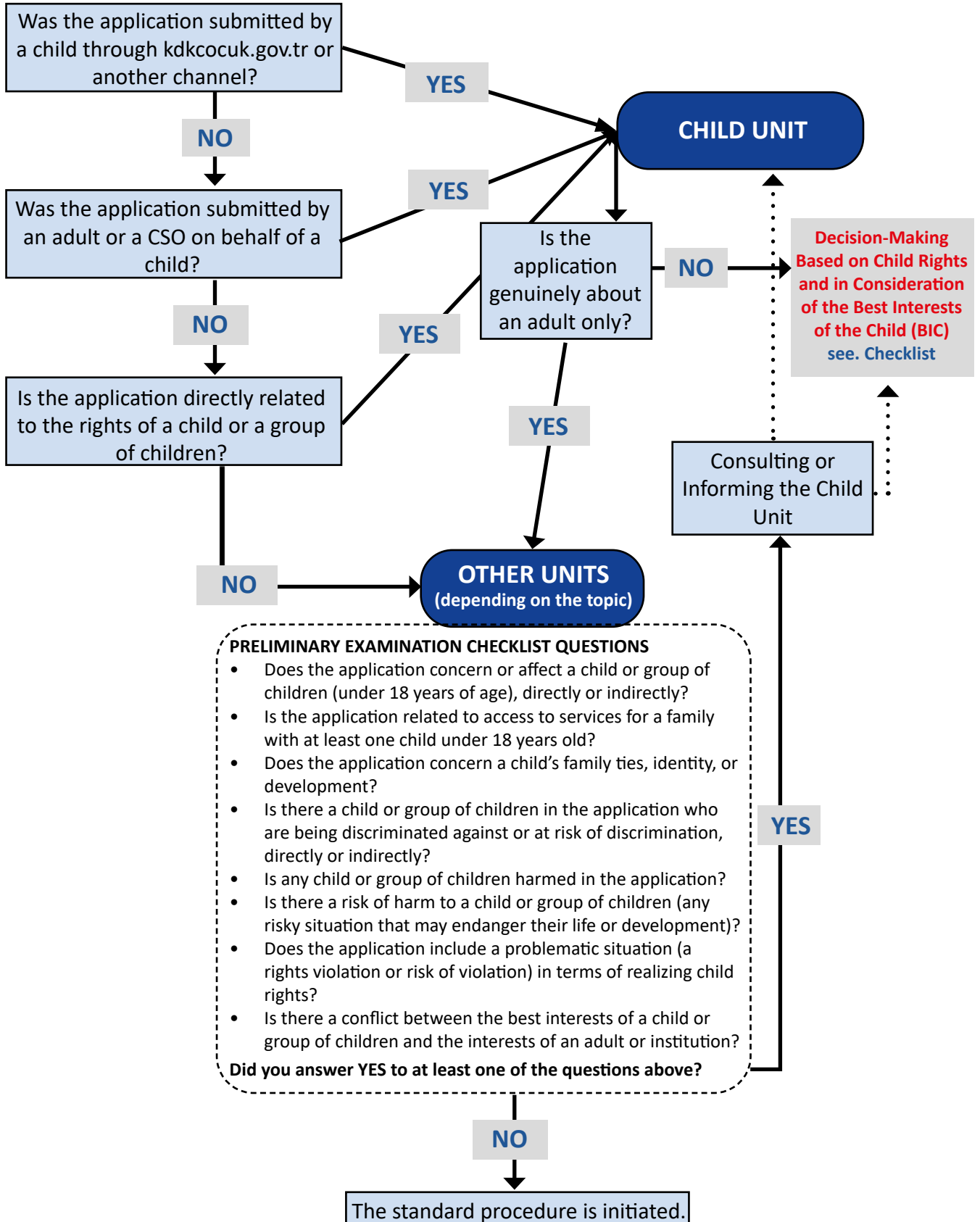
This relates to being an institution committed to strengthening its capacity to make effective and sound decisions on a wide range of child-related matters. Actions that can be taken to put this criterion into practice include learning from applications and experiences, establishing an effective internal monitoring and evaluation process, encouraging feedback, and maintaining continuous learning while keeping abreast of developments in the field of children's rights.

b. Identifying Cases That Affect Children's Rights

This flow has been developed to facilitate the implementation of the principle of protecting the best interests of the child in complaints received not only by the Child Unit but also by other units during the preliminary examination stage.

This flow is an updated version of the flow presented on page 28 of the Guide to Child-Centred Complaints Handling, enhanced with additional checklist questions that strengthen a child rights-based perspective in light of current experience.

IDENTIFYING CASES AFFECTING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



BIC: Best Interests of the Child

c. Workflow for the Child Unit and Other Units

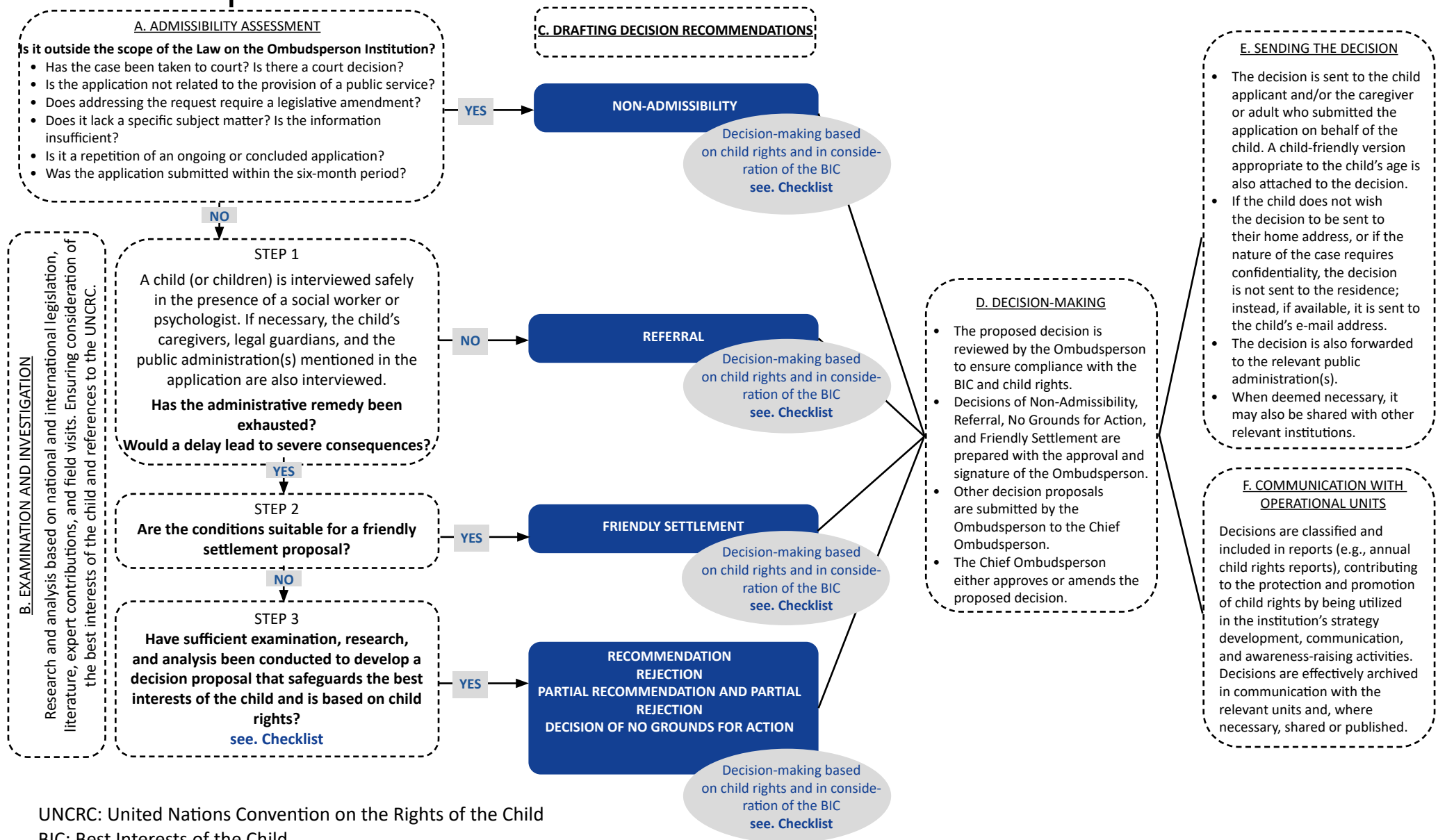
The KDK Child Unit guides all applications related to child rights and those submitted by children, seeking to apply the principle of the best interests of the child based on child rights. It also provides support to other units in developing child rights-based decisions through continuous communication and coordination.

The following flow has been simplified and updated based on experiences in the implementation process of the version included in the Guide to Child-Centred Complaints Handling, to serve as a clear and practical guide in the decision-making phase. After determining situations that affect children's rights with the help of the flow in the previous section, the following six stages must be followed in order to ensure a child rights-based process in decision-making regarding a complaint: The six stages are as follows:

- Assessment open to examination,
- Examination – requesting information and documents – investigation,
- preparing the draft decision,
- making the decision,
- sending the decision,
- communication with operational units.

To ensure that these six stages operate in a manner that upholds child rights and the best interests of the child, a roadmap has been established — drawing on the checklist provided in the next section — that outlines the pathways leading to different types of decisions under the Law on the Ombudsperson Institution.

There is an application for which a decision must be made based on child rights and in consideration of the BIC.



d. Checklist Questions for Use When Needed

As stated in General Comment No. 14 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, “an inclusive and non-hierarchical list of elements relevant to the assessment of the child’s best interests would facilitate decision-making by persons required to determine the child’s best interests.” Based on this, the following checklist has been prepared to facilitate child rights-based and best interests-oriented decision-making. Concrete examples are provided to clarify certain items where needed. A shorter version of the list is included in the ANNEXES section.

Checklist and Assessment Questions	Yes	No
Examination Stage		
<p>Were the affected child or groups of children identified in accordance with the principle of safeguarding the best interests of the child?</p> <p>→ see UNCRC Article 3</p> <p><i>Example: Identifying siblings in a complaint about a public service provided to the family, or identifying other children using the same playground in a complaint about a neighbourhood park</i></p>		
<p>In case of any delay in the decision-making process, is there a possibility of severe and irreparable consequences for the child or group of children concerned? If so, was the process expedited?</p> <p><i>Example: Possibilities of severe consequences such as the complainant’s treatment being delayed and the illness worsening due to a late response to their complaint about a health service received, or the child being injured or losing their life as a result of safety risks in the closed institution where they reside</i></p>		
<p>Were the views of the child or children concerned included in the process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were interviews with children conducted by professionals such as social workers or psychologists? In cases of abuse, if an expert has already interviewed the child, was that interview used to avoid retraumatization? → see UNCRC Articles 12 and 13 • Were age-, capacity-, and development-appropriate methods and tools used? → see UNCRC Articles 12 and 13 • Was a safe environment provided to support the child in expressing themselves comfortably, and were methods appropriate to the child’s age and developmental characteristics used? → see UNCRC Articles 12 and 13 • Were manipulative, coercive, or leading questions avoided? see UNCRC Articles 12 and 13 		
<p>Were the child’s age, developmental characteristics, language, religion, ethnic origin, disability or special needs status, gender, living conditions, and other individual circumstances taken into consideration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was an assessment of the child’s uniqueness conducted? → see UNCRC Articles 2, 7–8, 23 • Was any potential discrimination analysed? → see UNCRC Articles 2, 7–8, 23 <p><i>Example: The reference to the child’s circumstances and individual characteristics (the child’s uniqueness) concerns conditions specific to the child, such as their living situation, the caregivers being elderly or having disabilities, or the child speaking a different language.</i></p>		

Checklist and Assessment Questions	Yes	No
Examination Stage		
In cases requiring child protection, and when indicated in the complaint, was the child's anonymity and protection of personal data ensured?		
Were analyses conducted in relation to the child rights listed below—and, where necessary, with respect to all provisions of the UNCRC? Were the violated rights identified with reference to the UNCRC? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-discrimination →see UNCRC Articles 2, 23 • Protection of family environment and maintenance of relationships → see UNCRC Articles 5, 7–11, 16, 18–22 • Care, protection, and safety of the child → see UNCRC Articles 5, 6, 19, 32–39 • Child participation and organization → see UNCRC Articles 12,13,14,15 • Respect for the child's privacy → see UNCRC Article 16 • The child's right to health and adequate standard of living → see UNCRC Articles 24–27 • The child's right to education →see UNCRC Articles 6, 17, 28,29, 30 • The child's right to rest, leisure, and play →see UNCRC Article 31 • Rights of children with disabilities →see Article 23 		
Was comprehensive research conducted on the identified rights violations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was international legislation reviewed (the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols, General Comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, conventions of the Council of Europe, and other relevant policy documents)? • Was national legislation reviewed? • Were consultations held with relevant institutions and organizations? Were references provided? • Were academic sources and expert opinions sought where necessary? Were references provided? 		
If the complaint was handled by a unit other than the Child Unit, was the Child Unit informed or consulted?		

Checklist and Assessment Questions	Yes	No
Decision Stage		
Was the research and analysis conducted during the examination stage sufficient to make a decision that upholds the best interests of the child?		
Was any potential inconsistency between the decision and the principle of the best interests of the child evaluated?		
Was the risk that the child or child group concerned might face additional rights violations beyond the subject of the complaint analysed? Was the decision made with consideration to prevent such risks?		
During the examination and decision-making stages, were personal data protected, and was the child's identity kept confidential where necessary to safeguard their well-being and safety?		
<p>Does the decision support the full and effective realization of rights recognized in the UNCRC and the holistic development of the child?</p> <p><i>During the examination stage, if other rights violations are identified that fall outside the scope of the submitted complaint, these must also be taken into consideration. For instance, when a child submits a complaint about the small size of the schoolyard and the lack of sufficient space to play, recommendations should be presented by linking the child's needs for rest, movement, and play with peers not only to Article 31 (the right to leisure, rest, and play) but also to Article 6 (the right to development) and Articles 28–29 (the right to education to ensure the child's ability to concentrate on lessons). This is also important for supporting KDK Child Unit's role in raising awareness on children's rights.</i></p>		
Was the risk of the child or group of children facing negative consequences, such as oppression, retaliation, or difficulty in seeking remedy again, evaluated in the decision? Were measures proposed—such as ensuring anonymity for the child's well-being—to prevent such risks?		

Checklist and Assessment Questions	Yes	No
Decision Stage		
<p>Was it considered, during the decision-making process, that even if the complaint was submitted by a single child, the subject matter may also concern other children?</p> <p><i>For instance, in complaints concerning services used by multiple children—such as a neighbourhood playground, a school canteen, or a restroom in a correctional or educational facility—it is necessary to include recommendations that also protect the rights of other children benefiting from the same service. This is because in a given area or institution, children in more disadvantaged positions in terms of knowledge, skills, and capacity to submit a complaint to KDK—such as Roma or refugee children—may face similar or even more serious problems but might be unable to submit a complaint themselves.</i></p>		
<p>Was the risk that the decision might cause harm to or lead to discrimination against another group of children assessed?</p>		
<p>Were the children’s views obtained freely without pressure or influence, and included transparently in the decision? Were the children’s needs and requests taken into account? Was it explained to them in the decision text how these were considered?</p>		
<p>Does the decision support children’s ability to express their views freely and seek remedies for their rights?</p>		
<p>Does the decision identify any additional responsibilities that KDK could assume to promote the advancement of children’s rights? If so, were relevant units and individuals contacted?</p> <p><i>These responsibilities may include activities such as raising awareness, conducting internal evaluations and updates, producing thematic reports, consulting with CSOs, supporting systemic changes related to issues affecting children, or contributing to the establishment of feedback and complaint mechanisms for children within public institutions. In particular, during the evaluation of complaints, areas and groups of children that are frequently the subject of complaints, or for which complaints are rarely or never received, may be identified in order to plan awareness-raising and capacity-building activities, thematic reporting, and collaboration with relevant CSOs.</i></p>		
<p>Does the decision include recommendations for eliminating the rights violations experienced by the child(ren)? Does it include alternatives or improvement suggestions to mitigate the adverse effects of these violations on children?</p> <p><i>For instance, the complaint of a child with special needs who was denied admission to a school may result in the child’s enrolment, yet the decision should also specify the need to compensate for the lessons missed during the period of exclusion.</i></p>		
<p>Was the child-friendly version of the decision prepared in a manner appropriate to the age and developmental characteristics of the child applicant?</p> <p>→ see Section III.</p>		
<p>Were the decision and its child-friendly version communicated to the child applicant?</p>		

III. CHILD-FRIENDLY DECISION WRITING

A. Child-Friendly Versions of Decisions

a. Why are child-friendly versions of documents needed?

Article 17 of the UNCRC defines access to information appropriate to the child's age and maturity as a right. Therefore, all public institutions and all individuals and organizations working with or for children should prepare child-friendly versions of relevant information and documents. Child-friendly documents aim to enhance children's access to information and their participation.

In the "Creating Child-Friendly Versions of Written Documents: A Guide", published by the EU in 2021, when children were asked why laws and policies should be child-friendly, they responded as follows:

- If these documents are friendly for adults, they should be friendly for children too. A document that is already child-friendly will also be friendly for adults.
- Children are also citizens. When children understand laws and legal regulations, they are more likely to accept and comply with them. Otherwise, how can children know what their governments are supposed to do?
- All documents should be understandable for children. Because children have the right to learn about their rights in a manner appropriate to their age and capacity.

In addition to the views expressed by children, the 12th Development Plan, the National Child Rights Strategy Document, and the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on Türkiye all emphasize the importance of increasing child-friendly publications and procedures, and the importance of fostering a culture of rights.

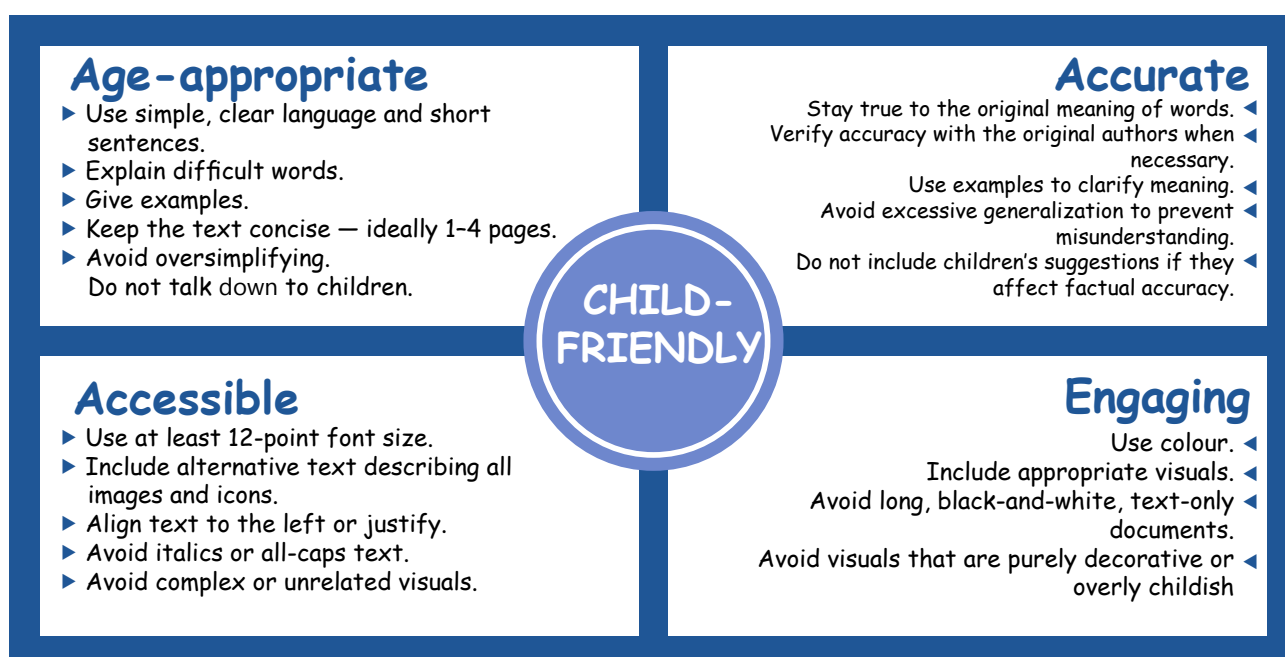
From the Concluding Observations
of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the Combined Fourth and Fifth Reports of Türkiye:

Strengthen mechanisms for receiving, investigating, and addressing complaints made by children in a child-sensitive and child-friendly manner, while ensuring the privacy and protection of child victims; conduct monitoring and follow-up activities; and ensure the visibility of such mechanisms among children throughout the country. (Under "Independent Monitoring," paragraph 13(b))

The Committee also recommends that the State Party take all appropriate measures to ensure the full implementation of the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations, and that a child-friendly version be disseminated to and made widely accessible to all children, including those in the most disadvantaged situations. (Under "Implementation and Reporting," paragraph 55)

b. What Is a Child-Friendly Version?

- ✓ Refers to a version of a specific text or document that has been adapted in a way children can understand, in order to support their participation.
- ✓ Child-friendly documents are written and designed to be understandable and engaging for children, using language appropriate to their age and level of comprehension. The text should be written and designed so that all children within the identified age group who have proficiency in the language of the text can understand it.
- ✓ Adaptations may be required to ensure accessibility for children with developmental disabilities or those whose first language differs.
- ✓ The child-friendly version is always much shorter than the original text. It cannot include the same level of detail as the original; however, the summary should cover the main topics and key concepts. It provides a practical way for children to understand what a document, law, policy, or decision contains and to access the information.
- ✓ A “perfect” child-friendly version that suits every child may not be possible. Nevertheless, efforts should always be made to produce the best possible version that all children can understand and access.
- ✓ Written texts are primarily prepared for children aged approximately 10 and older, who have developed reading skills. Younger children may also understand these texts by reading them themselves or by having an adult read them aloud. Older children may likewise need support from others to fully understand the text.
- ✓ Because there are individual differences among children, regularly obtaining feedback from those who access the text helps create improved versions in the future.
 - The language used should be age-appropriate and accurate.
 - The design should be accessible and engaging for all children.



B. Preparing Child-Friendly Versions

When preparing child-friendly versions of documents, the following seven steps can be followed. This section includes examples particularly related to the preparation of child-friendly versions of KDK decisions. KDK aims to prepare and disseminate child-friendly versions not only of its decisions but also of its website and various publications.

- Identifying the Target Audience

Identifying the target audience is the first step in preparing child-friendly versions. The document must be prepared based on factors such as the age, language level, cultural background, and special needs of the children in the target audience. A KDK decision should be presented in more detail for a 15-year-old child and in simpler language for a 10-year-old child. When identifying the target audience, an example guiding question could be:

“What is the age range of the children who will access the document, and what are their general language skills and comprehension levels?”

- Determining the Key Message

Determining key messages is essential for effective child-friendly versions. When communicating a decision related to a complaint, the main points of the decision should be clearly identified, and key messages such as the purpose, goals, and principles should be emphasized. This enables children to understand the decision and recognize essential information. Clearly determining the key messages ensures that child-friendly versions achieve their intended purpose.

For instance, the main points of a KDK recommendation decision will include the rights violations identified during the examination process and the two or three most significant recommendations made to the relevant public institution.

- Using Simple and Clear Language

When preparing child-friendly versions, the language used should be simple, clear, and age-appropriate. Technical terms should be avoided, and sentences should be short and direct as much as possible. This helps children understand the text more easily. In the ANNEXES section of the guide, a glossary is provided explaining expressions and words that may be difficult for children to understand. Sources offering simplified versions of the rights contained in the UNCRC are also included in the ANNEXES section.

- Supporting with Visuals

The use of visuals is important for capturing children’s attention and helping them understand decisions. Pictures, graphics, and simple diagrams play a supportive role in the text. Visual aids help children better understand the decision and engage more actively with the content. The ANNEXES section includes examples of visual-based design templates for child-friendly versions of decisions.

- Being Inclusive and Accessible

Child-friendly versions should also be inclusive of children with special needs. This means ensuring the text is accessible, including alternative text, and considering varying levels of reading or comprehension difficulty. In addition to disabilities/special needs, it is important to adopt an inclusive approach that enables children who speak different first languages to understand the text. Special consideration should be given to children with hearing or visual impairments, ensuring accessibility through sign language, alternative text, or online reading tools, where needed.

- Testing Children's Participation and Comprehension

Consulting with children and ensuring their participation when preparing child-friendly versions will make the resulting document more effective and comprehensible. Especially when preparing child-friendly versions of documents that will be disseminated in printed form, it is essential to consult children within the target audience, obtain their voluntary feedback, and finalize the document accordingly. The finalized version of the document should also be shared with the children whose views were collected, and they should be informed accordingly.

For diverse documents that are frequently produced, such as KDK decisions, it may not always be possible to ensure children's direct participation every time. In such cases, it is sufficient to consult children once while preparing representative samples and templates for the types of documents to be produced, obtain feedback from children regarding the comprehensibility of the texts, and make continuous improvements based on this feedback.

Preparing child-friendly versions together with children and testing their comprehensibility is crucial for creating content that children truly understand and engage with. This step, which holds great importance for a child rights-based approach, should never be omitted.

- Privacy and Protection of Personal Data

If the document for which a child-friendly version will be prepared is a decision text or a similar document, confidentiality becomes an important consideration. Just as in the preparation of the original text, the protection of personal data and the right to privacy must also be observed when preparing child-friendly versions. Even if children do not request it, in cases where the application is kept confidential and the applicant's name is not disclosed to the administration for the child's well-being, it is important to include information on this matter within the content of the child-friendly version, so that children feel safer.

C. Sample Templates for Child-Friendly Versions of Decisions

The KDK Child Unit accepts applications/complaints directly from children, from caregivers acting on their behalf, or from CSO representatives, without requiring proof of personal interest. KDK also maintains a child-friendly website that includes information about applications received from children and explanations about KDK itself. When the website was updated in 2025, children's participation was ensured by conducting a survey over a period of about two months to collect their views.

Although the decisions rendered following applications are prepared as clearly and simply as possible, the fact that they are also official decisions sent to the administration—requesting, on behalf of an applicant child, that the matter be examined and evaluated by the Ombudsperson Institution, a constitutional body—means that the length of the decision and the formal and technical language required by the nature of the application adversely affect the child-friendly quality of such decisions. Therefore, there is a need for texts that enable children to understand the decisions issued regarding applications made by themselves or by others on their behalf. This section presents sample templates for child-friendly versions of KDK decisions prepared for child applicants.

Child-Friendly Versions of Decisions

Transforming KDK decision texts into letters written in a style and simplicity appropriate to children's age and developmental characteristics, and sending them to their recipients in this format, would constitute a child-friendly approach. Furthermore, it is considered that the letter format would help establish a closer line of communication between KDK and children, increase the institution's visibility and, consequently, trust in it, and motivate children to seek remedies for their rights.

Under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure, to which Türkiye is a State Party, children may submit their complaints to the UN Committee on the Rights of

the Child alleging violations of their rights under the UNCRC.

In 2019, sixteen children from Türkiye, Germany, France, Brazil, and Argentina submitted a complaint to the Committee, arguing that these States had failed to take sufficient measures against climate change, thereby violating the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2021, the Committee concluded its review of the case and issued its decision, accompanied by an open letter addressed to the child applicants. As an example, this letter is provided below.

Open letter to the authors,

Dear Chiara, Catarina, Iris, Raina, Ridhima, David, Ranton, Litokne, Deborah, Carlos, Ayakha, Greta, Ellen-Anne, Raslen, Carl and Alexandra,

We write to acknowledge the importance of your actions in bringing this historic case to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Although you acted on your own behalf, we are aware that many children around the world are experiencing the same effects and concerns that you are. We want you to know that the Committee spent many hours discussing your case, and we struggled with the fact that although we entirely understood the significance and urgency of your complaint, we had to work within the limits of the legal powers given to us under the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OPIC). So as you will see from the simplified explanation of the case that we have written below, you were successful on some aspects but not on others.

We hope that you will be empowered by the positive aspects of this decision, and that you will continue to act in your own countries and regions and internationally to fight for justice on climate change. We encourage you to use the simplified explanation of the case that we have written, to share your message with other children and young people. Your case also increased the Committee's awareness about these issues and highlighted our shared sense of urgency, and therefore we have already announced our decision to write our next General Comment on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change. We plan to consult with children and young people around the world, and we invite you, as the authors of this significant case, to share your views during the processes towards the drafting of the next General Comment.

Yours sincerely,

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Source: Bianet, October 2021

The practice adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as the examples included in the Guide to Child-Centred Complaints Handling prepared for the Child Unit—where a personalized cover page written in plain language is attached to decisions concerning children—illustrate that preparing KDK decisions in a letter format using clear and age-appropriate language is an effective means of supporting children's right to access information and ensuring their participation.

When preparing template letters for different types of decisions, attention should be paid to the points outlined in Section III.B, Preparing Child-Friendly Versions, and the letter should not exceed one to one-and-a-half pages. Using a colourful design template may help make the letter more visually engaging. Examples of colourful designs can be found in the ANNEXES section on page 35.

Templates for Child-Friendly Decision Texts

The KDK Child Unit issues the following types of decisions in response to complaints related to children's rights:

- Decision of Non-Admissibility
- Referral Decision
- Friendly Settlement Decision
- Recommendation Decision
- Rejection Decision
- Partial Recommendation and Partial Rejection Decision
- Decision of No Grounds for Action

Taking these decision types into account, seven different templates have been prepared, each with the same opening and closing sentences. The texts in the templates are suitable for children aged 10–12, and were developed through consultations with children in different age groups (9–14 years). Although the texts are understandable for younger and older age groups, various adaptations are necessary to account for their developmental capacities. Suggestions for these adaptations are provided below. The ANNEXES section includes sample decisions for children aged 8–9 and over 12.

For children aged 10 and under:

- The font size can be adjusted to 13 or 14 points.
- Adding relevant visuals within the text can make it more engaging. If adding visuals causes the text to exceed two pages, some reductions may be made.

For children over 12 years old:

- Although they have the capacity to read longer texts, they may not find them engaging; therefore, it is preferable to keep the length limited to 1–2 pages, similar to versions prepared for younger children.
- In Recommendation, Rejection, and Partial Recommendation/Partial Rejection decisions, the key steps of the examination process and the section containing recommendations at the end may be explained in slightly more detail. For example, the number of listed items may be increased from 3 to 5.

Template for Decision of Non-Admissibility – Child-Friendly Version



Dear ... (child's name)

We have received your complaint. ... *Summarize the subject of the complaint in one or two sentences* ... Complaints and requests from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us.

We carefully examined your complaint and reviewed it together with my team. As an Institution, we are required to comply with the rules governing our work. These rules are written in the "Law on the Ombudsperson Institution" and in our Implementation Regulation. They are also available on our website. Your complaint *falls outside our working rules due to summarize in no more than 5-6 words the legal provision leading to the decision of non-admissibility.* Therefore, we could not evaluate your complaint, and we wanted to inform you. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below. When you wish to submit another complaint, you can learn about the application requirements on our website.

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you experience problems on different issues, you can always apply to us again. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,

Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights

Contact details

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to you is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Template for Decision of Non-Admissibility – Child-Friendly Version



Dear ... (child's name)

We have received your complaint. ... *Summarize the subject of the complaint in one or two sentences* ... Complaints and requests from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us.

To better understand your complaint, we conducted meetings with you and *list all institutions/persons consulted*. If could not be reached: In the meantime, we also tried to contact you but were unable to reach you.

As a result of the meetings/our review of your complaint, we learned that you had not previously submitted your concern or request for rights to *name of institution* We can only address issues that have first been referred to institutions but remained unresolved. Therefore, we have forwarded your complaint to *name of institution* We requested that they evaluate your case within the framework of children's rights and particularly in relation to *list all relevant rights articles and provide brief explanations of what they cover*

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. We hope that you will continue to advocate for children's rights in our country. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,

Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights

Contact details

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Template for Friendly Settlement Decision – Child-Friendly Version



Dear ... (child's name)

We have received your complaint ... *Summarize the subject of the complaint in one or two sentences* ... Complaints and requests from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us.

We carefully examined your complaint and reviewed it together with my team. To better understand your complaint, we conducted meetings with you and *list all institutions/persons consulted*. We presented a proposal to the institution(s) to help resolve the problem you experienced, and the institution accepted this proposal. Then, by following up the process, we learned that your problem has been resolved. If you are not satisfied with the solution, you can apply to us again.

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,

Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights

Contact details

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Template for Decision of No Grounds for Action – Child-Friendly Version



Dear ... (child's name)

We have received your complaint. ... *Summarize the subject of the complaint in one or two sentences* ... Complaints and requests from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us.

When we started reviewing your application, we learned that explain in 5–6 words the development requiring a Decision of No Grounds for Action For this reason, we are closing your application as requested. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below.

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you experience problems on different issues, you can always apply to us again. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,

Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights

Contact details

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to you is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Template for Recommendation Decision – Child-Friendly Version



Dear ... (child's name)

We have received your complaint. ... *summarize the subject of the complaint in one or two sentences* ... Complaints and requests from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us.

We carefully examined your complaint and reviewed it together with my team. While reviewing your application, ... *summarize in no more than three sentences the most critical steps that influenced the decision (such as laws referenced, institutions consulted, and/or articles on children's rights)* were evaluated.

As a result of the detailed review, we would like to inform you that we have accepted your application. Regarding the problem you experienced, *we consider that* *[name(s) of institution(s)] have certain responsibilities /actions they need to take*. We have shared our recommendations with these institutions to ensure that they protect children's rights. We will continue to follow up on the process to ensure that these recommendations are implemented.

This decision will be published on our website so that it can serve as an example for other children as well. In line with our Institution's sensitivity, your name and personal information will not be visible.

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,

Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights

Contact details

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to you is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Template for Rejection Decision – Child-Friendly Version



Dear ... (child's name)

We have received your complaint. ... *Summarize the subject of the complaint in one or two sentences* ... Complaints and requests from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us.

We carefully examined your complaint, and reviewed it together with my team. As an Institution, we are required to comply with the rules governing our work. These rules are written in the "Law on the Ombudsperson Institution" and in our Implementation Regulation. They are also available on our website. While making the decision, since we also need to protect the rights of other people, it was not possible for us to accept your request. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below.

This decision will be published on our website so that it can serve as an example for other children as well. In line with our Institution's sensitivity, your name and personal information will not be visible.

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you experience problems related to*the issue for which the rejection decision was given...* or in different matters, you can always apply to us again. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,
Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights
Contact details

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Template for Partial Recommendation/Partial Rejection Decision – Child-Friendly Version



Dear ... (child's name)

We have received your complaint. ... *Summarize the subject of the complaint in one or two sentences* ... Complaints and requests from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us.

We carefully examined your complaint and reviewed it together with my team. While reviewing your application, ...*summarize in no more than three sentences the most critical steps that influenced the decision (such as laws referenced, institutions consulted, and/or articles on children's rights)* were evaluated.

We carefully examined your complaint, and reviewed it together with my team. In your application, *regarding*three- or four-word summary....., *we believe that*(name(s) of the institution(s))..... can take action. We have shared our recommendations with these institutions to ensure that they protect children's rights. We are also sharing these recommendations with you. These recommendations are:

- *item 1 (maximum 10 words)*
- *item 2 (maximum 10 words)*

As an Institution, we are required to comply with the rules governing our work. These rules are written in the Law on the Ombudsperson Institution and in our Implementation Regulation. They are also available on our website. While making the decision, since we also need to protect the rights of other people, it was not possible for us to accept some of your requests. As a result of the detailed review, we were unable to make any recommendations regarding the part of your application concerning*three- or four-word summary*.....

This decision will be published on our website so that it can serve as an example for other children as well. In line with our Institution's sensitivity, your name and personal information will not be visible.

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,
Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights
Contact details

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

IV. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

Checklist and Assessment Questions	Yes	No
Examination Stage		
Were the affected child or groups of children identified in accordance with the principle of safeguarding the best interests of the child?		
If the examination and decision-making process is prolonged, is there a risk of serious and irreversible consequences for the child(ren) concerned? If so, was the process expedited?		
Were the views of the child or children concerned included in the process?		
Were the child's age, developmental characteristics, language, religion, ethnic origin, disability or special needs status, gender, living conditions, and other individual circumstances taken into consideration?		
From the perspective of child safety, was the confidentiality of the child's identity and the protection of personal data ensured in cases where it was deemed necessary, even if the child did not request it?		
Were analyses conducted in relation to child rights —and, where necessary, with respect to all provisions of the UNCRC? Were the violated rights identified with reference to the UNCRC?		
Was comprehensive research conducted on the identified rights violations?		
If the complaint was handled by a unit other than the Child Unit, was the Child Unit informed or consulted?		
Decision Stage		
Was the research and analysis conducted during the examination stage sufficient to make a decision that upholds the best interests of the child?		
Was any potential inconsistency between the decision and the principle of the best interests of the child evaluated?		
Was the risk that the child or child group concerned might face additional rights violations beyond the subject of the complaint analysed? Was the decision made with consideration to prevent such risks?		

During the examination and decision-making stages, was the protection of personal data ensured in cases where it was deemed necessary, even if the applicant child did not request it? If the confidentiality of the child's identity was ensured, was this specified in the decision?		
When the decision was uploaded to the Institution's website, was it stripped of personal data?		
Does the decision support the full and effective realization of rights recognized in the UNCRC and the holistic development of the child?		
Was the risk of the child or group of children facing negative consequences, such as oppression, retaliation, or difficulty in seeking remedy again, evaluated in the decision? If such risks exist, were recommendations included to prevent these outcomes?		
Was it considered, during the decision-making process, that even if the complaint was submitted by a single child, the subject matter may also concern other children?		
Was the risk that the decision might cause harm to or lead to discrimination against another group of children assessed?		
Were the children's views obtained freely without pressure or influence, and included transparently in the decision? Were the children's needs and requests taken into account? Was it explained to them in the decision text how these were considered?		
Does the decision support children's ability to express their views freely and seek remedies for their rights?		
Does the decision identify any additional responsibilities that KDK could assume to promote the advancement of children's rights? If so, were relevant units and individuals contacted?		
Does the decision include recommendations for eliminating the rights violations experienced by the child(ren)? Does it include alternatives or improvement suggestions to mitigate the adverse effects of these violations on children?		
Was the child-friendly version of the decision prepared in a manner appropriate to the age, developmental characteristics and language diversity of the child applicant?		
Were the decision and its child-friendly version communicated to the child applicant?		

ANNEX 2: CHILD-FRIENDLY GLOSSARY

This glossary has been prepared to support how challenging words and concepts can be used or explained to children when preparing child-friendly texts. Words and concepts frequently encountered in the decision texts prepared by the Child Unit have been included.

United Nations (UN): An organization made up of 193 countries that work together. The UN helps countries keep the promises they have made about respecting people's rights.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): The rights that all children inherently possess, arising from their basic needs. It is the most widely ratified and the most fundamental international document on children's rights.

Child rights: The rights that all children have simply because they are children. These rights ensure that children can live healthy and fulfilling lives. States are responsible for implementing these rights.

Best interests of the child: Choosing what is best and most beneficial for the child, while giving priority to the child's views and needs.

Friendly settlement: Resolving a problem through mutual agreement without going to court or another authority.

Access: To reach or make use of something.

Review: To look or examine again.

Safeguard: To ensure protection.

Ensure: To guarantee or secure that something will happen or be protected.

Law: The set of rules in a country that tell people what they must or must not do.

Administrative remedies: The procedures used to request that an institution or its administrators take or refrain from a specific action; ways of submitting requests or applications to institutions.

Rights violation(s): Acting against rights; a situation in which rights are breached or injustice occurs.

Neglect: The failure to meet a child's basic needs or to provide proper care.

Non-admissibility: The condition of being ineligible for evaluation or review.

Human rights: The rights that all people have, arising from their basic needs.

Abuse: To hurt, harm, or mistreat a child. It includes physical, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse.

Public institution: Also called a state institution. Institutions responsible for a country's administration and for providing services to the public, such as schools, hospitals, and municipalities.

Participation: When children can express their thoughts, and adults listen carefully and give importance to their views.

Policy: The plans and regulations made by a government or leaders about how a country will be managed.

To be established (as fact): To be proven or confirmed by evidence.

To complain: To tell a person or institution to stop doing something that is wrong or unpleasant, or to change it.

To commit: To agree to do something or make a promise.

To allocate: To set aside something (such as money or duties) for a specific purpose; to decide how it will be used.

To request: To ask for something formally.

Recommendation: A suggestion or proposed course of action.

Remedy: To correct or make up for something wrong or incomplete.

To determine: To find or identify something.

To encourage: To motivate, inspire, or give courage.

To benefit (from rights): To possess rights and be able to exercise them.

ANNEX 3: CHILD-FRIENDLY VERSIONS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF DECISIONS FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

EXAMPLE 1: REJECTION DECISION (High School Level)

Subject of the Application:

In the submitted application, the applicant is a second-year high school student who wishes to transfer to Batman İbn-i Sina High School. The applicant states that the school principal, in a disparaging manner, said that he/she could not be admitted because he/she has a hearing impairment, and that the guidance counselor also said that his/her transfer could be possible if he/she received a positive result in a guidance test. The student explains that the test result was positive, but this time the principal refused to admit him/her, requested a medical report, and claimed that the student's mental health was not sound. The student expresses that he/she was very upset by this situation and that wants to study nursing, requesting assistance as he/she needs to attend this school for that purpose.

Child-Friendly Version of the Decision Text:

Dear (child's name),

We have received your application. We learned that you want to attend Batman İbn-i Sina High School but have faced some difficulties. You mentioned that you had a problem because the school principal asked you to provide a report about your health condition. Applications from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us!

We carefully reviewed your application and worked on it with my team. As an Institution, we must comply with the rules that govern our work. These rules are written in the "Law on the Ombudsperson Institution" and our Implementing Regulation. They are also available on our website. During our review, we found that there were some uncertainties regarding your health condition at your previous school, and that the new school principal needed this information. We examined the Regulation on Secondary Education Institutions of the Ministry of National Education and other relevant provisions, and we learned that when students are registered, their health conditions must be suitable for the specific vocational field in vocational schools.

Since we must also protect the rights of others when making our decision, and as a result of our detailed examination, it was not possible for us to accept your request due to the uncertainties about your health condition and the fact that the report had not been delivered to the school principal. If you wish to obtain more information or ask any questions, you can contact us through the contact details below.

This decision will be published on our website so that it can serve as an example for other children as well. For your safety and privacy, your name and personal information will not be shown.

Once your report is submitted and your health condition becomes clear, if you experience another unfair situation or face any other issues, you can always apply to us again. We would be very happy if you continue to visit www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about child rights and our Institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

*With our warm regards,
Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights
Contact Details*

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

EXAMPLE 2: RECOMMENDATION DECISION

Subject of the Application:

In the submitted application, the applicant states that they have achieved first and second places in the field of painting in international competitions for their age group. The applicant notes that, according to the Directive on Awards of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), children who win first place in international competitions are entitled to two republican gold coins, and those who win second place are entitled to one. The applicant indicates that they applied for these awards but their name was not published in the Official Announcements Journal (Tebliğler Dergisi), that they have lost motivation to draw and participate in competitions, that they worked very hard, and that they did not receive the gold awards they deserve. Therefore, the applicant requests that the awards be granted.

Child-Friendly Version of the Decision Text:

Dear (child's name),

We have received your application. You wrote that you were unable to receive the awards you deserved for the achievements you earned in international painting competitions. Applications from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us!

We carefully reviewed your application and worked on it with my team. In particular, Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees children's right to participate in artistic, sports, and cultural activities, guided us. We also examined the relevant rules of the Ministry of National Education. We evaluated the issues cited as reasons for not granting the awards, such as lack of budget.

As a result of the detailed review, we would like to inform you that we have accepted your application. We believe that the Ministry of National Education has responsibilities in resolving the issue you experienced. We have shared our recommendations with the institution to ensure that they protect children's rights. We will continue to follow up on the process to ensure that these recommendations are implemented. We are also sharing these recommendations with you. These recommendations are:

- Granting the award corresponding to your 2019 achievement, as your name was published in the Official Announcements Journal;
- Investigating and evaluating your achievements from other years in which your name was not listed in the Journal;
- Ensuring equal treatment for all children who achieve success in international competitions;
- Planning the budgets required for the awards;
- Conducting awareness-raising activities for staff regarding the rules on granting awards.

This decision will be published on our website so that it can serve as an example for other children as well. For your safety and privacy, your name and personal information will not be shown.

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you wish to obtain more information or ask any questions, you can contact us through the contact details below. We would be very happy if you continue to visit www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about child rights and our Institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,
Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights
Contact Details

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Child-Friendly Version of the Decision Text (sample design):



Dear (child's name),

We have received your application. You wrote that you were unable to receive the awards you deserved for the achievements you earned in international painting competitions. Applications from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us!

We carefully examined your complaint, and reviewed it together with my team. In particular, Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees children's right to participate in artistic, sports, and cultural activities, guided us. We also examined the relevant rules of the Ministry of National Education. We evaluated the issues cited as reasons for not granting the awards, such as lack of budget.

As a result of the detailed review, we would like to inform you that we have accepted your application. We believe that the Ministry of National Education has responsibilities in resolving the issue you experienced. We have shared our recommendations with the institution to ensure that they protect children's rights. We will continue to follow up on the process to ensure that these recommendations are implemented. We are also sharing these recommendations with you. These recommendations are;

- Granting the award corresponding to your 2019 achievement, as your name was published in the Official Announcements Journal;
- Investigating and evaluating your achievements from other years in which your name was not listed in the Journal;
- Equal treatment for all children who have achieved success in international competitions; Planning of the budgets required for the awards.
- Conducting awareness-raising activities for staff regarding the rules on granting awards.

This decision will be published on our website so that it can serve as an example for other children as well. For your safety and privacy, your name and personal information will not be shown.

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below.

We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,
Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights
Contact Details


*Tebliğler Dergisi (Official Announcements Journal): Let us say, it is the official publication of the Ministry of National Education, where announcements and information related to the Ministry are published.

Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

EXAMPLE 3: REFERRAL DECISION (Younger Age Group – Sample Design)

Subject of the Application:



The applicant stated that they help stray animals as much as they can, but are unable to cover the expenses of sick animals, and expressed that municipalities do not provide adequate services in this regard. The applicant requests that municipalities offer better care for stray animals and that their opinions be heard when they wish to communicate their requests to the municipalities.





.../.../.....


Dear ... (child's name)

Thank you for applying to us about improving the care of stray animals! Applications from children are very important to us.

 We have carefully read your application, examined it with our team, and tried to identify issues related to child rights. We also met with you and, when necessary, with the relevant persons and institutions. 


 We can address only those problems that have already been brought to the attention of institutions but remained unresolved. Therefore, we have forwarded your application to the Ataşehir Municipality and İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality.

 **Article 12: Respect for the Views of the Child**

We requested that they take into account the Law on the Protection of Animals and children's right to participation as stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. If your issue is not resolved by the institution, you can apply to us again. 

We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you wish to obtain information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.

With our warm regards,
Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights

 Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Contact

EXAMPLE 4: DECISION OF NON-ADMISSIBILITY (Younger Age Group – Sample Design)



GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TÜRKİYE OMBUDSPERSON INSTITUTION



Dear ... (child's name)

We have received your complaint. ... *Summarize the subject of the complaint in one or two sentences* ... Complaints and requests from children are very important for our child-friendly Institution. Thank you for reaching out to us.

We carefully examined your complaint and reviewed it together with my team. As an Institution, we are required to comply with the rules governing our work. These rules are written in the "Law on the Ombudsperson Institution" and in our Implementation Regulation. They are also available on our website. Your application *summarize in no more than 5-6 words the legal article leading to the decision of non-admissibility*..... falls outside the scope of our working rules. Therefore, we could not evaluate your complaint, and we wanted to inform you. If you wish to obtain more information or ask questions, you can reach us using the contact details below. When you wish to submit another complaint, you can learn about the application requirements on our website.



We congratulate you for the courage you have shown in standing up for your rights. If you experience problems on different issues, you can always apply to us again. We would be very happy if you continued to follow www.kdkcocuk.gov.tr to learn more about children's rights and our institution. Please know that we will continue to work for the rights of children.



With our warm regards,
Ombudsperson Responsible for Children's Rights
Contact details



Note: This letter has been prepared to explain the decision we have made to you. The full text of the decision we sent to the institution is enclosed. You can read the decision yourself or ask an adult to help explain it to you in detail.

Address: Kavaklıdere Mah.
Zeytin dalı Caddesi No:4
Çankaya / ANKARA

Website: <https://kdkcocuk.gov.tr/>
Tel: 0312 465 22 00

ANNEX 4: USEFUL RESOURCES

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocols, General Comments, and Other Relevant Documents:

- [Convention on the Rights of the Child, Optional Protocols, Rules of Procedure, and](#)
- [General Comments of the Committee on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights](#)
- [European Convention on Contact Concerning Children](#)
- [Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse \(Lanzarote Convention\)](#)
- [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child \(COM/2021/142\)](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#)
- [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [European Convention on Human Rights](#)
- [European Social Charter](#)
- [Guidelines on Child-Friendly Legal Aid](#)

Related KDK Documents:

- [KDK Child Rights Strategy 2018–2023](#)
- [Guide to Child-Centred Complaints Handling \(Child Unit\)](#)
- [Guide to Child-Centred Complaints Handling \(All Units\)](#)
- [Other Relevant Reports](#)

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – Child-Friendly Materials:

- [Poster on the Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Animated Film on the Convention on the Rights of the Child – İstanbul Bilgi University Child Studies Unit](#)
- [Animated Film on the Convention on the Rights of the Child – ICHILD](#)
- [Animated Film “What Can I Do About Rights Violations?” – ICHILD](#)
- [“A Trip to Child Rights”, UNICEF](#)
- [General Comment No. 25: Children's Rights in the Digital Environment, UNICEF](#)
- [General Comment No. 26: Children's Rights and the Environment with a Special Focus on Climate Change, UNICEF](#)

Other Relevant International Institutions and Organizations:

- [The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children \(ENOC\)](#)
- [Child Rights Connect](#)
- [Child Rights International Network](#)

