Top 10 Rights of Children

1. The child shall have the right to speak their own opinion on issues important to them and adults shall take their time to carefully listen to them.

I think it is important for the development of a child from the early age to be able to express themselves and to stand for their own opinion which would allow them to be responsible adults in the future. In the book *Persepolis*, although the main character, Marjane Satrapi, was young, she had the comprehensive knowledge and she liked reading the books which affected her way of thinking. She lived in the times of religious wars and women being treated unfairly with no right to speak but she was not afraid to express her own thoughts, even if they demonstrated the hatred toward the Iranian government. As for a child her thoughts were very mature and she deserved to be listened just like every other child. She was fortunate to have supportive parents who encouraged her to have her own beliefs which helped her to shape her personality. The example of Marjane’s opinion is that she did not like social classes after her maid was not allowed to talk to the boy that she fell in love with because he was from the wealthy family. Marjane protested that it was not her maid’s fault that she was born where she was born.

2. The child’s privacy shall be respected.

Children should have provided their own space where they can focus on their activities. It is important for a parents or guardians to talk to their child but they should remember to teach
them how to maintain the safety standards inside and outside the household and therefore have trust for their child and let them have the responsible freedom. The example for this right can be found in *Persepolis*. Marjane’s parents gave her a lot of freedom; she could go out and meet up with her friends or dress in western clothes, listen to the foreign music or put the rock bands posters on the wall in her room. I think it gave her the sense of independence and individuality.

3. **The child shall be protected from physical and mental abuse.**

Children are exposed to many types of violence e.g. domestic, school, peer violence, or environmental. The actions taken in order to protect a child should come from parents or guardians in a first place or public institutions. In *Our America* book, the life in Ida B. Wells projects shows the example of how children should not be raised. Living in the environment where guns, drugs, and shootings are seen daily by the children affects them for the rest of their lives. LeAlan and Lloyd described how hard it is to escape from that community, most of the children have no role models at home, and therefore they are likely to repeat the pattern and end up not having healthy relationships with people because no one protected them in the past.

4. **A child shall have the right to physical and intellectual development.**

Children should have an open access to education at any age because it gives them opportunity to overcome the obstacles in life with knowledge and skills. In *Persepolis*, Marjane had a chance to attend the good school, which made her knowledgeable and gave her foundations for shaping her personality. Even when she had to stop attending school forsome
period of time because the war was going on, she continued reading books and educating herself on her own.

5. **A child shall have the right to feel loved and protected.**

A sense of love and acceptance is necessary for a child at every stage of life. Children who experience feeling of being misunderstood and left alone are sometimes willing to take dangerous risks to be accepted in a group. Parents and guardians should prevent that and be always there for children. In *Our America*, authors interviewed Suggs Miller who is a president of Local School Council and who had a close relationship to Johnny (a boy who caused a death of Eric Morse). He said that he was a very sensitive child and all he needed was someone to spend time with him, because he could not count on his family. Children seek for attention and love.

6. **A child shall have the right to choose sexual orientation.**

I think that children who become aware of their sexuality should be supported by parents/guardians/schools/environment because they have a right to be themselves. All kinds of rejection may become the cause of suffering for a child. The support is important also because it is not easy for a child to think that he/she disappointed the loved ones because of the way he chose to live. I can relate this statement to *Persepolis*. In Marjane’s story tensions between Iran and Iraq forced people to change their beliefs and therefore caused the abandonment of identity. People were not accepted for who they are anymore unless they fulfilled the demands of Islamic regime.
7. **A child shall have the right to have both parents present in his/her life, even if the parents do not live together.**

Having both parents is important because it gives a child the feeling of love and shows that being a parent means being responsible even if parents do not get along. In *Our America*, both Lloyd and LeAlan have no stable situation at home. LeAlan was raised by his grandparents and Lloyd was raised by his sisters. Although they are smart and want to get out of their environment, I think that their life would be less complicated if they had their parents, who would be responsible for being there for them to show them the right way in life since the beginning.

8. **A child shall have a right to the medical care.**

I think that child should have the medical care provided in any dangerous or life threatening situation. In *Our America* the controversial event was the death of Lloyd’s mother, because doctors were too afraid to come to the South Side of Chicago area. I think that if the ill or injured child would be put in the same situation it would be even more disappointing, because every child or adult should be taken care of if they need help.

9. **A child shall have a right to food and shelter.**

Every child should have provided standard living conditions in a safe environment because it is essential for a healthy life. In *Our America*, although children had housing provided it should still be considered as bad solution because the neighborhood in which they lived was dangerous and not adequate for the healthy upbringing. Very often children did not have anything to eat too so they would steal food and things from the stores.
10. A child shall not be involved in any political conflicts.

The conflicts of government should not affect the children, especially if it is an armed conflict. In that case they should be embraced by a special care or provided with a safe place. In *Persepolis*, during the war, young boys were enrolled in the army which obviously meant they are not going to survive. The conflicts of adults should never affect children and I think the situations described in *Persepolis* were terrifying because kids were deprived of a normal childhood and they had to grow up fast and pretend they can handle the war like adults.