

Best Interest of the Child – model (BIC-Model) (Kalverboer and Zijlstra, 2006)

The BIC-Model is based on UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which states in art. 3.1 that, in all decisions concerning children, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration. Decisions are in the best interest of the child if children can develop to the maximum extent possible (art. 6 CRC).

The BIC-Model includes 14 environmental conditions for the optimal development of children, and is the result of an extensive literature overview. If all conditions are of a good quality for a considerable period of time, the child will be given optimal opportunities for development.

The table below shows the BIC-Model with references to the related articles in the CRC and to the paragraphs of the General Comment No. 14 (GC 14) of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on the best interests of the child assessment and determination.

BIC-Model	
<i>Current situation</i>	
Family	Society
<p><i>1. Adequate physical care</i> Adequate physical care refers to the care for the child's health and physical well-being by parents or care-providers. They offer the child a place to live, clothing to wear, enough food to eat and (some) personal belongings. There is a family income to provide for all this. In addition, the parents or care-providers are free of worries about providing for the child's physical well-being. CRC Art. 24, 26, 27. GC 14 para. 70, 71, 77, 78, 84.</p>	<p><i>8. Safe wider physical environment</i> The neighbourhood the child grows up in is safe, as well as the society the child lives in. Criminality, (civil) wars, natural disasters, infectious diseases etc. do not threaten the development of the child. CRC Art. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. GC 14 para. 70, 71, 73, 74, 77, 78, 84.</p>
<p><i>2. Safe direct physical environment</i> A safe direct physical environment offers the child physical protection. This implies the absence of physical danger in the house or neighbourhood in which the child lives. There are no toxics or other threats in the house or neighbourhood. The child is not threatened by abuse of any kind. CRC Art. 19, 24. GC 14 para. 61, 70, 71, 73, 74, 77, 78, 84.</p>	<p><i>9. Respect</i> The needs, wishes, feelings and desires of the child are taken seriously by the child's environment and the society the child lives in. There is no discrimination because of background, race or religion. CRC Art. 2, 13, 14, 15, 16, 30, 37. GC 14 para. 56, 70, 73, 74, 79, 84.</p>
<p><i>3. Affective atmosphere</i> An affective atmosphere implies that the parents or care-providers of the child offer the child emotional protection, support and understanding. There are bonds of attachment between the parent(s) or care-giver(s) and the child. There is a relationship of mutual affection. CRC Art. 19. GC 14 para. 70, 71, 72, 84.</p>	<p><i>10. Social network</i> The child and his family have various sources of support in their environment upon which they can depend. CRC Art. 20, 37, 31. GC 14 para. 70, 73, 84.</p>
<p><i>4. Supportive, flexible childrearing structure</i> A supportive, flexible childrearing structure encompasses several aspects like: enough daily routine in the child's life; encouragement, stimulation and instruction to the child and the requirement of realistic demands; rules, limits, instructions and insight into the arguments for these rules; control of the child's behaviour; enough space for the child's own wishes and thoughts, enough freedom to experiment and to negotiate on what is important to the child; no more responsibilities than the child is capable of handling. CRC Art. 13, 14. GC 14 para. 70, 71, 84.</p>	<p><i>11. Education</i> The child receives a suitable education and has the opportunity to develop his personality and talents (e.g. sport or music). CRC Art. 17, 28, 29, 31. GC 14 para. 70, 73, 84.</p>
<p><i>5. Adequate example by parents</i> The parents or care-providers offer the child the opportunity to incorporate their behaviour, values and cultural norms that are important, now and in the future. CRC Art. 10.</p>	<p><i>12. Contact with peers</i> The child has opportunities to have contacts with other children in various situations suitable to his perception of the world and developmental age. CRC Art. 31. GC 14 para. 70, 73, 84.</p>

GC 14 para. 70, 71, 84.	
<i>6. Interest in the child</i>	<i>13. Adequate examples in society</i>
The parents or care-providers show interest in the activities and interests of the child and in his perception of the world. CRC Art. 31. GC 14 para. 70, 71, 84.	The child is in contact with children and adults who are examples for current and future behaviour and who mediate the adaptation of important societal values and norms. CRC Art. 2, 8, 13, 14, 15. GC 14 para. 70, 73, 84.
<i>Future and past</i>	
<i>Family</i>	<i>Society</i>
<i>7. Continuity in upbringing conditions, future perspective</i>	<i>14. Stability in life circumstances, future perspective</i>
The parents or care-providers care for the child and bring the child up in a way that attachment bonds develop. Basic trust is to be continued by the availability of the parents or care-providers to the child. The child experiences a future perspective. CRC Art. 5, 6, 9, 10, 18. GC 14 para. 65, 66, 67, 70, 72, 74, 84.	The environment in which the child is brought up does not change suddenly and unexpectedly. There is continuity in life circumstances. Significant changes are prepared for and made comprehensible for the child. Persons with whom the child can identify and sources of support are constantly available to the child, as well as the possibility of developing relationships by means of a common language. Society offers the child opportunities and a future perspective. CRC Art. 6, 9, 10, 20. GC 14 para. 65, 70, 74, 84.

Source: Van Os, E. C. C., Kalverboer, M. E., Zijlstra, A. E., Post, W. J., & Knorth, E. J. (2016). Knowledge of the unknown child: A systematic review on the elements of the Best Interests of the Child Assessment for recently arrived refugee children. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 19(3), 185-203. doi: 10.1007/s10567-016-0209-y.