



## **Children and Authority: Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 94.01.06  
by Trisha Ann Turner

Presently, I work with middle-school students at an urban, alternative school. My student population consists of self-contained special education students labelled SEM (socially and emotionally maladjusted) or LD (learning disabled). Although my students are bright and intuitive, many of them have a short attention span and difficulty focusing on activities and discussions. I have chosen the topic of my unit to explore a variety of legal issues relevant to children of today. These issues effect my students and may strongly impact their lives.

I will present this unit in a thematic approach. Rather than focusing on only one topic, I will engage the students in various topics. I believe that my students will be much more motivated and involved in the unit as we explore many different and interesting issues. I will cover the following issues in this unit.

- 1) adoption/foster care
- 2) parental responsibility for safety
- 3) abuse and neglect
- 4) pre-natal decisions faced by the mother
- 5) health issues
- 6) school-related issues

Each issue deals with the roles, rights and responsibilities of authority figures in relation to the family unit.

I plan to examine various court cases as an introduction to each topic. Students will be able to think critically and make value judgements while examining legal disputes. In addition, students will have the opportunity to heighten their awareness of controversial issues through community informational pamphlets and current events newspaper articles.

This unit will be presented two-to-three times a week. I will devote about a week to each of the six topics. I will integrate this unit throughout various content areas such as: social development, science, language arts, and reading.

(Recommended for Social Development, Language Arts, Reading, Science and Social Studies, grades 6-7)

**Key Words**

*Students' Rights Generational Relations Family Life Problems Law Adoption Child Custody Children's Rights*

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