

Statement for Media Outlets

March 1, 2023

We are disturbed by the distorted reports and wrong conclusions concerning Jehovah's Witnesses and child safety based solely upon the comments of those who are disgruntled former associates of our religion. Their views run contrary to the fact that Jehovah's Witnesses want the best for their children.

Jehovah's Witnesses do not force their children to adopt their faith. (See the article: [Do Jehovah's Witnesses Force Their Children to Adopt Their Faith?](#)) All Jehovah's Witnesses, even minors, make their own personal decisions to learn, accept, and practice what the Bible teaches. Infants and children who are not yet mature enough to make their own decisions cannot become a believer. Children of Jehovah's Witness parents who desire to be baptized will go through the same procedures of personal study and reach a level of maturity before they would be accepted for baptism. See the article [How do I become one of Jehovah's Witnesses?](#) at www.jw.org.

As it is recognized domestically and internationally, parents have the right to raise their children according to their beliefs and moral values. However, it is an individual's decision, whether as a mature child under the care of their parents or as an independent adult, to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. This is in harmony with the liberty of parents protected by Article 18, Clause 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Article 14, Clauses 1 and 2 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: Article 18.4: "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

Convention of the Rights of the Child: Article 14.1 and 2: "1: States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child."

Medical Choice: Jehovah's Witnesses value life and actively seek quality medical care for themselves and their children. They accept the vast majority of medical treatments except for allogeneic blood transfusions. Jehovah's Witnesses do not accept blood transfusions for religious reasons, rather than medical ones. They base their position on the Bible's command to 'keep abstaining from blood.' (Acts 15:29) (See the article [Why Don't Jehovah's Witnesses Accept Blood Transfusions?](#) at www.jw.org.) No one is ever forced to refuse a blood transfusion. Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach that whether to accept a blood transfusion or any other form of treatment is a personal decision for each person to make without force or pressure.

In case of a medical emergency, each Jehovah's Witness is encouraged to consider their medical decisions in advance and write them down. Then, if they desire, baptized Jehovah's Witnesses can prepare the "Durable Power of Attorney" card and write down their personal decisions on it. This card has been held to be a reliable and authoritative indication of a Witness patient's medical wishes if the patient is unconscious or otherwise incapacitated.

Teaching of Children: Jehovah's Witnesses do not tolerate child abuse. The publications of Jehovah's Witnesses consistently encourage teaching and guiding children with affection and love. (See the articles [What makes a good parent?](#), [How to Educate Your Child](#) and [How Should You Discipline Your Children](#) at [jw.org](#).) At times, discipline includes correcting a child's misbehavior. However, the discipline of children should be given as a manifestation of parental love to correct a child and should never be abusive or cruel.

Excommunicated Jehovah's Witnesses: Please see the article, [Do Jehovah's Witnesses Shun Those Who Used to Belong to Their Religion?](#) Our legal right in determining who qualifies to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses is internationally recognized. It is a fundamental human right enshrined as the freedom of religion in the constitution of Japan as well as the constitutions of countries throughout the world. This freedom is also enshrined in many international treaties such as the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Please see the following articles at [www.jw.org](#) and the judgement of the Supreme Court of Canada. ([England Upholds Rights Regarding Religious Affiliation / Supreme Court of Canada Refuses to Interfere With Disfellowshipping Procedure / Supreme Court Judgment](#))

Education: Jehovah's Witnesses highly value education as it enables their children to gain essential knowledge and skills to provide for themselves and their family. Each family is responsible for deciding for themselves to what degree their children should seek higher education. They find it helpful to consider the moral and religious influence such education may have on their children as well as their financial abilities. (See the article [How Do Jehovah's Witnesses View Education?](#) at [www.jw.org](#).)

Public Information Department of Jehovah's Witnesses