

**Children's Day**, any of the various [holidays](#) in honor of children that are celebrated on different dates in countries throughout the world. In general, Children's Day festivities promote children's [human rights](#) and [welfare](#), recognize children's contributions to society, and celebrate the joys of [childhood](#). These holidays often emphasize the importance of educating children and of protecting them from harm. A significant proportion of countries celebrate the [holiday](#) in early June or mid- to late November. Countries have various local traditions regarding special [food](#), [dress](#), and activities on Children's Day.

## In the United States

In the United States, Children's Day is sometimes said to be observed on the second [Sunday](#) of June, although dates have varied widely. Despite the popularity of similar holidays around the globe, the holiday has not caught on in the popular imagination in the U.S. The unofficial holiday's origin lies in a church observance held in 1856 (some sources claim 1857) by pastor Charles Leonard of the [Universalist](#) Church of the Redeemer in Chelsea, [Massachusetts](#). Over time, a few other American [communities](#) adopted his idea. Like Children's Days in other countries, the holiday is dedicated to children's welfare and rights and a recognition of their contributions. American parents are encouraged to spend quality time with their children, and politicians make declarations concerning children's welfare. Political leaders have occasionally switched the date of the holiday. In 1995 Pres. [Bill Clinton](#) officially declared October 8 to be National Children's Day. In 2001 Pres. [George W. Bush](#) declared a National Child's Day to be on the first Sunday in June. Pres. [Barack Obama](#) then declared November 22 to be National Child's Day in 2009, and he later adjusted it to November 20, matching the United Nations' date, in renewed declarations in [subsequent](#) years of his presidency. Despite such presidential proclamations, Children's Day, or variants thereof, is not officially or popularly observed in the United States.

# International and World Children's Days

Some countries celebrate Children's Day on June 1, particularly countries that were previously part of or [affiliated](#) with the [Soviet Union](#). The June 1 date originated at the 1925 World Conference for the Well-Being of Children held in [Geneva](#). The conference passed a resolution to celebrate an International Children's Day on June 1. Delegates at the Women's International Democratic Federation meeting in [Moscow](#) in 1949 made a similar decision to establish such a holiday on June 1.

In 1954 the [United Nations](#) (UN) established Universal Children's Day with the purpose of improving children's welfare. The UN urged all countries to celebrate children and promote their well-being on this holiday, with traditions and activities of their own choosing. The holiday was renamed as World Children's Day and established as November 20 in 1959. That date coincided with the [UN General Assembly](#)'s adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which defines the human rights of children. On World Children's Day in 1989 the UN General Assembly adopted the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). This document, intended to protect the human rights of children, has been ratified by every country in the world except, as of 2025, the [United States](#).

## In China and Russia

[China](#) and [Russia](#), along with many other [communist](#) and post-communist countries, celebrate Children's Day on June 1, following the decision at the 1949 Women's International Democratic Federation meeting in Moscow. In Russia the holiday is observed with games, readings, classes, and visits to cultural institutions, such as museums and [zoos](#). In China parents and teachers give children gifts and treats, including toys, snacks, and [money](#) in red envelopes, called *hongbao*, which are also given to children at other Chinese holidays, such as [Chinese New Year](#). The holiday is

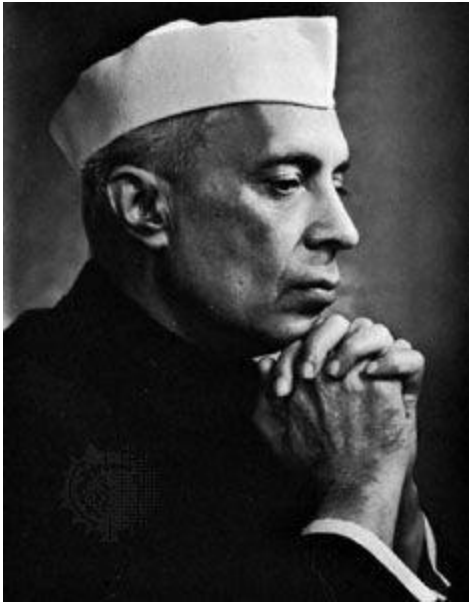
celebrated with educational activities, sports tournaments, field days, and special performances such as talent shows.

## In India



[Children's Day in India](#) - A boy dressed as Jawaharlal Nehru handing out candy on Children's Day in Amritsar, Punjab, India, on November 14, 2022.

Children's Day, or Bal Diwas, is celebrated on November 14 in [India](#). This date honors the birth anniversary of [Jawaharlal Nehru](#), a leader of the [Indian Independence Movement](#) and India's first [prime minister](#). Nehru was fond of children, who called him Chacha ("Uncle") Nehru. In December 1949 he wrote a [note to children](#) in the popular magazine *Shankar's Weekly* in which he stated, "I like being with children and talking to them and, even more, playing with them. For a moment I forget that I am terribly old and that it is a very long time ago since I was a child." Nehru also wrote about playing with children in other countries and declared, in a way that speaks to his larger political concerns for social harmony, "For children everywhere are much the same; it is the grown-ups who imagine they are very different and deliberately make themselves so."



[Jawaharlal Nehru](#) November 14, the birth date of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, is celebrated in India as Children's Day.

His birthday began to be celebrated by Indians as Children's Day by the mid-1950s. In 1953 Nehru observed in a letter that Children's Day had been celebrated on his birthday in [Delhi](#) with various festivities, including a parade of children, and he remarked of that sight: "It was the India of tomorrow and the day after, on the march, and the picture of this future was heartening." In his Children's Day broadcast on November 14, 1957, [Rajendra Prasad](#), India's first president, [lamented](#) that most government time was consumed by adults' concerns, but in contrast it is, "a welcome idea to have one day every year to be celebrated as Children's Day when all questions pertaining to children and [child welfare](#) would receive special attention." The popular but not official holiday in India recognizes children's rights and children's potential, promotes child welfare and education, and celebrates childhood. Educational events and cultural performances are held in India on this day.

## In Japan



**Carp windsocks for Children's Day in Japan** - A postcard from Japan c. 1907–18 depicting the carp-shaped windsocks (*koinobori*) flown to celebrate Tango no sekku (Boys' Day).

Children's Day (Kodomo no hi) is celebrated on May 5 in [Japan](#). The holiday, which was formally established by the Japanese government in 1948, promotes children's health, happiness, and good fortune. Japan's Children's Day is part of the [Golden Week](#) of four closely spaced national holidays. To celebrate Children's Day, families display traditional items that symbolize strength and success, including [samurai](#) armor or helmets, dolls of famous warriors, and streamers shaped like carp, called *koinobori*. Families take special baths, called *syobuyu*, in water sprinkled with iris leaves and roots, which are thought to ward off evil and bring good [health](#). They eat *kashiwa mochi*, [rice](#) cakes filled with sweet [adzuki bean](#) paste and wrapped in [oak](#) leaves, and *chimaki*, [dumplings](#) wrapped in [bamboo](#) leaves. In the past May 5 was the date of a holiday called Boys' Day (Tango no sekku). Many Japanese citizens still celebrate May 5

in the form of that earlier male-specific [iteration](#). There is also a holiday called Girls' Day (also Doll Festival or Hina Matsuri), which is celebrated on March 3 with displays of *hina* dolls.

In addition to the main Children's Day, Japan celebrates another holiday that honors children: the Seven-Five-Three Festival ([Shichi-go-san](#)), a tradition rooted in the [Shintō](#) religion. The festival celebrates children who are three, five, and seven years old. It is held on November 15 (the sum of three, five, and seven). These three numbers are considered lucky and these ages are considered important milestones for Japanese children. Japanese citizens mark this festival by taking their children to a Shintō shrine and praying for the children's health and happiness. During the festival, some children wear suits and dresses, while others dress in traditional Japanese clothing, including [kimonos](#), [obi](#) (belt-like garments), *tabi* (sock-like garments), *zori* (sandals) and, for boys, *hakama* (trousers) and *haori* (jackets). Children receive candy called "one-thousand-year sweets" (*chitose ame*) in the lucky colors of red and white. The candy comes in bags decorated with [cranes](#) and [turtles](#), which symbolize longevity. On this day, adults and children also make paper cranes to give to others.