

RIGHTS IN ACTION

A newsletter for ACT children and young people about their rights, safety, and wellbeing



CONTENTS

Your right to be with your parents

CareersXpo

**2025 Young Canberra
Citizen of the Year Awards!**

August celebrations

What's new?

- Starting on 31 August, Sunday buses in Canberra will start running more often and for longer - [check out the new timetable](#).

Did you know...

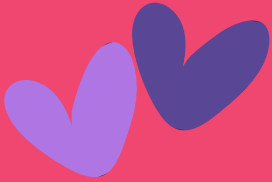
- The definition of 'family' varies in different cultures.
- The word family comes from the Latin word 'familia', which means household.
- In Australia there is an average of 2.49 people per household!

Yuma! Welcome to August Rights in ACTION. This month we explore family! Including your right to be with your parents and the importance of families in the Human Rights Act 2004.

We also have an article about the wonderful time we had at CareersXpo where we met so many Canberra students! There is also information about the Young Canberra Citizen of the Year Awards, some special days in August we have celebrated, an activity page with some fun activities to do at home, and a very cool campaign NAPCAN is running that you can take part in!



Your right to be with your parents



You must not be separated from your parents against your will unless it is better for you not to be with them. When you are away from your parents, you should be able to stay in contact with them, as long as this will not cause you harm.

Article 9, Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Adults who care for you when you are a child are really important. Parents and carers help you figure out who we are and should keep us safe.

The ACT Human Rights Act 2004 recognises that there are a lot of different kinds of families, and all are important. They should all be protected and treated equally.

Children also have special protections, so if families are not keeping you safe, sometimes the government might need to find you somewhere else to live. This is called out-of-home care.

Being unsafe is when your needs are not being looked after, or you are at risk of physical or emotional harm. If the government decides a child needs to live somewhere else, they must keep the child's best interests in mind, listen to their views and make sure they are still connected to their culture.

Even if a child is separated from one or both parents, they still have the right to have contact with them, unless this would be harmful.

Monitoring out-of-home care

Part of Jodie's job is to monitor services for children and young people and speak up when she thinks more needs to be done to make their lives better. This role is written into law, so services (including the ones that care for children who cannot live with their parents) must give Jodie information so she can check that they are supporting the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people.

Last year we spoke to some young people who had to live away from their parents while they were growing up. It can be really scary, and they wanted to make sure other children in this situation would be listened to by the adults caring for them. Here are some of the things they told us:

“Being listened to makes you feel fulfilled, makes you feel important, makes you feel seen.”

“Hear me with your ears, see me with your eyes, but listen to me with your heart.”

“When I feel listened to it makes me feel safer.”



CareersXpo is held in August every year in Canberra and is open to high school and college students. It is a great way to learn about different career and study options but we love it because we get to meet with and talk to students!

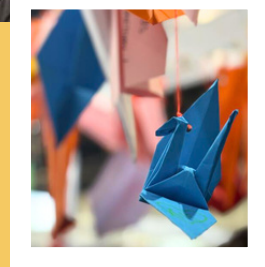
This year we asked students to tell us what they wish adults knew about school. Students wrote their answers on paper then folded them into paper planes. We had some great responses that will contribute to our consultation about school, which we are doing this year.

What do you wish adults knew about school?

Email us to let us know: actkids@act.gov.au or to hear more about our consultation.

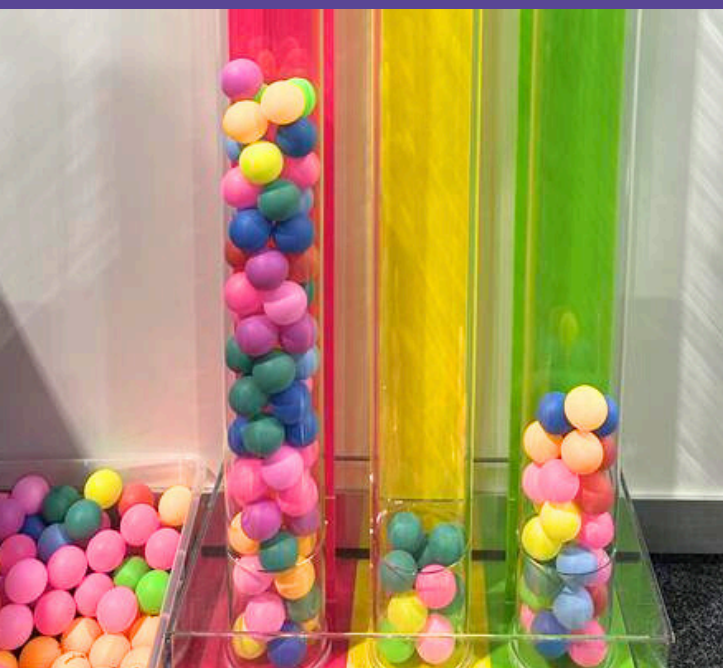


Young people at our stall



Messages to the Commissioner

Is school refusal a problem at your school?



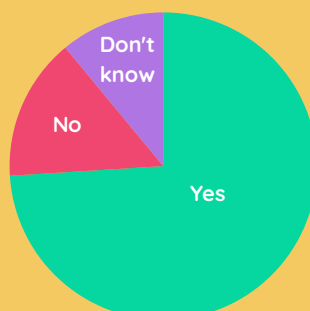
Yes

No

Don't Know

We also asked about school refusal. Out of 431 votes:

- 74% said that school refusal was a problem in their school
- 11% said it was not
- 15% did not know.



What happens if it gets too hard to go to school?

Some students find school so stressful they cannot go. This is sometimes called school attendance problems, school refusal, school can't or school phobia. It is different to wagging because parents know they are not going and are often working with the school to find a solution.

Throughout Term 3 and 4, we are talking to children and young people about how they feel about school, and how this impacts their attendance. We will use what we hear to work with the Education Directorate, so everyone feels safe and happy at school!

There will be lots of ways to take part in this work, so stay tuned!

"Not everyone has it easy at school"

"I wish the adults knew how tiring it gets"

"That sometimes kids need a break even if they're not sick."

Some of the messages written in the paper planes.

Nominations now OPEN for the 2025 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year Awards!

Do you know someone aged 12 to 25 who is doing amazing things in Canberra? It could be a friend, a sibling - or even you!


The Young Canberra Citizen of the Year Awards celebrate young people who are helping make our community better. There are 6 different awards to recognise all kinds of great contributions, like:

- Being a great role model
- Leading others and developing this skill
- Overcoming tough times to reach goals
- Helping look after the environment
- Active involvement in our community
- Groups that deliver initiatives, services or opportunities for young Canberrans.
- Excelling in creative Arts.

You can nominate yourself or someone else. It is a great way to celebrate all the wonderful things young people are doing in Canberra.

Nominations close on 10 September at 5pm.

To nominate someone or to find out more about the different awards go to dhcs.smartygrants.com.au/YCCY2025.



Who will you
nominate?

INSPIRE



August Celebrations!

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's day

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day was held on the 4th of August this year. This special day celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and the importance and impact that culture, family and community have for them.

To celebrate, Children and Young People Commissioners, Guardians, and Advocates from around Australia made a video in which they answered the question: What do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children tell you they love about culture, community and connection to Country.

Answers included learning about their culture, being on Country and being surrounded by people who take the time to listen, learn and walk with them.

If you are allowed on YouTube, [check out their answers here.](#)

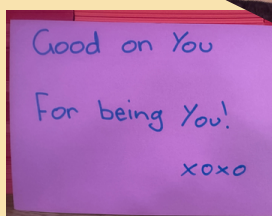


Wear it Purple day

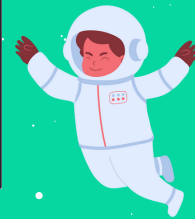
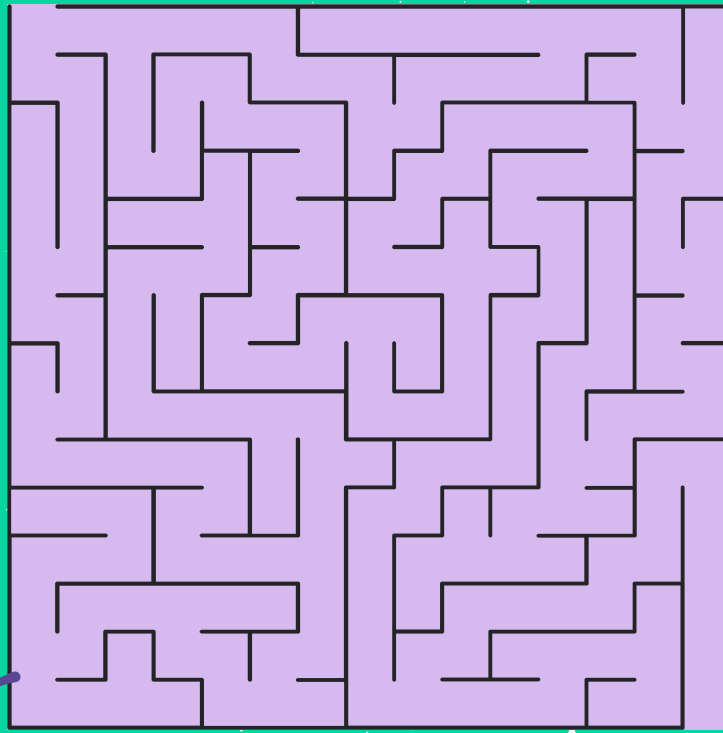
The 29th of August 2025 is 'Wear It Purple Day', a yearly event that was started by a group of students. It aims to create safe inclusive and empowering environments for all LGBTIQA+ people. It is a wonderful time to show support and acceptance of all rainbow children and young people.

The theme this year is 'Bold Voices, Bright Futures', and is about being proud of who you are, and coming together to create a more inclusive world where young people's feel proud of who they are.

We celebrated by wearing purple and finding all the purple things in our office! Here are a few favourites.



Maze Challenge



Help Charlie get to his ship before it launches!

Did you know that astronauts age slightly slower than people on Earth? This is because of effects of time dilation.

Cool experiments to do at home



Fizzy Oranges

Take one orange cut into eight segments and 1/2 a teaspoon of baking soda.

Dip one segment of orange lightly into the baking soda and take a bite. It will become fizzy in your mouth.

This is from the acid in the orange mixing with the baking soda to create a chemical reaction.

Learn more about this experiment at sciencefun.org/kidszone/experiments/orange-fizz/

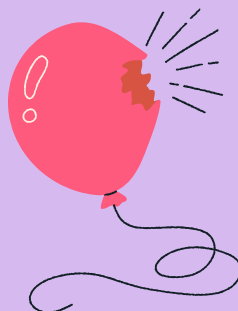
Balloon pop! Not!

Blow up a balloon (not too full) and tie it off at the end. Next create an X with two pieces of tape on your balloon. The pieces of tape should each be about 5cm long.

Push a pin into the middle of the X. Leave it there, and watch.

The balloon will still pop, but much slower than without the tape.

Go to sciencefun.org/kidszone/experiments/balloon-pop-not/ to learn why.



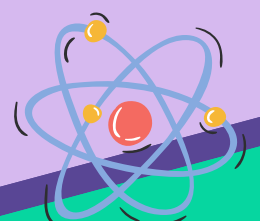
Squishy egg

Submerge a raw egg in its shell in a glass of vinegar. Wait two days. Then take the egg out and hold it over an empty bowl. The egg will be squishy and bouncy.

Gently experiment squeezing and bouncing the egg in the bowl.

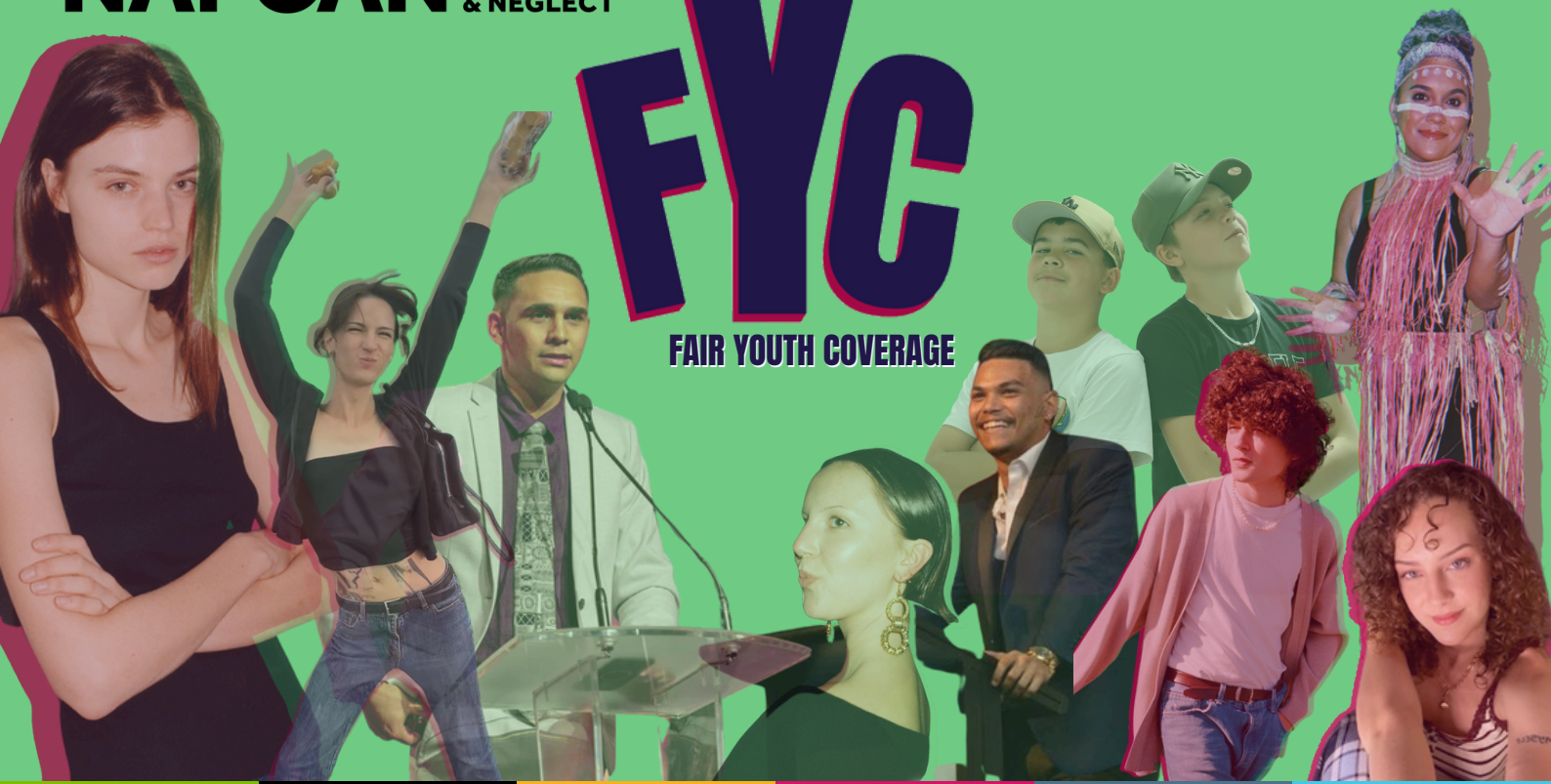
Be careful because it is still delicate and will still break easily.

Go to kids.nationalgeographic.com/science to watch a video about this experiment.



FYC

FAIR YOUTH COVERAGE



The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) is a leading national organisation dedicated to ensuring all children and young people in Australia are safe and supported.

When stereotypes are used
by news media they influence
public perception towards
our youth.

This influences policies made for young people, and can impact how young people feel about themselves.

Fair Youth Coverage

Fair Youth Coverage is a national youth-led campaign, which features 100 diverse voices that challenge harmful stereotypes and celebrate everyday strength, resilience, and brilliance, showing that positive youth stories aren't rare, they are just rarely told.

Are you a young person doing good things? It can be in sport, advocacy, arts, entertainment and more. If this is you, contact oliver.white@napcan.org.au for more information.