

RIGHTS IN ACTION

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



CONTENTS

Your right to be protected if you are accused of a crime

International Pride Month

Holiay activity ideas

World Refugee Day

Winter Bingo!

What's new?

- The 21st of June was the winter solstice. The winter solstice has the shortest daylight and the longest night-time of the whole year. Now each day will be lighter for longer until next winter!

Did you know...

- From 1 July 2025, children and young people in the ACT under the age of 14 years will not be charged with a crime; instead they will be given support for the causes of their behaviour. Find out more on page 2.
- The ACT is the first place in Australia to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years!

Yuma! Welcome to June Rights in ACTION. This month we are exploring your right to be protected if you are accused of a crime. We also celebrate International Pride Month and learn about World Refugee Day.

It is almost the holidays! To celebrate we have a few activities you can try while you are not at school.

It has been so cold the last couple of weeks, so I hope you are staying warm and well. Look after yourself!

Jodie



INTERVIEW WITH JODIE: RAISING THE MINIMUM AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

In 2023, the ACT Government passed a law to increase the minimum age a child can be held responsible for a crime. At first it was raised from 10 to 12 years and on 1 July 2025 it will be raised again, to 14 years. This means if you are under the age of 14 you will not be charged, convicted or sent to prison, except in the case of 4 especially serious offences. Here is some information from Jodie about the importance of these changes.



Why is it important to raise the age of criminal responsibility?

“Raising the age helps protect children’s rights because when children do things that cause harm, there are usually lots of reasons for this. They might not have the care they need, or they might be dealing with their own trauma. They may not understand the consequences of their actions or perhaps they do not have the skills to control their behaviour yet.

Article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child says that if a child or young person is accused of a crime, they should get special treatment because they are a child and not be put in prison unless there is no other option.

Instead of punishing a young person in these situations, it is much better to get them the help and support they need. This is better for the young person and is more likely to prevent harmful behaviour in the future, so is also better for the community.”

“Taking children into custody does not make our community safer. They are children, not criminals. They need our compassion, and they need our care.”

Jodie, speaking at the Songs for Freedom concert in 2023.

What will happen if someone under 14 breaks the law?

“Children and young people who break the law will be referred to specialist support instead of being taken to court or prison.

There is a group of experts whose job it is to support young people in this situation. When a child or young person is referred to them, they work with the child or young person’s family and make a plan to help. Working on the problems that caused the young person to act in a harmful way will help it not happen again in the future.”

What have you heard from children and young people about raising the age?

“In the ACT, a very small number of children are charged with crimes. I have spoken to young people who have experienced the justice system, and those who have not. All of them agree 12 years old is too young.

“Don’t put kids in jail until age 18.”

“Kids shouldn’t be worried about their next court date or where they’re gonna be sleeping; they should be worried about footy training or when their next assignment is due.”

We must listen when children and young people tell us what they need, and we must respond by putting in the right supports, so they are safer and so are our communities.”

International Pride Month

Every June, people around the world come together for International Pride Month. It is a celebration of the progress that has been made to make our communities more inclusive, but also a time to think about the change that still needs to happen, so **everyone** feels safe, accepted and is treated equally.

To mark International Pride Month, you can celebrate yourself or learn about LGBTQIA+ communities. Get creative, have some fun and spread the Pride!



Check out movies, TV shows and books that feature LGBTQIA+ story lines to learn some new perspectives.

Only 1 in 3 LGBTQIA+ children and young people feel like their opinions and experiences are listened to, heard and valued by people around them.



Learn about the meaning of the different LGBTQIA+ flags at rainbowinclusion.org.au/flags/

Did you know 86% of LGBTQIA+ children and young people say that just seeing someone with rainbow or ally accessories makes them feel safer?

Share your gender pronouns by creating a name tag or sign for your door or learn about pronouns with [this interactive guide](#).

Only 27% of LGBTQIA+ children and young people at school reported staff in leadership positions used their preferred pronoun appropriately.



Create a self-portrait. Draw, paint, use a camera or even clay to make a self-portrait that represents the things that are special about you.

79% of LGBTQIA+ children and young people said they had felt accepted and included sometime during the last year.



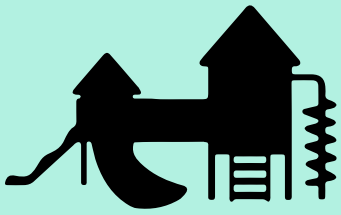
Show your pride!



Holiday Activity Ideas



Play a game of disk golf. There are some courses in Canberra. Find them here actdiscgolfclub.com/courses/



Visit Canberra's best playground. The Boundless playground in Kings Park was voted Canberra's best playground. Visit to find out why!



Try nature photography. Go for a walk with your camera. Take some photos and enjoy the view. You can get tips for taking photos with a smart device here.



Our favourite winter festival, Winter in the City, is back this year. With street performers, music, comedy and food trucks there is a lot to do! Check it out from 5-19 July.



Set up a hot chocolate station. Make a batch of hot chocolate and let people choose their extras - marshmallows, cinnamon, whipped cream, sprinkles! Design your signature drink!



Has this winter been dry or wet? Why not measure the rainfall with your own rain gauge! You will need an old plastic bottle or container. Find out how here.



Make your own gratitude bookmark

1. Print this bookmark or make your own.
2. Draw or write three things you are grateful for.
3. Laminate your bookmark or stick it to a piece of cardboard.





World Refugee Day

Refugees are people who have to leave their country because they are being **persecuted** and are not safe. Often refugees have to leave their homes really fast. It can be a long and dangerous journey.

When refugees come to Australia they are safe, but it can still be very hard to settle. There are lots of new things to learn. They have to get used to a new place, new rules and often a new language.

The 20th of June was World Refugee Day. This is an international day to show support for refugees. This year the theme of the day was about **solidarity**. Helping refugees feel they are heard and not alone.

Watch Neha's video to learn ways you can welcome newly arrived children and young people youtu.be/ei0eOehciwM?si=yxorNBxrzVbgsear.



Persecution

When someone hurts, threatens, or treats a person (or group of people) badly because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

Solidarity

Showing support, sympathy and trying to help. Showing solidarity is like saying 'I am with you'.

Winter Bingo

Do you ever get bored traveling in the car? Why not play a game of 'Winter Bingo'?

How to play:

- Spot all the things on the list.
- The first person to say "Bingo" and name the item gets a point.

You can challenge yourself to find them all alone, or work with someone else in the car.

Remember not to distract the driver though!



Umbrella



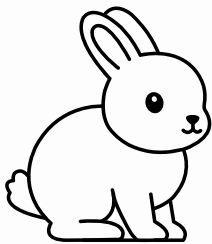
Emergency vehicle



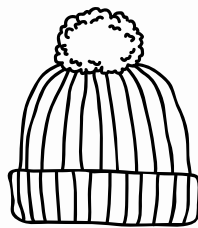
Snow



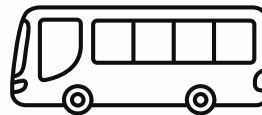
Pedestrian crossing



Rabbit



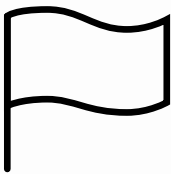
Beanie



Bus



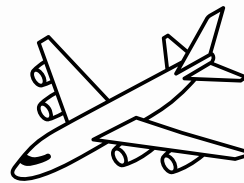
Post box



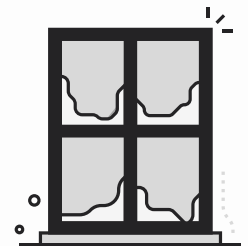
Flag



Dog



Aeroplane



Frost



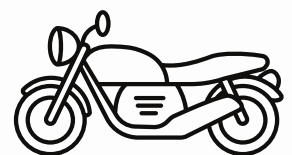
Green car



50 speed limit sign



Pine tree



Motorbike