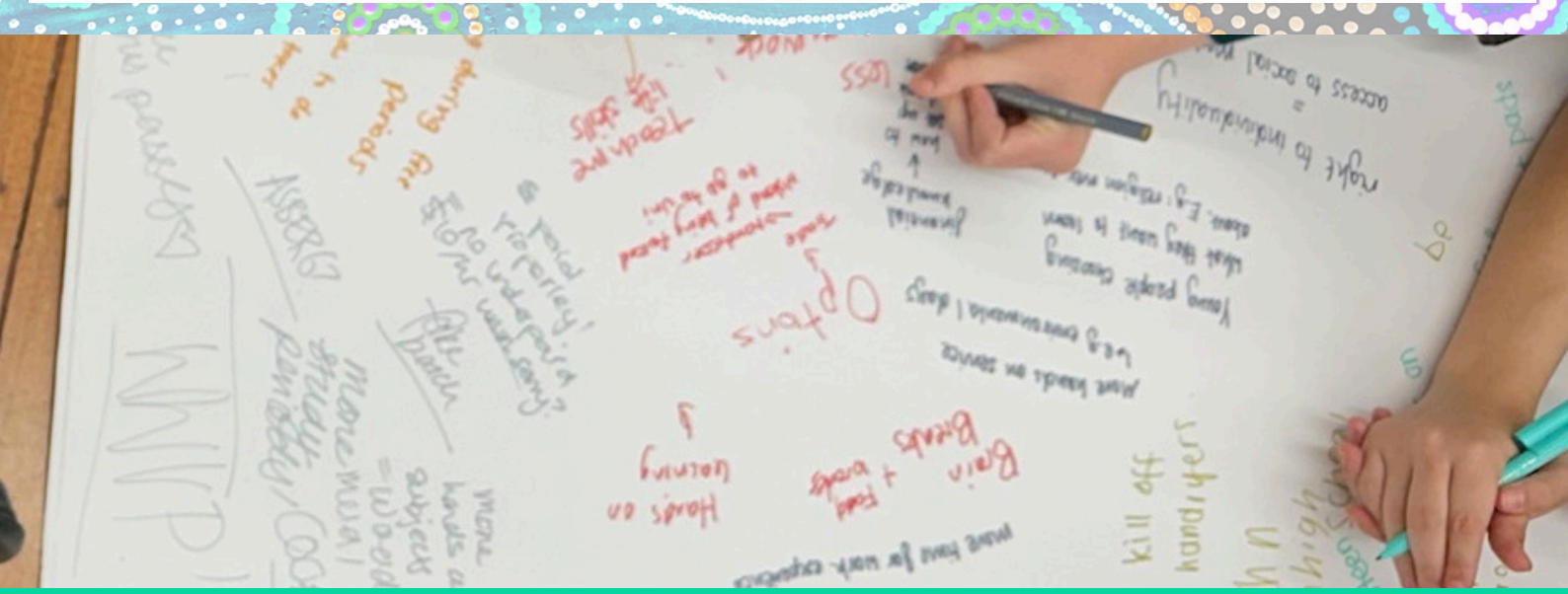


RIGHTS IN ACTION

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



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What's new?

- I hope you have had a good start to the new school year. We have spent the start of the year looking at what we heard from you last year, so that we can focus our work in 2025 on the things **you** think are important!

Did you know...

- Colouring calms the brain and helps your body relax. It is a good way to unwind at the end of a busy school day. There is a colouring page at the end of the newsletter.
- We still have a whole month of summer to go (Autumn starts on 20 March). So, get out and safely enjoy the sun when you can. It can help relieve stress too!

Yuma! Welcome to 2025, a new school year, and our February newsletter!

I am excited for 2025. We heard lots of important things from children and young people just like you! Look at page 2 to find out more. We will think about how we can use what you told us to make Canberra better.

We also have some tips from other students on starting a new school year. We asked them what they wish they knew at school when they were younger. What tips would you share?

I am looking forward to a busy and fun year, working hard to make the ACT a better place for children and young people. You can contact me anytime with your ideas, questions, or contributions to the newsletter.



Listening Tour Findings

At the end of last year, we went to seven different schools and organisations to speak to children and young people about what would make Canberra a better place for you to live. We got around 600 suggestions! Here are some of the things you told us.

Survival rights

Standard of living - Families need help with the costs of living, like free food for people who are struggling, free public transport for children and young people, and lower fees for sport.

Health - Make wait times for mental health diagnosis and support shorter; make dentists cost less; young people need to be able to go to doctors without their parents. Other ideas included focusing more on health and fitness at school, and free contraception.

Mental health - A lot of comments were about the lack of support for mental health and wanting more support through school, like having more school psychologists.

Healthy environment - This is very important to many of you, including looking after nature and animals better, and working harder to reduce emissions.

Stop abuse - Protect children from abuse, including less hitting, more support when things are difficult at home, and having police that are more approachable for kids.

Stop bullying - Increase respect for kids from adults and each other. Stop cyberbullying.

Non-discrimination - Have more support for people with disabilities, stop racism, and increase support for Autistic students. Make it easier for kids to use their chosen pronouns at school.

Child and youth justice - "Not placing children in Jail but still giving punishment."

Protection rights

Development rights

Cost of education - Make school fees and other school costs (like uniforms and camps) cheaper; make university cheaper/free; fund public schools better; and fix unequal funding of some schools.

Quality of education - Make school more fun; give more choice over subjects; have a shorter week or shorter days; have more support for students; make school safer; teach more life skills like how to do taxes; have better health education.

Play and recreation - No homework; shorten time at school; have more public holidays and enable more family time; have more sports fields and cheaper sport; have device clubs.

Have a say - Give children and young people more say on social issues and laws; lower the voting age; get adults to listen to kids' ideas; ongoing consultation so children and young people have a say in important decisions.

Independence - Give children and young people more freedom and independence as they grow up; help young children get jobs but also keep them safe.

Self expression - Let kids be themselves; help them find people they share interests with (including through social media but also keep children and young people safe online).

Participation rights



Have your say, in your way!

To make things better for children and young people in the ACT, we need to hear from you throughout the year.

- Write to us,
- Create an artwork or cartoon,
- Make a video or audio,
- Write a poem or song.


Use the space below to write or draw, take a photo of it to send to me, or send a video or audio to hrc.act.gov.au/ytf.



ideas 

Kid approved lunchbox hacks

Working out what to put in a lunchbox every day can get hard! Here are some ideas to make your lunch more fun.




1. Freeze your drink and use it to keep your lunchbox cool.

2. Use your lunch box lid as a sticker chart: get a sticker for every new food you try!



3. Have a daily theme, like Fruity Fridays or Treaty Tuesdays!

4. Have a lunch swap with your friends. Make lunch for each other then swap. Check allergies first!



5. Make a batch of pasta salad that you can eat over a few days (remember to store it safely and don't keep it too long).

6. Make your own trail mix: try popcorn, choc chips, and seeds!

7. Cut your sandwiches into fun shapes with cookie cutters!

BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS

If you could go back in time, what advice would you give yourself about starting a new school year? We asked some older students what they would tell their younger selves. Here are their tips!

When I started year 7 last year I joined lots of sports teams. It was a good way to make friends and feel part of the school.

Zac, Y8

Be confident and don't be afraid to make friends because friends will look out for you and are fun to hang out with.

Eden, Y5

Even though school is different to being at home, you can have a great time at school. There's a lot of great teachers and fun activities to do.

Flynn, Y4

Believe in yourself, look after your friends, and have fun! Life isn't about getting any place fast... it's about going slow and enjoying the ride.

Tiarna, graduate

Most of your bad days you won't even remember!

Tara, graduate.

There is always someone who wants to help. You just need to ask.

Mali, Y5

Don't be afraid to call out your peers if they're being bullies. You will regret it later if you don't. It's ok to not be the most social kid. Everyone has their own way of functioning.

Tara, graduate



