

# RIGHTS IN ACTION

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



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## What's new?

- National Reconciliation Week starts on 27 May. The theme this year is 'Bridging Now to Next'. Check out more at [Reconciliation Australia](#) and learn about Sorry Day on page 5.

## Did you know...

- In March this year, Thailand made all physical punishment of children against the law.
- Physical punishment in schools was banned in the ACT in 1997.
- Every state and territory in Australia has laws to stop physical punishment in schools, except Queensland.



Yuma! Welcome to our May Rights in ACTion newsletter. This month we highlight an international campaign that aims to make the laws that protect you stronger. Learn more on page 2. We also have some information about how organisations and services in the ACT can help you feel safe, and some information about National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week.

I would love to hear what you do to mark Reconciliation Week, so please let me know!



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*Jodie*

# Your right to protection

**THE GOVERNMENT MUST MAKE SURE YOU ARE SAFE FROM ALL FORMS OF PHYSICAL OR MENTAL VIOLENCE, NEGLECT, AND ABUSE BY ANY PERSON WHO LOOKS AFTER YOU.**

## Convention on the Rights of the Child

In order to grow up healthy and happy, children and young people need to be cared for and protected from all forms of harm and violence.

68 countries in the world have completely banned the physical punishment of children and young people, but Australia has not. In the ACT, physical punishment is specifically banned in schools and childcare services. Currently, it is not specifically banned in homes.

The **End Physical Punishment of Australian Children Campaign** aims to stop physical punishment of children everywhere.

There are three things we are asking the Government to do:

- To change the laws so that physical punishment of children is not allowed anywhere.
- To educate adults about why physical punishment is not the best option.
- To support parents to learn and use alternatives to physical punishment.

**Physical punishment** (also called corporal punishment) is when physical force that causes pain, emotional distress, or discomfort (like smacking, shaking or pinching) is used as a response to the behaviours of children.

Jodie, your Children and Young People Commissioner, is an active member of this campaign and is helping to raise the issue with the government, so the law can be changed, and children and young people can be better protected everywhere.





# Being safe and feeling safe

We have just updated our website with lots of information about your right to feel safe in organisations and services that work with you.

Being 'child safe' means that grown-ups need to make sure they:

- listen when you tell them about things you are worried about
- think about what needs to happen to keep you safe
- tell you what they will do
- do what they say they will do.

Our website explains what organisations need to do and has some activities you can do to work out what feeling safe means to you.

Some young people told us what makes them feel safe. If you would like to tell me what feeling safe means to you, I would love to hear from you.

**What are Child Safe Standards?**  
The Child Safe Standards are ten steps organisations and services need to take to make sure they look after your rights, safety, and wellbeing.

Organisations and services must make sure you feel safe to be yourself, including by showing that they understand and support your individuality and your cultural needs. They must make sure ALL children and young people are included, no matter who you are or where you come from. If you are an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child or young person, they must respect and value your diverse and unique identity and experiences.

**Step 1**  
People who provide services care about keeping you safe and well, and must have systems and processes to make sure everyone understands why this is important.

**Step 2**  
Services make sure you know your rights and involve you when they make decisions that affect you.

**Step 3**  
Your family and your community must be told about how services are being made safer, and how they can help to keep you safe and well.

**Step 4**  
All kids, teens, young people, families, and people working in services must be treated fairly and with respect, and services must have systems to help make sure this happens.

**Step 5**  
Services that work with you have workers who are safe grown-ups. Workers get support to make sure they can keep you safe and well, and they know how to help if there is a problem.

**Step 6**  
Services make sure you, your family and other people in the community know how to speak up if you or they are worried about things that people in the service are doing.

**Step 7**  
Workers know how to keep you safe and well and keep learning new things to help them be safe grown-ups.

**Step 8**  
Services find ways to make sure physical and online spaces where you spend time are safer.

**Step 9**  
Services that work with you must check their systems and processes often and keep looking for new ways to make their services safer.

**Step 10**  
Services must write down the ways they keep you safe, and make sure this is easy to read and understand by anyone who wants to read it.

ACTChildSafe.act.gov.au | ACTChildSafe@act.gov.au | 02 6205 2222

**There are 10 things services need to do to help you feel safe. Check them out at [actkids.act.gov.au](http://actkids.act.gov.au) or click on the poster**

I am believed. I can tell someone about my worries and trust them to do something to help make things better.

I can speak up. I can tell a trusted adult when I have concerns, and I know they will do something about it.

I am respected for being me. I can wear what I want, share my beliefs, and be involved in my culture.

I am valued. I can say what I think, need, or want even if it is different to other people.

I feel understood. I am being listened to and cared about.

## I feel safe when:

- I feel understood. This means I am being listened to and cared about.
- I feel believed. I can tell someone about my worries and trust them to do something to help make things better.
- I am respected for being me. I can wear what I want, share my beliefs, and be involved in my culture.
- I am valued. I can say what I think, need, or want even if it is different to what other people think.
- I can speak up. I can tell a trusted adult when I have concerns, and I know they will do something about it.





# SELF-CARE WORD SEARCH



Find the hidden self-care ideas!

Sometimes we need to be reminded of the simple ways to look after ourselves. Use this word search both as a reminder, and as a mindfulness tool!

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C	F	L	C	L	C	O	H	C	G	M	C	L	S	T
A	E	O	Y	E	X	E	R	C	I	S	E	I	L	Y
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MINDFULNESS

STRETCHING

DANCING

EXERCISE

READ

RELAXING

GRATITUDE

KINDNESS

BREATHE

YOGA

JOURNAL

PLAYING



# NATIONAL SORRY DAY AND RECONCILIATION WEEK

The 26th of May is National Sorry Day. On this day, we remember and respect the Stolen Generations, who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly taken from their families when they were children. It is an important day to acknowledge the grief and trauma caused by the removals. The ACT marked Sorry Day on 23 May this year. It was pouring with rain, so the Bridge Walk was cancelled, but lots of people still came to show their support on this important day.



Jodie (holding the centre umbrella) and her team at the Sorry Day event.

National Reconciliation Week begins on 27 May and continues until 3 June. It is a time for all Australians to learn about the histories, cultures, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. You can learn more about Reconciliation Week at [reconciliation.org.au](http://reconciliation.org.au).



**Did you know?** Purple is used to symbolise National Sorry Day and it represents the Native Hibiscus flower. The flower is used because it thrives in harsh conditions, and purple represents compassion and healing. You can find out more and take part in the colouring competition at [The Healing Foundation](http://TheHealingFoundation).



## Invite Jodie to visit your school or club!

Jodie, **your** Children and Young People Commissioner, loves to visit schools and clubs to talk about your rights and listen to your ideas.

If you would like Jodie to visit your school or club, ask your teacher or coach to send an email to [actkids@act.gov.au](mailto:actkids@act.gov.au) or call on 02 6205 2222.