

RIGHTS IN ACTION

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



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What's new?

- Earlier in April, the draft National Autism Strategy was published so people can send their feedback to the Government. Find out how you can have a say on page 3.

Did you know...

- About 1 in 6 people in Australia have a disability? And around 1 in 10 school students have a disability.
- It can take two years to train a service dog? Once trained, service dogs can go to all public places and any breed of dog can become a service dog if they have the right personality and training.



Yuma! Welcome to the April newsletter! I hope you all had a relaxing holiday and are ready for the new term. This month we are exploring your human rights when you have a disability - did you know you have the right to support? Check out what this means on page 2. You can also let us know what you think of the National Draft Autism Strategy and get some tips on making friends at school!

I love hearing from you, and there are lots of ways for you to get in touch. Feel free to let me know what is important to you and tell me your ideas about how to make Canberra better for children and young people like you!

YOUR RIGHT TO SUPPORT IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY



If you have a disability, you have the right to special care and support so you can live a full life, with dignity, and be a part of the community.

Article 23, Convention on the Rights of the Child

If you have a disability, you have the right to:

- get the support you need,
- be included in your community, and
- be treated equally.

In Australia, including in the ACT, there are laws to make sure people with disabilities are able to be active members of the community and have a say on decisions about their lives.

Sadly, people with disabilities face barriers to their rights because of negative attitudes or people not understanding their needs.

The ACT Human Rights Act 2004 says people with disabilities cannot be discriminated against (treated negatively because of their disability) and you must have the same opportunities as other people. There is also a special law for the whole of Australia called the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 to protect you from unfair treatment if you have a disability.

This might mean services need to make reasonable adjustments to make sure you can get the same opportunities as other people. For example, you might need to bring your service dog into a restaurant or have extra time on a test at school. Reasonable adjustments are small changes that can help you do things other people can do, like going to school, taking public transport, or having a job.

The Government must also help you, and the people who care for you, get the support you need so that you can do the things you want to do.

If you have a disability and think your rights are not being protected, you can let me know by emailing me at: actkids@act.gov.au. Or you can ask a trusted adult to email me for you. We can talk to you about what your options are and help you to find a solution.

Draft National Autism Strategy

At the beginning of April, the Australian Government published a draft **strategy** to make sure **Autistic** people can participate in all parts of life, and our communities are safe and inclusive for them.

The draft strategy was designed with a lot of input from Autistic people, including children and young people. It is almost finished, but the Government wants to give people another chance to have a look at it and let them know if it is good, or if things need to be changed.

This was announced on the radio on 2 April, which is World Autism Awareness Day. When it was announced, 9-year-old Dawn asked if we could put it into child-friendly language so she can comment on it.

A note about language

People use different words to talk about autism and their identity. Some people like to say 'Autistic person' and some like to say 'person with autism'. Other people will have other ways they talk about it. Some Autistic people identify as having a disability, and others do not.

We use 'Autistic person', but support everyone's choice about the terminology they prefer and how they like to identify.

We thought that was a great idea!

It is your right to have information you understand, and to be able to have a say on things that matter to you. So, we have spoken to the team who wrote the strategy and are working on a **summary** of it that you can understand.

Are an Autistic child or young person who would like to have a say?

You, or someone you trust, can email us so we can send you the summary. You can then tell us what you think by coming to talk to us (or we can come and talk to you). If there is another way that suits you more, please use it - you might like to write a letter, draw a picture, record your thoughts as a voice memo, or sing a song!

If you would like to have a say, we need to you to tell us by **Monday 13th May**.

That gives us time to send the summary to you, and then to hear what you think about it. There are lots of ways to have a say, and we can explain how to tell us what you think. We will make sure you can let us know what you think in a way that suits you.

Email: actkids@act.gov.au



Word definitions

Strategy A plan of what we want to do and how we want to do it.

Summary A shorter, more simple, form of a document.

Tips for making friends at school

A young person who spoke at a conference I was at in March said:

“The 5 people you hang out with most, will be the 5 behaviours you show.”

You want friends who support the behaviours you value most. At school, friends can be life-long, or last for a short time - that is ok. You can have different friends at different times in your life. You might be ready to make some new friends this term, or perhaps you have started a new school. It is always a good time to make a few new friends, so here are some tips to get you started!

5 tips to make friends at school

Compliment someone to start a conversation.
“You scored a great goal in PE today.” or “I liked the question you asked in class today.”

Find people who share your interests.
Join school clubs or bring an activity you love to do and invite others to play as well, such as a board game or football.

Look for people who support you and make you feel comfortable.

Introduce yourself to people you don't know. Saying ‘Hi!’ and telling someone your name helps to start a conversation.

Ask someone to sit with you at lunch time. This might be scary but can be a great way to start a conversation.





I care what you think



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ACTKIDS_CYPC



It is part of my job to listen to you and tell other adults what you think will help make Canberra a better place for children and young people. Hearing from you is also my favourite part of my job! You can use the postcard below, email me, upload pictures or recordings to our [Young Thinker Forum](https://www.hrc.act.gov.au/ytforum), or call me.

Have your say in your way!

POSTCARD



To: Jodie Griffiths-Cook
ACT Human Rights Commission
GPO Box 158
Canberra
ACT 2601

Sending your message to Jodie



ACTKids@act.gov.au (snap a photo and email it)



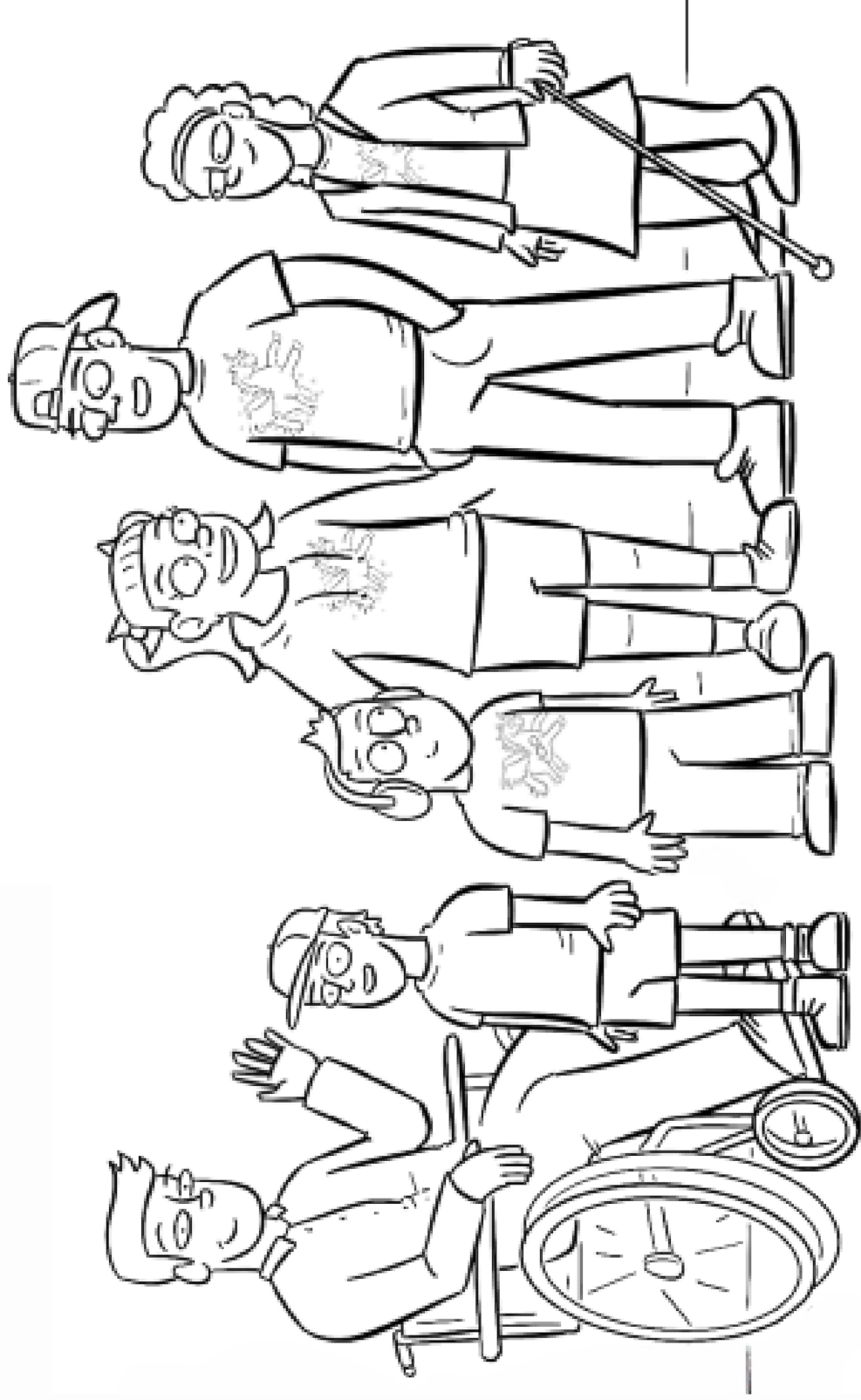
Upload it to the Young Thinker Forum www.hrc.act.gov.au/ytforum



Put a postage stamp on it and send it by mail!

Your rights, in your words

Colouring in



I have the right to _____