



Taking Action

Implementing the Statement of Commitment to Western Australia's children and young people

The Commissioner for Children and Young People is committed to promoting the rights of all children and young people in WA.

All children have the right to be safe, healthy, happy and learning. Everyone has a responsibility, including family, carers, the broader community and children and young people, to work together to deliver these rights.

In making sure these rights are upheld, the Commissioner must give special consideration to those children who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or vulnerable or disadvantaged for any reason.

"It's about your rights that you have, that you actually deserve. And people can't just take those things away from you."

Children and young people's rights should matter to everybody.

The Statement of Commitment (the Statement) formalises the Commissioner for Children and Young People's obligation to monitor and promote the rights of children and young people in Western Australia.

The Statement is intended to guide the Western Australian community's collective efforts to ensure all children and young people in this state are safe, healthy, happy, learning. It is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and informed by conversations with Western Australian children and young people.

The UNCRC is an international agreement protecting the rights of children under the age of 18, to which almost every country on the world is a signatory. It was ratified by Australia in 1990.

The rights contained in the UNCRC are guided by four General Principles:

- Best interests of the child.
- Non-discrimination.
- Right to be heard.
- Survival and development.

These principles strongly inform the Statement of Commitment.

The role of the Commissioner for Children and Young People

The Commissioner for Children and Young People was appointed by the Parliament of Western Australia to help monitor and promote children's rights in this State. The Commissioner's work has regard for the UNCRC, in particular the best interests of the child. This principle underpins all of the Commissioner's key functions.

The Commissioner has a strong commitment to both the safety and wellbeing¹ of children and young people and all work of the office and with other organisations focuses on these priorities.

All children and young people are entitled to live in a caring and nurturing environment and to be protected from harm and exploitation. Children and young people should be safe, feel safe and like they belong and are respected everywhere, whether at home, school, the broader community or online.

The Statement is closely guided by the Commissioner's priority areas and contains nine rights that support three domains of children and young people's wellbeing. These domains are informed by what children and young people consistently tell the Commissioner is important to their wellbeing. Research also confirms that positive outcomes in these domains are important contributors to wellbeing.²

The nine rights that support the three domains of wellbeing are:

Safe and supported

- The right to be safe and feel safe everywhere
- The right to belong and be you
- The right to be treated fairly and humanely

Learning and participating

- The right to contribute, make decisions and be listened to
- The right to education and lifelong learning
- The right to explore, express and create

Healthy and connected

- The right to a healthy life
- The right to play, have fun and be active
- The right to be loved

¹ Wellbeing can be understood in both material and subjective terms. Material circumstances of a family and access to basic material needs can be a significant contributor to the wellbeing of children and young people in other domains. Subjective wellbeing considers how children and young people feel about themselves and the world they live in, including physical and mental health and concerns about broader issues like family conflict and problems at school (Commissioner for Children and Young People 2014, *The State of Western Australia's Children and Young People – Edition Two*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA.)

² Commissioner for Children and Young People 2014, *The State of Western Australia's Children and Young People – Edition Two*, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA.

How can I implement, support or promote the Statement of Commitment?

How you implement, support or promote the Statement of Commitment will differ depending on who you work with, the type of work you do, and the size and capacity of your organisation. However, everyone has a role to play - including parents, teachers, members of the broader community and children and young people.

There are many ways of taking action, including:

- Reflecting on your current policies, programs and practices – how do you measure up? Are decisions made in the best interest of the child? Do children and young people have a meaningful voice in decisions that affect them? Do the children you work with know about their rights and responsibilities? Do the adults?
- Developing process and impact assessment tools to audit existing policies and programs and align new policies and programs with the Statement of Commitment.
- Informing and educating children and young people about their rights – and responsibilities. This may include things such as developing curriculum-linked learning resources for school, community or sporting groups.
- Asking for children and young people’s input, listening to what they say, and taking their views seriously.
- Sharing the Statement with relevant stakeholders.

What can children and young people do?

By discussing what it means to have rights, children and young people can develop their understanding of the important connection between rights and responsibilities.

In what ways are children responsible for ensuring that other people’s rights are also protected?

How do their actions impact others, and how do others’ actions impact them?

Children can promote their own rights and the rights of other children and young people around them, by -

- Speaking up! Help others be heard, raise concerns, or educate your friends.
- Letting adults know if you are worried about something, have a complaint, or are not happy with how you have been treated.
- Talking to your friends, teachers, parents or carers to let them know the Commissioner supports children’s rights and has produced this document.

Useful links and resources from the Commissioner for Children and Young People

- [Statement of Commitment](#)
- [Child Safe Organisations WA](#)
- [Monitoring Children and Young People's Wellbeing](#)
- [Engaging with Aboriginal Children and Young People Toolkit](#)
- [Engagement in Education](#)
- [Improving legislation and policy for children and young people](#)

Other useful links and resources

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Children's Commissioner New Zealand - Child Impact Assessments resources](#)
- Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland - [UNCRC](#) and [Children's Rights Impact Assessment resources](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Commission Western Australia](#)