

# TERRITORY AND NATIONAL POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS INFLUENCING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When reviewing individual, family and community outcomes, it is important to acknowledge the broader policy and social influences. Several Australian Government and Australian Capital Territory policies influence child health, wellbeing, learning and development within the ACT.

## ACT policies and frameworks

**The Human Services Blueprint** was released in 2014 and provides a framework for the delivery of better and sustainable outcomes for our children and young people by ensuring improved access and service integration for human service users.

To learn more visit: [www.betterservices.act.gov.au/human-services-blueprint/human-services-blueprint-final](http://www.betterservices.act.gov.au/human-services-blueprint/human-services-blueprint-final)

**The ACT Children and Young People's Commitment 2015–2025** was released in December 2015 and is a high-level strategic document that sets a vision for a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to promote the rights of children and young people (aged 0 to 25 years) in the ACT. It is envisaged that the Commitment will provide guidance to people in the Canberra community on how to assist children and young people to reach their potential, make a contribution, and share the benefits of our community.

To learn more visit: [www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/publications/children-and-young-people-commitment](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/publications/children-and-young-people-commitment)

**A Step Up for Our Kids – One Step Can Make a Lifetime of Difference** (Out of Home Care Strategy 2015–2020) was released in January 2015. The Strategy is a cornerstone initiative of the ACT Government's Better Services suite from the Human Services Blueprint. The Strategy will strengthen existing child protection and out of home care services through the introduction of new services and reforms, ensuring children and young people who need protection and care receive the right service, at the right time for the right duration.

To learn more visit: [www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/out-of-home-care-strategy-2015-2020](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/out-of-home-care-strategy-2015-2020)

**Community Services Directorate Business Plan 2015–16** outlines the Directorate's direction over the financial year, including principles, priorities, strategic initiatives and measures of success.

To learn more visit: [www.communityservices.act.gov.au/home/about\\_us/strategic\\_plan](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/home/about_us/strategic_plan)

**Early Years Learning Framework: Belonging, Being and Becoming** describes the principles practices and outcomes that support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.

To learn more visit: [https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging\\_being\\_and\\_becoming\\_the\\_early\\_years\\_learning\\_framework\\_for\\_australia.pdf](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf)

ACT schools are progressively implementing the **Australian Curriculum for students in Kindergarten to Year 10**. The Australian Curriculum describes what all Australian students should be taught, and the expected quality of their learning. The Australian Curriculum is founded on the principles of quality and equity, and seeks to develop successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.

To learn more visit: [www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/)

**Education Capital: Leading the Nation — Education and Training Directorate Strategic Plan 2014–17.**

To learn more visit: [www.education.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/publications\\_a-z](http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/publications_a-z)

**Skilled Workforce for the ACT: ACT Skills and Training Policy Directions Paper.**

Reforms are underway to ensure a strong ACT training sector provides quality opportunities for people to access flexible training to enhance their career prospects. In a time of limited resources, it is also important for the ACT to continue to find efficiencies in how training can best be supported, to ensure its ongoing sustainability.

To learn more visit: [www.education.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/677165/ACTSkillsAndTrainingPolicyDirectionsPaper\\_v1.0.pdf](http://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/677165/ACTSkillsAndTrainingPolicyDirectionsPaper_v1.0.pdf)

**ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2015–2018** sets out the commitment of the ACT Government, our service partners, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, and most importantly the community, to work together to recognise and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the ACT and surrounding region. Together we can bridge the gap and ensure all Canberrans receive the opportunities to achieve equitable outcomes in all aspects of their life.

To learn more visit: [www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/agreement-2015-18](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/atsia/agreement-2015-18)

**ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Partnership 2015–2018**

provides a higher level of understanding and mutual commitment to addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT law and criminal justice system, improving their community safety, and overcoming social inclusion. It is a joint partnership between the ACT Government and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. The partnership is a first for the ACT, involving considerable consultation with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

To learn more visit: [www.justice.act.gov.au/aboriginal\\_and\\_torres\\_strait\\_islander/aboriginal\\_and\\_torres\\_strait\\_islander\\_justice\\_affairs](http://www.justice.act.gov.au/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_justice_affairs)

**The Blueprint for Youth Justice in the ACT 2012–22** is a ten-year strategy of reform that focuses on early intervention, prevention and diversion of young people from the youth justice system.

To learn more visit: [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/337590/Blueprint\\_for\\_Youth\\_Justice\\_in\\_the\\_ACT\\_2012-22.pdf](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/337590/Blueprint_for_Youth_Justice_in_the_ACT_2012-22.pdf)

**ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women Strategy 2011–17** targets violence against women and children by promoting holistic and flexible service provision, an anti-violence culture, and accountable perpetrators who are supported to change their behaviour.

To learn more visit: [www.communityservices.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/231341/ACT\\_Prevention\\_of\\_Violence\\_Against\\_Women\\_and\\_Children\\_Strategy\\_2011.pdf](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/231341/ACT_Prevention_of_Violence_Against_Women_and_Children_Strategy_2011.pdf)

The **ACT Women's Plan 2016–26** sets out key directions and priorities in relation to the ACT Government's work in the area of improving outcomes for women and girls living in the ACT. Work under the Plan will address priority areas of women's health and wellbeing; women's access to stable and affordable housing; women's right to safety at home and in the community; and women's economic security and leadership. The Plan also sets out a course of action to introduce targeted measures to improve outcomes for women who are at heightened risk due to intersecting forms of discrimination as a result of factors such as disability, race, age and socio-economic status.

To learn more visit: [www.communityservices.act.gov.au/women/office\\_for\\_women/womens-plan-2016-26](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/women/office_for_women/womens-plan-2016-26)

The ***Involve Canberra Disability Commitment*** is a movement of people with and without disability, community organisations, industry and government acting together to achieve change that empowers people with disability. We will achieve change through community designed social campaigns that focus on practical action in each priority area.

To learn more visit: [www.involvecbr.com.au/](http://www.involvecbr.com.au/)

The ***National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)*** is a new way of funding individualised support for people with disability (including psychosocial disability) that involves more choice and control and a lifetime approach to a person's support needs. The NDIS trial began on 1 July 2014 for people with disability living in the ACT. People have been transitioning over this past two years. Around 5,075 people with disability in the ACT are covered by the scheme as of September 2016.

To learn more visit: [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au), call the NDIA on 1800 800 110 or TTY users phone 1800 555 677 and ask for 1800 800 110

***Renewing Libraries: Libraries, Literacy and Learning Strategy 2015–2019*** aims to deliver and support literacy programs, help create lifelong learners, facilitate information-sharing with the community, and provide access to technology, the internet and inclusive spaces. It also invests in the vision of Canberra as a digital city—digitally literate, connected and engaged.

To learn more visit: [www.library.act.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0009/728280/1500147-Libraries-Strategy\\_FA\\_web-FINAL.pdf](http://www.library.act.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0009/728280/1500147-Libraries-Strategy_FA_web-FINAL.pdf)

***Towards Zero Growth Healthy Weight Action Plan*** is a whole-of-government initiative to address the rising rates of overweight and obesity across the ACT population. This initiative is guided by the Towards Zero Growth Healthy Weight Action Plan which was launched by the ACT Government in 2013. The Action Plan sets a target of 'zero growth' in the rates of overweight and obesity within the ACT across six key themes: schools, workplaces, urban planning, food environment, social inclusion, and information and data.

To learn more visit: [www.act.gov.au/healthyliving](http://www.act.gov.au/healthyliving)

***Active2020: A strategic plan for sport and active recreation in the ACT and Region 2011–2020*** promotes ACT Government and industry partnerships dedicated to encouraging long term investment and planning by sport and recreation associations in the ACT. It aims to improve the health, wellbeing and connectedness of community members, including children and young people.

To learn more visit: [www.sport.act.gov.au/about-us/active-2020](http://www.sport.act.gov.au/about-us/active-2020)

**Nature Play CBR** is about getting more children outdoors more often so they can reap the benefits of unstructured playing, learning and being physically active. Children need nature play for their physical and mental health, for their cognitive and emotional development, and because they have a right to run, climb, build, get dirty, and imagine the world for themselves through play.

To learn more visit: [www.natureplaycbr.org.au](http://www.natureplaycbr.org.au)

**The Canberra Plan: Towards our second century** shapes the ACT Government's vision for the growth and development of Canberra into the future and aims to make Canberra a great place to live for children, young people and other members of the community.

To learn more visit: [www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/120217/canberra\\_plan\\_text\\_V5.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0013/120217/canberra_plan_text_V5.pdf)

**Canberra Social Plan 2011** vision is that: Canberra is a place where all people reach their potential, make a contribution and share the benefits of an inclusive community. The Plan 2011 re-affirms the ACT Government's commitment to the people of Canberra. It is based on the themes of connection, belonging and collaboration.

To learn more visit: [www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/216559/2011CanberraSocialPlan\\_Print\\_Version.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0010/216559/2011CanberraSocialPlan_Print_Version.pdf)

**The Social Compact 2012** highlights the relationship between the government and community sector and the vital role played by the community sector in contributing to quality community life.

To learn more visit: [www.cmd.act.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/521486/The-Social-Compact\\_web-version2.pdf](http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/___data/assets/pdf_file/0008/521486/The-Social-Compact_web-version2.pdf)

## National policies and frameworks

The current initiatives within the ACT fit within a broader national policy context focused on monitoring and promoting positive outcomes for children and young people. Current initiatives influencing the development of children and young people nationwide include:

- ***Investing in the Early Years – A National Early Childhood Development Strategy*** (2009) and the ***National Early Childhood Strategic Plan*** (2014–2017) aim to build an effective early childhood development system in Australia that will contribute to the nation’s human capital and productivity.
- ***National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*** recognises the importance of quality early childhood education and care and aims to implement national quality standards to ensure consistent and high quality practices.
- ***Protecting Children is Everyone’s Business: National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children 2009–2020*** aims to build parenting and community capacity to care for children and reduce child abuse and neglect over time. The National Standards for out-of-home care seek to drive improvements in the quality of care so that children and young people in out-of-home care have the same opportunities as other children and young people to reach their potential in life wherever they live in Australia.
- ***Closing the Gap*** is a national integrated strategy to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians, and in particular provide a better future for Indigenous children.
- ***Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy 2010–2015*** aims to contribute to improving the health, nutrition and wellbeing of infants and young children, and the health and wellbeing of mothers, by protecting, promoting, supporting and monitoring breastfeeding.
- ***National Strategy for Young Australians*** describes what it’s like to be young in Australia today and highlights eight priority areas for government action now and into the future.
- ***National Disability Strategy 2010–2020*** provides a unified, national approach to improving the lives of people with disability, their families and carers.
- The ***Australian Curriculum*** sets consistent national standards to improve learning outcomes for all young Australians. It sets out, through content descriptions and achievement standards, what students should be taught and achieve, as they progress through school. It is the base for future learning, growth and active participation in the Australian community. ACARA develops the Australian Curriculum through rigorous, consultative national processes.

## Looking for more data?

**ACT Health Epidemiology Branch** provides a range of reports on the health of the ACT population, to assist with the development and evaluation of policies and interventions to improve health. Reports outlining the health status of children and young people in the ACT include: the biennial Chief Health Officer's Report, the *Health Status of Young People in the ACT 2012* report, and maternal and perinatal health publications.

To learn more visit: [www.health.act.gov.au/health-services/population-health/health-improvement/epidemiology-branch/](http://www.health.act.gov.au/health-services/population-health/health-improvement/epidemiology-branch/)

**Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Children and Youth theme page** provides a guide to both ABS and non-ABS data, identifying the wide range of information available on children and youth.

To learn more visit: [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

The **Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)** is a national population measure of children's development at school entry in five domains of physical health and wellbeing; emotional maturity; social competence; language and cognitive skills; and communication and general knowledge. The AEDC website also provides contextual community data from the Australian Census (2006 and 2011) relevant to the development of children.

To learn more visit: [www.aedc.gov.au/](http://www.aedc.gov.au/)

The **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)** is a major national agency which provides reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare. The National headline indicators for children's health, development and wellbeing, for example, includes a set of 19 children's headline indicators designed to focus policy attention on priorities for children's health, development and wellbeing. Young Australians: their health and wellbeing is a series of reports that provides the latest available information on how Australia's young people aged 12–24 years are faring according to a set of national indicators of health and wellbeing.

To learn more visit: [www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)

The **Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)** is a national non-profit organisation working to improve the wellbeing of children and young people, by advancing collaboration and evidence-based action.

To learn more visit: [www.aracy.org.au/](http://www.aracy.org.au/)

**Longitudinal Study of Australian Children** (LSAC) investigates the health, education, child and family functioning, child care and socio-demographics of Australian children. Data collection began in 2004 on two cohorts of children, infants and 4–5 year olds. The study will continue to follow these two cohorts of children to the ages of 14–15 years and 18–19 years.

To learn more visit: [www.aifs.gov.au/](http://www.aifs.gov.au/)

**Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth** (LSAY) is a research program that tracks young people as they move from school to post-school destinations, such as further study, work and other destinations, and explores social outcomes, such as wellbeing. Information collected as part of LSAY covers a wide range of school and post-school topics, including: student achievement, student aspirations, school retention, social background, attitudes to school, work experiences and what students are doing when they leave school. This includes vocational and higher education, employment, job seeking activity, and satisfaction with various aspects of their lives.

To learn more visit: [www.lsay.edu.au/](http://www.lsay.edu.au/)

Every year, the Australian Government's Productivity Commission releases the **Report on Government Services** (ROGS) to provide information on the effectiveness and efficiency of government services across Australia. Chapters relating to children and young people are included in Part B (early childhood, education and training) and Part F (community services).

To learn more visit: [www.pc.gov.au/gsp/rogs](http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/rogs)



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