**Stats & Facts: Children’s Rights**

In Australia, most children enjoy their right to education, healthcare, and a good standard of living. Most live in safe, caring homes and communities where they can grow and develop, play and have fun, be involved in activities, and look forward to the future. But some children need more support to enjoy all their rights and freedoms.

Children and their caregivers tell us, and national data shows us, that there is more work to be done to support children in the areas of disability, mental health, safety (including online safety), housing, and child justice, among others.

# **Demographics**

* There are 5.8 million children aged under 18 in Australia. That’s almost 1 in 5 people in Australia.[[1]](#endnote-1)

# **Mental health**

* 1 in 3 children aged 12-17 report high or very high levels of mental distress.[[2]](#endnote-2)

# **Where and how children are living**

* Over 45,000 children are in out-of-home care.[[3]](#endnote-3)
* Over 40% of children in out-of-home care are First Nations.[[4]](#endnote-4)

# **Safety**

* People in Australia who report that as a child they experienced:
* exposure to domestic violence: 40%
* physical abuse: 32%
* emotional abuse: 31%
* sexual abuse: 29%
* neglect: 9%[[5]](#endnote-5)
* Young women reported substantially higher rates of child sexual abuse and higher rates of neglect and emotional abuse than young men.[[6]](#endnote-6)
* 44% of 12 – 17 year olds in Australia reported having a negative online experience in the last 6 months.[[7]](#endnote-7)
* 30% were contacted by a stranger or someone they didn’t know
* 15% received threats or abuse online[[8]](#endnote-8)

# **Disability**

* Over 1 in 5 students in Australian schools received an educational adjustment due to a disability.[[9]](#endnote-9)

# **Standard of living**

* 1 in 6 children live in poverty[[10]](#endnote-10) and on Census night in 2021, nearly 29,000 children were experiencing homelessness.[[11]](#endnote-11)

# **Contact with the criminal justice system**

* In most parts of Australia, the minimum age of criminal responsibility is 10 years.[[12]](#endnote-12) The United Nations recommends that it be at least 14 years.[[13]](#endnote-13)
* On an average day in Australia in 2022-23, over 4,500 children were under youth justice supervision. 82% were supervised in the community, and 18% were in detention.[[14]](#endnote-14)

# **Young peoples’ future and the environment**

* Over 1 in 2 young people report feeling fearful about their future due to climate change.[[15]](#endnote-15)

# **Suggested citation**

Australian Human Rights Commission. (2025). Stats & Facts: Children’s Rights.

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