

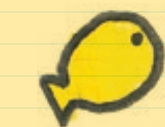
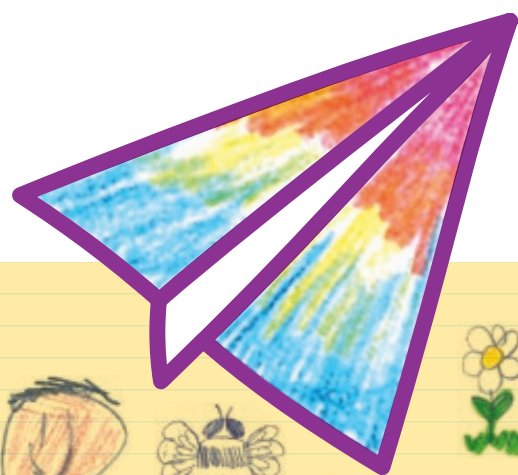
South Australian
Commissioner
for Children and
Young People
2023

ccyp.com.au

The Things That Matter 4

Views of 8-12 year olds on life,
school and community

PROJECT REPORT NO. 37 | JULY 2023



Commissioner
for Children &
Young People

The Commissioner's Role

The South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People is an independent statutory position, established under the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* ('the Act'). The Commissioner's role includes advocating for systemic change to policies, programs and practices that impact the rights, development and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.

This work is informed by the experiences and issues of children and young people themselves, with a specific focus on those who struggle to have their voices heard.

The Commissioner's strategic agenda was formulated with direct input from children and young people. In particular, children and young people asked the Commissioner to facilitate their involvement in decision making, and to create opportunities for them to experience authentic participation.

The Commissioner is working with a number of partners on this agenda, including ways in which children and young people can have input into the design and delivery of policies, processes and practices that relate to delivery of services aimed directly at them.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the 16,007 South Australian school students aged 8–12 years who participated in the Commissioner's Student Voice Postcard Project in 2022. Thanks also to the teachers and school staff who supported their participation.

Please note: All quotes in this report are reproduced verbatim.

Suggested Citation

Connolly, H. Commissioner for Children and Young People, South Australia (2023)
The Things That Matter 4 – Views of 8–12 year olds on life, school and community. July 2023.

All material presented in this publication is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



with the exception of:

- photographs and images;
- the Commission's logo, any branding or trademarks;
- content or material provided by third parties; and
- where otherwise indicated.

Contents

Commissioner's Foreword	4
Overview of student and school participation	7
Key messages	10
What do 8 to 12-year-olds think is the best thing about being a kid?	12
What do 8 to 12-year-olds worry about?	17
What do 8 to 12-year-olds want grownups to know?	22
What do 8 to 12-year-olds think would make the world better?	27
Reflections on gender	31
Conclusion	32



Commissioner's Foreword

This is my fourth *Things That Matter* report. As with all of my previous postcard reports it draws on responses from school children aged 8–12 years who participate in my annual Student Voice Postcards initiative via their school.



Over the four years since I commenced the initiative, I have received 46,683 postcards from South Australian children in this age group – a rare and unique data set that provides incredible insight into their lives during these times.

These postcards have enabled me to better understand what children are doing, what matters to them, and what concerns they have. The postcards are just one way in which I help to ensure South Australia is meeting its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically in relation to providing children with opportunities to express their views on all matters affecting them (Article 12).

Postcard packs are sent out in Term 3 each year to every school that has students in the 8-12 year age group. The packs contain a pre-printed postcard that contains a set of four simple questions children are asked to respond to in their own words. They are also invited to draw a picture on the reverse side of the postcard with many of these featured in this report.

For 2022, my four postcard questions focused on children's views about what they thought the best thing about being a kid is, what they worry

about most, what they want grownups to know, and what they think would make the world a better place.

Family and friends, caring for the environment and acting on climate change, school experiences, sickness and death, and kindness and equality, were all central to many of the responses I received from children in 2022.

A total of 16,007 South Australian children aged 8-12 years completed a postcard in 2022.

They came from 336 schools across the state – with this figure representing participation by more than half the schools in South Australia that have 8–12 year-old children enrolled. This is a considerable increase on the 13,868 children who completed postcards in 2021 from a total of 289 schools who participated.

Of the 336 schools who participated in 2022, 84 did so for the first time, while 67 schools have now participated across all four years.

The 2022 postcards were completed by students from Government, Catholic and Independent schools across metropolitan, regional, rural, and remote parts of South Australia.

They included children attending a diverse range of school types: primary schools, primary/



secondary combined schools, Area schools, Special Education schools, and Aboriginal/Anangu schools.

A similar number of girls and boys completed postcards in 2022, with a smaller number of children describing their gender as non-binary, genderfluid, more than one gender, or in other ways gender diverse than in 2021.

The responses across the postcard questions for 2022 show that South Australian children are compassionate, engaged in the world around them, and keen to share their views with adults. Children shared their experiences and views on school and home life, as well as on society more broadly. They wrote about their interests and concerns, and what they wanted for themselves and others.

Children want adults to listen to them, to hear their ideas, and to treat them with respect. They want them to know more about who they are and to have a better understanding of their lives.

A key concern for children was the environment and the need to act on climate change; a topic that comes up frequently in the postcards, and which many children feel passionately about.

Children's responses also highlighted that they want to live in a world with kindness, where everyone is treated equally and where there is no judgement. They envisage a world that has no bullying, no fighting, no wars, no hunger, and no poverty.

Family and friends were often central to their responses, with children expressing their gratitude for their parents, and being able to spend time together.

But many children also said they worried about 'bad things' happening to their parents and family members with several children expressing their concerns for their families and themselves in relation to death and getting hurt or sick.

Children reported a broad range of school experiences, with some more positive than others. Ultimately, children want grownups to know more about these experiences, and for children to be able to make suggestions for changes to their school lives that will make their school days better.

Not having adult responsibilities was viewed as a key distinction between children and adults, although some children noted they had worries about these for the future.

Overall, children's responses highlighted that most have enjoyment or fun in their lives, and that this is important to them.

Children wrote about issues personally impacting them and those around them (friends, family, educators, and animals) as well as their concerns in relation to societal and global issues. There are several important contextual factors which provide a background to some of these responses.

In the second half of 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic was having less of a daily impact on people's lives in South Australia. While COVID-19 was mentioned in some children's responses across several questions, it was less prevalent than in the 2021 postcards.

A new concern for children arising since the 2021 postcards was the war in Ukraine. Several children showed awareness of global issues, asking for the war to be stopped and for all countries to find ways to get along.

There were also some continuing issues mentioned by children across multiple years of the postcards. These included the need to care for the environment and to take immediate action on climate change, with deep concerns expressed for the world and its plants and animals now and into the future. Children also wanted adults to adopt a more nuanced approach to 'screens,' one that reflects the complexity and often centrality of digital technology they are required to embrace as a young person growing up in the 21st century.

A huge thank you to all of the students and their educators, teachers, and support staff at schools who supported their participation in 2022. It's fantastic to see the support for this student voice and agency initiative growing year on year. Seeing an increasing number of children and schools participating in 2022 demonstrates the value educators give to ensuring students have opportunities for voice and agency.

A special thank you to the 67 South Australian schools who have participated every year since the initiative commenced in 2019. I am confident that the ongoing nature of this data set will become increasingly valued by researchers and policy makers with each passing year.

I'm hoping all schools who have already participated will continue to do so, showing their support for the initiative again in 2023. I also look forward to seeing even more schools take part in Postcards this year. It is my hope that each school will support as many 8–12 year-old students as possible to participate in the initiative.



Postcards are a great opportunity for children to share their views and experiences about their lives in a simple yet convenient format. Alternative formats are available to enable participation by 8–12-year-old children who use other methods to communicate apart from handwriting or drawing. We have also had responses from children using braille, as well as from those who use augmented and alternative communication methods. I encourage you to get in touch if you'd like to explore options for student participation in these, or other, ways.

My Postcards initiative aims to not only listen to children but to use their responses to advocate for and make a difference to the lives of children in this age group throughout South Australia. I look forward to your support for the 2023 Postcards initiative and to hearing what children in the State have to say about their lives and the world around them this year.

Helen Connolly

Commissioner for Children and Young People
Adelaide, South Australia

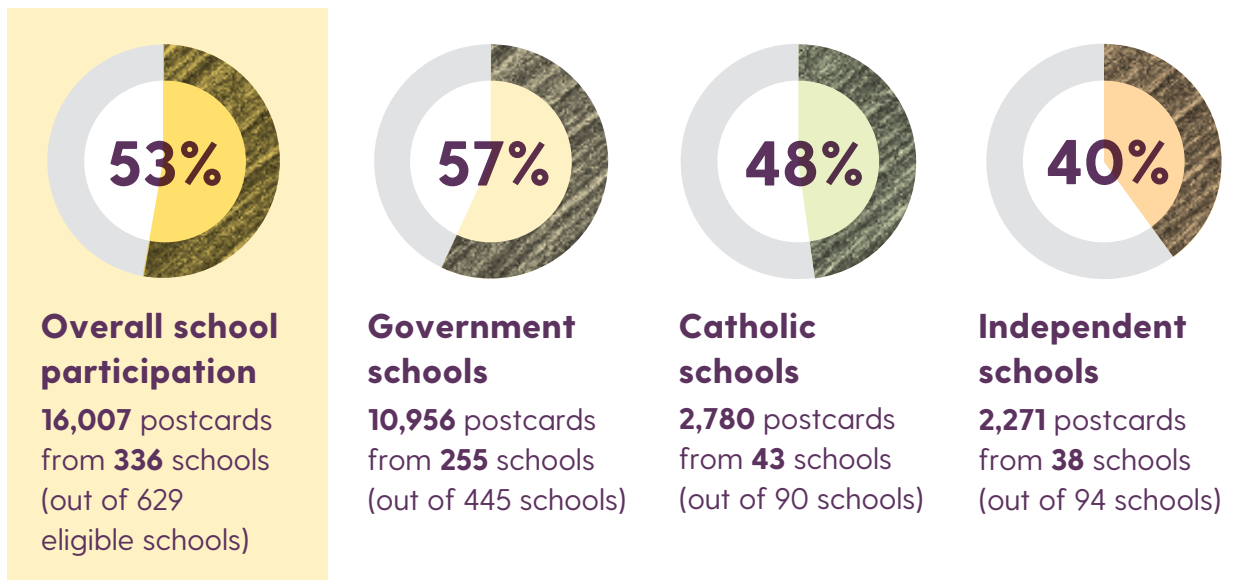
Overview of student and school participation

The 2022 postcard contained the following questions along with an option to draw a response as shown in the graphic below:



Postcard packs were sent to 629 schools across South Australia. The following participation rates are based on 629 as the total number of schools with 8–12 year olds enrolled that were invited to participate.

Participation rates, by school sector

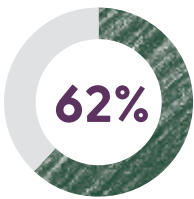


Participation, by type of school

- 10,704 postcards from 245 primary schools
- 4,057 postcards from 51 primary/secondary combined schools
- 1,014 postcards from 23 Area schools
- 180 postcards from 13 Special Education schools
- 52 postcards from 4 Aboriginal/Anangu schools



Participation rates, by South Australian government regions



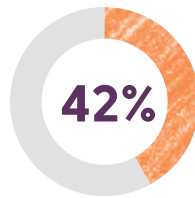
Adelaide Hills
888 postcards from 23 schools (out of 37 schools)



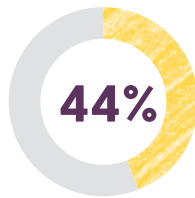
Barossa, Light and Lower North
942 postcards from 15 schools (out of 29 schools)



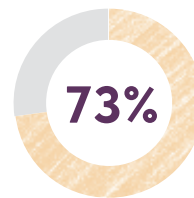
Eastern Adelaide
2,485 postcards from 38 schools (out of 61 schools)



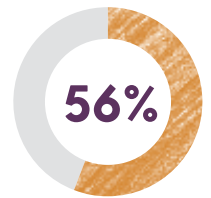
Eyre and Western
465 postcards from 16 schools (out of 38 schools)



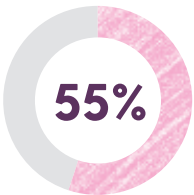
Far North
541 postcards from 12 schools (out of 27 schools)



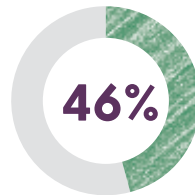
Fleurieu & Kangaroo Island
438 postcards from 11 schools (out of 15 schools)



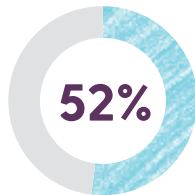
Limestone Coast
823 postcards from 22 schools (out of 39 schools)



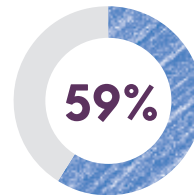
Murray and Mallee
1,218 postcards from 28 schools (out of 51 schools)



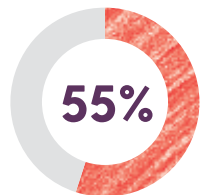
Northern Adelaide
2,622 postcards from 50 schools (out of 109 schools)



Southern Adelaide
2,649 postcards from 53 schools (out of 102 schools)

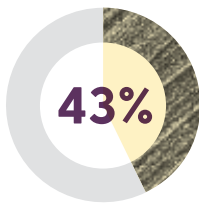


Western Adelaide
1,573 postcards from 34 schools (out of 58 schools)



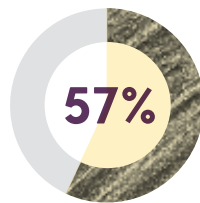
Yorke & Mid North
1,363 postcards from 34 schools (out of 62 schools)

Participation rates, by Index of Educational Disadvantage* for government schools



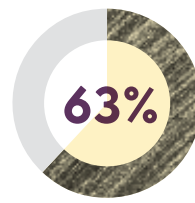
Category 1 schools

317 postcards from **16** schools (out of 37 schools)



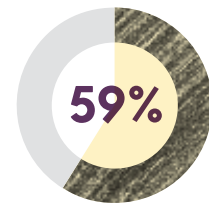
Category 2 schools

1,454 postcards from **36** schools (out of 63 schools)



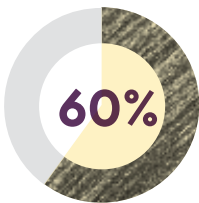
Category 3 schools

1,163 postcards from **30** schools (out of 48 schools)



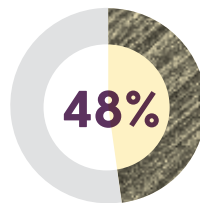
Category 4 schools

1,815 postcards from **38** schools (out of 64 schools)



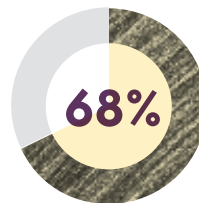
Category 5 schools

2,115 postcards from **49** schools (out of 81 schools)



Category 6 schools

2,032 postcards from **43** schools (out of 89 schools)



Category 7 schools

2,060 postcards from **43** schools (out of 63 schools)

*The Index of Educational Disadvantage groups South Australian government schools into seven categories of relative disadvantage, with schools in Category 1 serving the most disadvantaged school communities, and Category 7 the least disadvantaged.



Key messages

Many children mentioned some form of enjoyment or fun in their lives.



School experiences varied between children, but ultimately children want grownups to know more about their school days and to listen to their suggestions for change.



Family and friends were written about by many children. Children expressed gratitude to their parents for having had them and for being able to spend time with them. They also expressed fears that something might happen to their parents, as well as to their siblings or friends.



Children care for the environment and want immediate action on climate change.



Children expressed concern for themselves and others in relation to death, getting hurt or becoming sick.



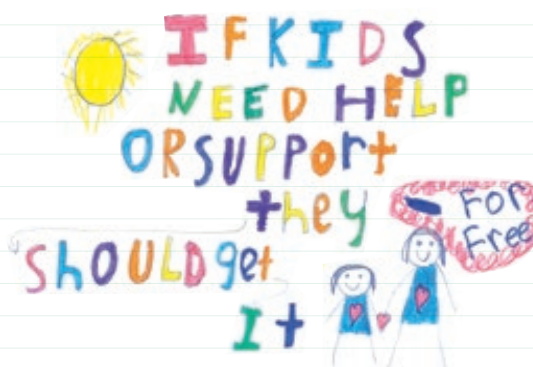
Having no 'adult responsibilities' was seen as a positive aspect of being a child, though some expressed worries about these in the future.



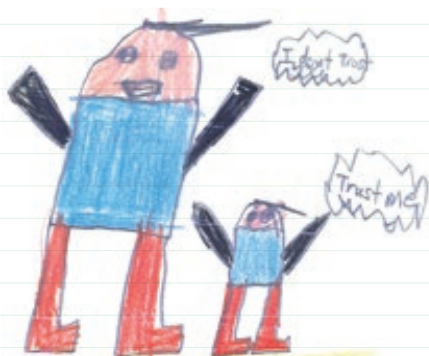
Children want to live in a world that is full of kindness and equality, and which has no bullying, fighting, wars, hunger, or poverty.



Children want grownups to know more about who they are and to have a better understanding of their lives.



Children have ideas which they want grownups to listen to more and they want adults to treat children with more respect.



There are several commonalities between children's responses, but it's also clear they have a diversity of experiences and views.



What do 8- to 12-year-olds think is the best thing about being a kid?

Having no adult responsibilities, like bills and work

Playing and having fun

Having and spending time with friends and family

Going to school and learning

Being young, energetic, and small

Nearly all of the 8-12 year olds completing the postcards named at least one 'best' thing about being a kid, with many children naming multiple things. These responses ranged from writing about why being a kid was better than being an adult, to comments that were specific to what was good about being a kid, to things that individual children liked best about their particular lives. Most of the responses viewed being a kid as positive.

- “ Have fun, do sports, stay fit and you get looked after and dont have to worry about paying bills and stuff.” (11, girl – Murray and Mallee, Government)
- “ You don't have to worry about work and you get to go to school and have fun.” (10, boy – Southern Adelaide, Catholic)

Having no adult responsibilities, like bills and work

Children frequently wrote that the best thing, or one of the best things, about being a kid was not having adult responsibilities. Not having to pay bills or have a job were viewed as particularly positive.

- “ Not having to deal with bills & taxes. Apparently Money is a Gift & a curse.” (11, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ You don't need to get a job. And I don't have to buy my food.” (9 1/2, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ Not having to pay taxes, helen please abolish taxes, taxes don't make people happy.” (12, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ I can go to the shops to buy things i like instead of paying bills.” (10, girl – Far North, Government)

Responses also highlighted the benefits of not having as many responsibilities as adults more broadly, and 'you don't have to be responsible for everything.' Children wrote about not having to worry or stress about a range of specific things that adults worry about, such as 'dealing with bills and taxes,' buying food, or having to 'drive the car.'





“ Having almost nothing to worry about. :) Not having tons of responsibility on our shoulders.” (8, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)

“ you can do whatever you want & you have no responsibilities.” (9, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)

Children also mentioned the benefit of not having to do chores like adults, such as not ‘clean[ing] up’ or ‘making tea’ at home.

Some children appreciated that having fewer responsibilities meant they had more time to relax and have fun.

“ that I don’t have to pay for food & I get to relax while my parents do the house work.” (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Catholic)

“ that we get to goof of and dont have to make dinner, lunch or breaky.” (9, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)

“ you don’t have to pay bills and drive places for ourselves, and cook food.” (12, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)

Playing and having fun

Many children wrote about playing and having fun as being the best things about being a kid.

Children wrote about playing indoors and outdoors, with their friends or by themselves. They liked physical activities, screen-based activities, and activities like drawing and reading.

Children mentioned a large range of sports and physical activities they liked, including football, gymnastics, basketball, swimming, soccer, cricket, netball, dance, tennis, and judo.

They wrote about riding bikes, building forts, and playing on the playground, trampoline, and swings.

“ You get to play and run around with your friends and no one would think that you are weird.” (11, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

“ practicing basketball. dreaming about being like michael Jordan.” (9, boy – Adelaide Hills, Government)

“ I like to go to the playground and spending time with my mum.” (10, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

A range of screen-based activities were also mentioned as the best things about being a kid, such as watching videos, television, and Netflix, gaming, and going on the iPad and computer. Children also wrote about playing all sorts of games and activities, like drawing, reading, and playing with Lego.

“ playing video games watching tv and not going to school on weekends.” (10, boy – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Government)

“ computer trampoline TV Lego puzzle play outside read ride a bike treasure map puzzle video game headphones.” (9, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)

“ being able to read or draw after lunch and lishing to adieo books.” (10, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)



More broadly, children wrote about having fun and enjoying life, doing a range of things at home, in the community, and at school. Some 8-12 year olds particularly enjoyed being free to play with toys or watch certain things without 'being judged' by others because of their young age.

- “ that your young and can have fun without know worries in your life.” (12, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ you wont be Judged on watching disney and playing with toys.” (11, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

Having and spending time with friends and family

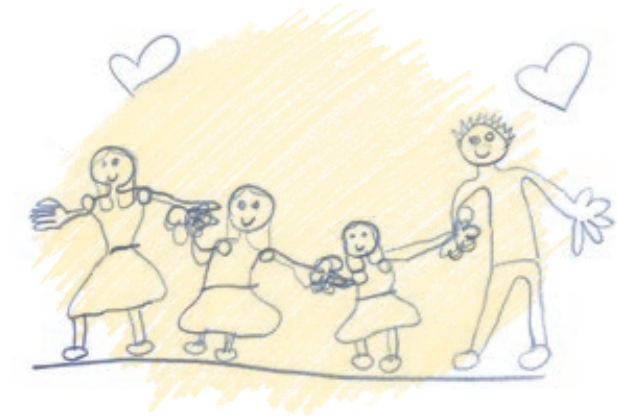
Many children wrote about the importance of friends and family in their lives.

Friends were written about positively, often in relation to playing and doing things together, and being able to see friends at school. Others also enjoyed making new friends: 'having friends and making new ones.'

- “ That you get to play with your friends whenever you want to. This makes me happy as I am a extroverted person.” (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ Going to school and hang out with your friends 5 days a week.” (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)

Children were grateful for having a family and being able to spend time with them, playing and going places, but also just being together. Some noted that not everyone was so lucky: 'Sadly not all kids have parents.'

- “ My family, My friend, sport and living on a farm.” (10, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Government)



- “ being able to do fun things and enjoy spendind time with my family and doing stuff i like.” (10, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)
- “ having a cubby house and family and pets and sisters and brothers.” (9, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)

Some children particularly appreciated being loved and cared for by their parents. Linking to no adult responsibilities above, children were also happy that parents paid for things for them, mentioning 'that you get lots of things (Presents),' as well as food, love, and attention.

- “ The best thing about being a kid is that your parents do nearly everything for you.” (11, boy – Murray and Mallee, Government)
- “ When it's night and we are on a car ride, I pretend to be asleep so my parents can carry me inside.” (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Catholic)
- “ that we get free food, love and attention from parents. They bought me my bearded dragon Harry.” (11, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)

Going to school and learning

Most children spend a significant amount of time at school, and several children wrote that the best thing about being a kid was that 'you get to go school.' Some responses focused on having a 'good education' and 'being able to learn at school,' particularly when 'we learn

in a fun way.’ Other 8-12 year olds elaborated on this in terms of being able to spend time with friends at school, and a smaller number referred to particular happy memories or fun experiences at school.

- “ getting to Learn New things and all the memories since the first day of school when I was in preschool.” (8, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)
- “ Having good education and having time to hang out with friends at school because I would be less happy without having friends or having school.” (11, boy – Southern Adelaide, Catholic)
- “ You can enjoy thing adults can’t like you can go to school and make friends while adults go to work.” (12, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

Some children wrote more broadly about enjoying learning ‘new things,’ both inside and outside of school. This included learning ‘new skills’ as well as learning ‘about the world,’ more about themselves, and ‘about our greatist interests.’

- “ Learning how to sing and learning Braille.” (10, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)

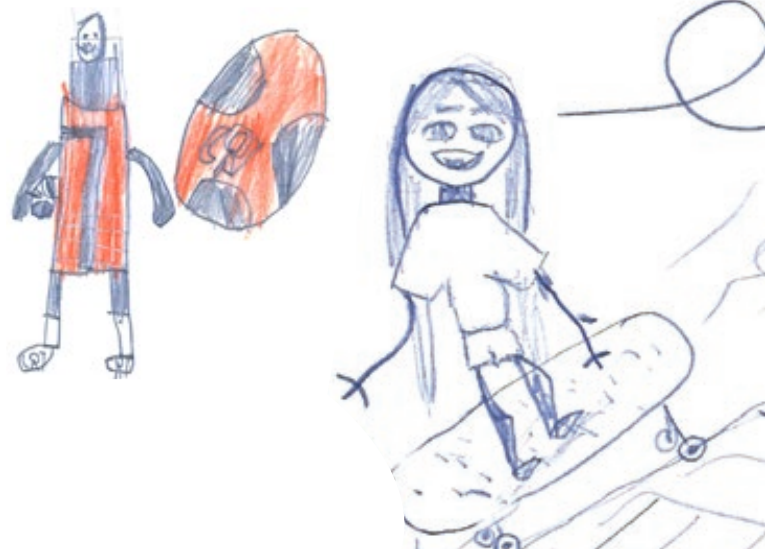
Being young, energetic, and small

Being young, energetic, and small was another best thing about being a kid where children positioned themselves in relation to adults. Several children noted that ‘We are more energetic than adults,’ and have bodies that are ‘flexible,’ and ‘athletic and active.’ Others enjoyed being ‘young and healthy’ and were grateful to have ‘more time to live longer.’

- “ That I am young and my body is healthy.” (14, boy – Western Adelaide, Independent)
- “ being able to be flexible with my body.” (9, boy – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “ being energetic running around having fun. also playing with my pets.” (10, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ that you can do more things like gymnastics and they have more beans (crazy).” (9, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)

Being able to fit into small places was also considered valuable, particularly at certain times such as ‘when you play hide ‘n’ seek.’ A small number of children described being ‘cute’ as one of the advantages of being a kid.

- “ you can fit in small places.” (8, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)
- “ that you can get away with things becuae you are little and cute. and you dont really have to pay for anything you get to live rent free.” (12, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)



And so much more...

Children shared such a large range of things they thought were the best things about being a kid that there are too many to name here. Some children appreciated having opportunities not available to adults. Others wrote about the joy of eating (especially lollies), imagination and creativity, fun events like birthdays and holidays, and sleeping and sleepovers.

- “ We have more oppitunities that most adualts dont, like going rock climbing and fancy oppitunities.” (10, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ that you get toys on your birthday.” (8, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ how many sleepovers you get and a Longer Life.” (9, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)
- “ eating lots of sugar.” (10, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Government)
- “ Not much, Most kids are capable of things adults can do. (and doing sport) (adults can do sport but I like doing sport).” (12, genderfluid – Eastern Adelaide, Government)



What do 8- to 12-year-olds worry about?

Family

School and school transitions

Friends and bullying

The future and growing up

The environment and climate change

Dying, getting hurt or sick, or getting COVID-19

Children worry about a wide range of things, from relationships with others to global issues. They are concerned about things happening now and in the future, and are worried about life at home, at school, in their local communities, and in broader society.

Children say their worries and concerns can often be dismissed by adults as being trivial. Children want adults to listen to what they have to say. Not only is it important for adults to listen but, as an extension of this, adults need to think about how these concerns can be alleviated or spoken about with children.

“ I worry about my family, my pets, my friends, myself, that no one like me, I'm doing well in school.” (10, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

“ going to school and people beating me up. The world turning into one big concrete house. All you can see is rubbish.” (10, boy – Adelaide Hills, Government)

Family

Children were particularly worried about their families, often simply writing ‘my family’ or ‘my parents,’ with others naming a range of those who are close to them: ‘My grandparents, friends, cousins, pets, sibling, parents and Auntie and Uncles.’ More specifically, children were worried about ‘bad things’ happening to their family members and relatives, including ‘if they get hurt’ or sick, ‘being in danger,’ and ‘getting hurt or dieing.’ They were also worried about ‘losing my family.’

“ My sister and family. I get scared when I don't know if my parents are ok. I also get worried about my sister... A LOT.” (10, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)

“ My parents getting in a car crash (theres a lot of kangaroos where we live.)” (10, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

“ my Tjamu (grandfather) because he's sick in Port Augusta. He take me to the shop.” (9, girl – Far North, Government)

“ how my mum is fealing if she is scared if she is feeling woried. i also worry about loosing friend.” (10, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)



Others were worried about family issues, particularly their parents fighting and separating, including potential changes to their living situation. While some children worried about not seeing enough of particular family members, others wrote about not wanting to see family members.

“ many things but the main thing is my Parent’s splitting up because they are always fighting and it can sometimes it can get really bad.” (12, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)

“ death people I love leaving me and my friends moving schools and me having to sleep at my dads house.” (10, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)

Some children were also worried about potentially disappointing their parents by doing something ‘wrong,’ not getting good grades at school, or not meeting their family’s ‘expectations’ in some way. Other children were worried about their family members, particularly siblings, who were being bullied. Others were concerned about themselves getting hurt by family members.

“ dissapointing my parents, getting my dance routines wrong and not getting a good grade.” (9, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

“ when my littel sister get’s bullied and when pepole be mean and bullies are man to kids who don’t like it.” (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)

Finally, some children were worried about their family’s ‘money problems,’ including not having enough money or ‘running out of money.’

“ My parents and money problems I am scared they will run out of money.” (11, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

School and school transitions

School was another key worry for many children, which is concerning given the large amount of time children spend at school.

Several children were worried about their grades and reports, and ‘failing my grade’ or ‘failing school.’ They were also worried about their schoolwork, not finishing assignments, and the ‘stress’ and pressure of getting school work done. Having too much homework or thinking their homework was not good enough was also a source of worry for some. Others were worried about ‘getting told off’ at school.

“ my school work. I find it hard to keep up and I feel a lot of presure get work done on time. I worry I’m not good enough.” (11, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)

“ Not fitting in at school and that I am not getting high enough grades.” (9, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)

“ Not finishing my assignments and getting in trouble.” (11, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

School transitions were also a concern for some children, particularly those who were due to start high school and were therefore navigating issues and/or changes in relation to their friendships. Some children mentioned being worried about ‘moving schools’ or ‘going to a new school,’ including whether they would ‘fit in,’ maintain existing friendships, or be able to ‘make new friends’.

“ The things I’m scared of (everything) having to start over in high school.” (11, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)

“ Going to high school and the work being too hard and me not fitting in.” (11, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

- “ Going to highschool but not making any new friends. I also worry about failing high school. (12, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)

Friends and bullying

Several 8-12 year olds were worried about friends, friendship issues, and bullying. Some wrote they were worried about ‘friends’ or ‘friendships’ more generally, while others were more specific in what they were worrying about.

Some children were particularly worried about losing friends or being separated or ‘growing apart’ from friends, highlighting the importance of having close friends in their lives. Some described worries that losing friends would mean they would ‘have no one to be with and no one to trust.’

Others wrote of their worries about not having friends at all, including ‘not having freinds to play with’ and ‘not always making friends or fitting in.’ Some were particularly concerned about this in terms of moving to a new high school or to another school and then struggling to make friends all over again.

- “ I worry about being split up from my friend and family.” (12, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)
- “ not having enough friends and not doing well in school.” (11, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

Some children also worried about friendship issues such as fighting with friends, or ‘upsetting my friends.’ Others were concerned about the wellbeing of their friends.

- “ Having argumnts with my friends then not being their friends ever again.” (11, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)



Bullying was also a big worry for many children, with several saying they were worried about being bullied themselves. Others were worried about siblings, friends, and other children being bullied, particularly ‘kids who can’t stand up for themselves.’

- “ bullying and being hurt I sometimes want to go to another Place.” (10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ getting argued with, getting talked over. and getting bullied.” (9, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)

The future and growing up

Many children wrote about the future and the concerns they had about growing up. Some focused on what might happen in the near future, including throughout the next school year, or their transition to high school. Others were concerned more broadly with what their future would look like beyond school, and about the changes they would experience in their lives. Some children were worried about becoming grownups and what this involved, as well as about growing up and getting old(er) in general.

- “ Growing up and how my future will be like.”
(11, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ I worry about one day leaving home and needing to do everything for myself.” (11, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

Some children were worried about finding jobs in the future, and about wanting to find a ‘good job’. They were also worrying about what would happen if they didn’t get a job or ‘get into a good University.’ Others were worried about whether they will be able to ‘be successful,’ earn money, and support themselves in the future.

- “ My future because it might be a bad future. I want to have a successful business in the future.” (9, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ getting a job and if I don’t I be homeless but who knows what is going to happen in the future.” (11, boy – Southern Adelaide, Catholic)

Children also wrote about a range of other worries in relation to the future, including the impacts of climate change, leaving home, what kind of person they will be, and the fear that ‘Something bad is going to happen in the Future.’

The environment and climate change

Children were worried about the environment and climate change, naming a broad range of concerns that included pollution, littering, trees, plastics, and animals. While some children included these in a list of worries, others named multiple aspects of the environment and climate change. Their responses focused on the impacts of climate change on ‘our future,’ including uncertainty about ‘what will happen to the world,’ the environment, and animals.



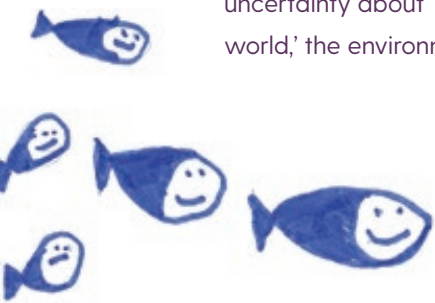
- “ the sea animals choking on plastic, the trees getting cut down all the time, earth isnt a joke.” (9, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ Species becoming extinct and single use plastic because our future is being affected and I dont want to live in a polluted future.”
(11, boy – Southern Adelaide, Catholic)
- “ The enviroment, we litter alot and it hurts the enviroment so we Should Stop.” (9, non-binary – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

Dying, getting hurt or sick, or getting COVID-19

Children often wrote about their worries in relation to death and sickness, including for their family members and their pets. However, children were even more worried about these events in terms of themselves, particularly in relation to death.

- “ What if I die? What if I get a little TOO bored? What if everyone doesn’t like me? What if everyone can read my mind?”
(11, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)
- “ the enevatebl death that a waits us all.”
(8, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)

Alongside death, some children were worried about ‘getting hurt,’ ‘broken bones,’ and ‘getting badly injured,’ or ‘getting a disease’ and ‘feeling sick.’ There were also some mentions of being worried about getting COVID-19.



They wrote about the potential impacts of injuries or sickness on different aspects of their lives now and in the future, including their ability to engage in sport or education.

- “hurting myself so badly I can't do gymnastics for the rest of my life.” (8, girl – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “getting sick, (e.g diabetes) because I want to live a full, happy and amazing life. For example: getting married, going to university and more!” (10, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “getting sick From an illness like cancer or COVID 19. And about the people who do.” (12, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)

And so much more...

Children also wrote about many other worries they had, including in relation to their pets and animal abuse, lack of money, 'scary things' like spiders and storms, and what people think of them.

- “Trinny finding her way out and we cant find her (Trinny is my dog)” (11, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)
- “The dark. I actually sleep better in the light. stepping on snakes and spiders crawling up my leg.” (9, girl – Adelaide Hills, Independent)
- “what people think of me and that im not good enough.” (11, girl – Murray and Mallee, Government)

Some children were worried about their own personal safety, including the risk of being kidnapped, hurt, or stolen. Others were concerned about war, violence, and conflict.

- “All the bad people out there that do the wrong things and also getting kidnapped and take away.” (10, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)
- “Wars drifting to Adelaide and Women's Rights.” (9, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

Nearly all children responded to the question about there being something that worried them, with some naming multiple worries.



What do 8- to 12-year-olds want grownups to know?

More about who they are

Children are responsible and have ideas and rights

What school is like

Children love and are grateful for grownups

Everyone needs to care for the environment and act on climate change

Children had diverse responses to what they wanted grownups to know. Some focused on the personal, like knowing more about their day-to-day lives and their likes and dislikes. Others focused on broader issues, such as the need to take better care of the environment. Some children wanted grownups to understand what life is like from their point of view and/or what other children go through more generally, such as grownups knowing 'how it feels to be small.'

- “ Understand what us kids are going through and feeling.” (12, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)
- “ That kids are Just as important as grown ups.” (8, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)

More about who they are

Many children wanted grownups to make an effort to know more about them, including more about who they are, their feelings, their likes and dislikes, and their aspirations.

Some children wanted grownups to know specific things about them, like 'that I am Vietnamese,' 'that I have adhd,' 'how old I am,' and 'I am the only one in my family with curly hair.'

Children particularly wanted grownups to know about their feelings. Some of these responses emphasised the importance of grownups listening to children and 'Thinking about how we feel instead of assuming first.' They wanted grownups to know 'That I have feelings too' and 'my true feelings,' while understanding that they may not always be happy. They also wanted grownups to know when they are sick, feel unsafe, or uncomfortable, and when they are 'scared, shy, worried or afraid.'

- “ That kids may look happy but you never really know. So just check in.” (12, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)



Other children wanted grownups to know what they like or like to do. This ranged from activities they enjoyed, such as playing various sports, gaming, reading books and drawing, to liking animals, to their favourite foods, such as ice cream and hot chips.

“ That my favourite hobby is drawing and I also love playing soccer/basketball with my brothers.” (11, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)

“ That I’m veary kind and I like meating new people and making new Friends.” (9, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)

Some children specifically mentioned things they don’t like, or that they don’t like to do, such as going to school or doing homework, eating different vegetables, or being around too many people.

“ That I hate doing certains tasks I also wish that grown ups knew that I get frustrated really easy.” (12, boy – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)

“ that Im a picky eater and I don’t like Peas in my food.” (8, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)

Others wanted grownups to know more about the kind of person they are. These children wrote about grownups knowing that they are friendly, kind, smart, mature, and responsible. Children also wanted grownups to know what they are good at, such as school, sports, reading, and drawing.

“ That I am hily intelegent and artistic and that I am a good singer.” (8, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)

“ I’m good at school work.” (7, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

Children also wanted grownups to know about their aspirations in relation to the kinds of jobs they’d like to do when they grow up.

Some children named occupations that included becoming a vet, a professional athlete, a gamer, or an actor.

“ That i will hopefully make afl and after that work in the climate and help the envirimt.” (11, boy – Northern Adelaide, Independent)

These responses highlight children’s desires for grownups to get to know them as individuals who have diverse feelings, interests, and aspirations.

Children are responsible and have ideas and rights

The need to be viewed as responsible, and having ideas and rights, was another thing several children wanted grownups to know. They wanted grownups to know that children are responsible and mature, ‘smarter’ than adults think, and ‘that kids can be trusted’ and ‘you can rely on me more.’

“ that we should get a bit more responsibility in life. Like getting trust more often or staying up a little later.” (10, girl – Eyre and Western, Government)

“ I am perfectly capable of doing things on my own, also the fact that I’m very mature!” (12, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

“ That I do not lie unless it’s a suprise or I really have to.” (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)

Others wrote about the importance of grownups knowing that children have ideas and ‘a voice that wants to be heard.’ They expressed frustration that their opinions and thoughts were not asked for, and when they were they were often ignored.

“ Kids have good ideas not just grownups so I think we should have a say in things to.” (11, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

- “ I want more of a say in things that we do at home.” (9, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ that kids around the world should be able to say there own opinions about how kids want to learn.” (10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)

Similarly, children wrote about the need to treat kids with respect and to know ‘That kids matter.’ Others highlighted that children are honest and trustworthy, and that it was important to them that adults treat them with honesty in return and ‘not to lie to me.’

- “ I want grownups to know I’m 10 years old not 2 and that I don’t like being treated like a baby.” (10, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

A smaller number of children specifically identified that they had (or should have) rights, and that grownups needed to recognise these.

- “ Kids are very smart and should have rights!” (10, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

What school is like

School is a central part of many children’s lives, yet children perceive that grownups do not always understand their experiences of school. The range of responses highlight the importance of adults taking an interest in individual children’s feelings about school rather than seeing and treating children as a whole group.

Children’s responses highlighted the diversity amongst children in terms of their individual experiences, and what they want grownups to know about school at an individual level. Some like school and others don’t, with children naming different aspects of what they like and dislike about their schooling experiences.



Some children wrote positively about school, including their overall enjoyment and the feeling they are ‘doing good at school.’ Other children wrote about school being ‘fun’ and having ‘amazing’ ‘really nice’ teachers. There were also children whose responses emphasised how much they enjoyed a particular subject.

- “ that this is an Amasing school and miss [name] is a great teacher.” (9, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)

- “ I am haveing a good time at school.” (9, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

In contrast, some children wanted grownups to know about their negative school experiences and the challenges they encountered on a day-to-day basis. They also wanted adults to know about their suggestions for ways to improve their experience of school.

Those children recounting negative experiences wrote that it can be ‘stressful’ and ‘scary’ going to school. Homework was mostly viewed negatively, with some suggesting the need for less homework or no homework at all. Some wrote that children should get more of a say in their learning, including when, what, and how they learn.



- “ that some children might be having struggle at school so its Not good to make it worse by yelling at them.” (10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ that school can be stressful and a scary place that doesn't feel safe.” (11, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ that kids should not get homework because we spend time at school for at least 6 hours or more.” (10, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)

Children love and are grateful for grownups

There were several children who wanted grownups to know how much they love them and how grateful they are for having them. Children wrote 'I love them alot' and 'I am greatfull for evry thin they do.' They also wrote that grownups were 'amazing' and 'the best' and wanted them to know 'that they mean so much to us.'

Children wrote about their love and appreciation of grownups generally, as well as in relation to specific people, such as their parents and grandparents. Some children emphasised that even if they didn't always show it, grownups needed to know that they love and care about them.

- “ Where ever they are and where ever I am I will always love and be grateful for what I've got.” (10, girl – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “ that all your kids love you even if they say heartbreaking stuff to you or do silly things.” (10, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)

Everyone needs to care for the environment and act on climate change

Large numbers of children want grownups to know that everyone needs to care for the environment and act on climate change. Children particularly wanted grownups to know that they 'lik[e] the enviroment and animals' and 'hate littering,' and 'that you need to treat Earth as you do to your child.'

They expressed concern about pollution and plastic, water and oceans, and animals and trees, as well as advocating for the use of cleaner energy sources. They wrote about their belief 'that we can stop climate change still,' and that grownups need to think about the future more.

- “ to stop littering rubbish so when us kids become Adults we have a good future.” (9, girl – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “ that if they don't stop climate change it will be far worse for the next generation.” (12, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ I want grown ups to know they must take care of the world.” (11, non-binary – Northern Adelaide, Independent)



And so much more...

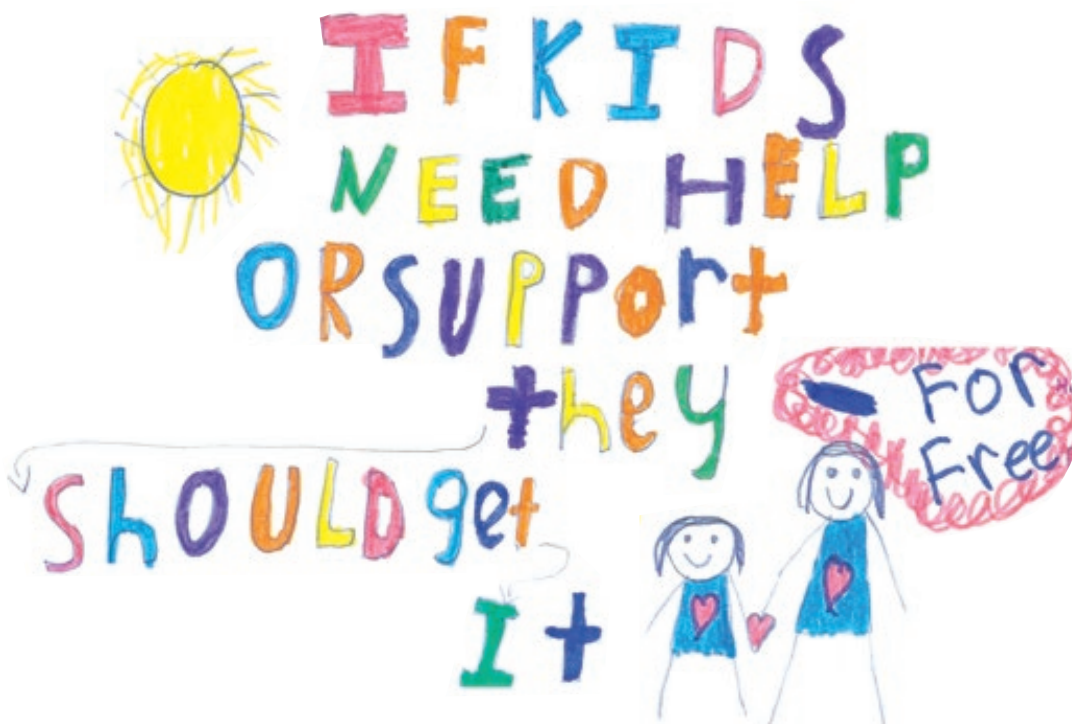
Children wanted grownups to know so many other things too. They provided such a diverse array of responses that there are just too many to include in this report. Some of these responses included the need to recognise that children aren't all the same and that sometimes children need help and sometimes they can help others. They said that children need to be treated well, and that being a child can be hard and that they don't always feel safe.

- “ not all kids are not that smart, some kids are intelligent in different ways.” (10, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ that we stress too, and we know that this world isn't all about sunshine and rainbows.” (8, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ That when I look down or get distracted easily is because something happend at home.” (11, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)

Others wrote about wanting to be allowed to use electronic devices more, and that ‘you cant pause an online game,’ that ‘grownups needed to be more understanding of children’, and that ‘grownups should take care of themselves and have more fun’.

- “ its alright if we are on our devices, it is something that makes us happy, and also we see you on it too.” (11, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ That if grownups can have bad days we can have bad days too.” (11, girl – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “ If Im not hungry I still want to eat later, don't make a fuss about it like you ate to many shapes.” (11, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)
- “ That even though you are old and mature, doesn't mean you can't have fun.” (10, boy - Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)

Most children responded with at least one thing they wanted grownups to know.



What do 8 to 12-year-olds think would make the world better?

Kindness, equality, and no bullying or fighting

Everyone cared for the environment and acted on climate change

No war, only peace

No sickness or death

No hunger, homelessness, or poverty, and everything was free

School was improved

Grownups listened more and children had more choice and freedom

Most children shared their ideas for what would make the world better, including those who had previously written positively about their lives in other postcard questions. Their responses focused on a variety of changes they'd like to see made, including changes to aspects of their day-to-day lives as well as responses to global issues.

“ every one was treated better and not bullied and If the world would get treated better because some people dont care about our planet and they end up messing our planet up!!” (10, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)

“ 1. People would actually care about pollution.
2. Everyone would be friendly to each other.
3. Everyone would show grattitude, empathy, kindness and respect.” (10, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)

The most common responses received by far related to kindness and equality and caring for the environment. These are themes that have been running through many of the responses to different postcard questions asked since the initiative commenced.

Kindness, equality, and no bullying or fighting

A common response to making the world better was a desire for more kindness and equality and the absence of bullying and fighting.

Children wrote about how the world would be better if ‘everyone was kind and not angry’ and ‘If we could all help each other’ and ‘be more caring’. Some children wrote specifically about equal rights, including the need to eradicate racism and sexism and how the world would be better if there was ‘more equality less racism.’

“ There was equality and fairness to everyone big and small.” (12, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

“ every one would pick up rubish and love everyone just because we are diffrent color does not mean we are diffrent from you.” (9, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)

“ everyone had equal rights including women, no more rascisam & no climate change.” (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

“ we didn’t have to fit in to boxes to apease socitey and could exist.” (11, non-binary – Western Adelaide, Catholic)

Children wrote about the world being better if ‘everyone got along without fighting and bullying,’ and if there was less judgement of others and no ‘bad people.’ Some 8-12 year olds envisioned a better world where ‘everyone’ would be accepted and respected for who they are, regardless of their size, appearance, gender, sexuality, skin colour, or disability.

“ everyone was happy and people would not fight, steal, and lots of other bad stuff.” (10, boy – Eyre and Western, Government)

“ People didn’t judge people just on what they looked like and be more accepting and respectful of everything and everyone around us.” (12, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

Everyone cared for the environment and acted on climate change

A recurring theme throughout the responses to the different postcard questions was the need to care for the environment and act on climate change. Children wrote about the world being better if these two things occurred.

More specifically, they wrote that there was a need for no littering, pollution, or rubbish, as well as no plastic or cutting down of trees. Children were also concerned about the impacts humans have on animals, where the world would be better with ‘People thinking about Animals feelings and homes.’



“ people don’t litter, and take better care of our home aka the earth.” (10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)

“ People started helping animals, helping plants, stopping pollution and stopping global warming.” (11, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)

“ there was less one use plastic & we cared for our environment!” (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)

“ Diesel and petrol and nuclear powered engines to be banned and only electric engines to be used and No polution in water or air.” (8, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

No wars, only peace

While children have written about war and peace in previous years, this was the first year since the war in Ukraine. Children wrote that the world would be better if ‘world war wasnt a thing’ and ‘the war in Ukraine ends.’ They wrote about their desire for ‘world peace’ and to ‘please bring peace and end wars.’

“ there was world peace and people didn’t take nature for granted.” (12, boy – Murray and Mallee, Government)

“ The leaders and countrys were nice to each other and why be mean if there is no reason.” (10, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)

This concern about the need to end wars and live in peace highlights the awareness that several children at this age have about global issues.

No sickness or death

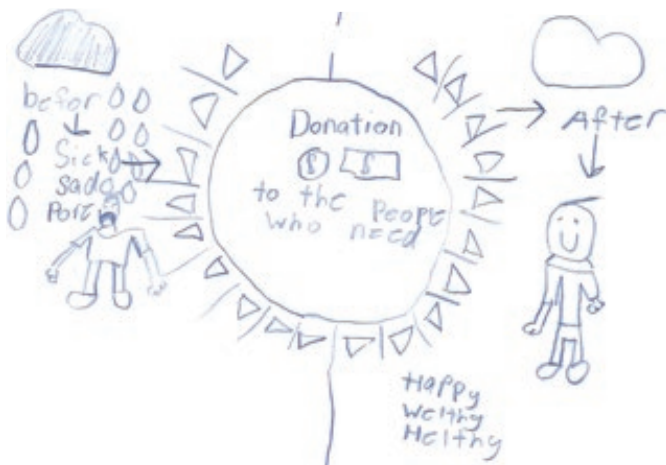
According to some children, the world would be better if there was no sickness or death. Children wrote that it would be better if 'we were all healthy 24/7,' 'people don't get sick,' and 'we could never die.' Some children specifically wrote that the world would be better if people didn't get sick or die from COVID-19.

- “ people cant die from cancer/any sickness.”
(11, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ The world would be better if covid-19 ending because too many people are getting sick with it.” (11, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

No hunger, homelessness, or poverty, and everything was free

Children demonstrated compassion for others by wanting there to be no hunger, homelessness, or poverty. Children wrote the world would be better if 'there was no hunger anymore,' 'everyone had a home,' and 'no one was poor.'

- “ if evry body got food, water and shelter.”
(8, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ everyone could afford to live in a proper house with clean energy.” (10, boy – Northern Adelaide, Independent)



- “ People in the world help the poor so they can eat and drink to survive.” (9, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)

Others wrote that everything should be free, or more generally that the world would be better if 'money was not a thing.' Children wrote that the world would be better if 'food was less expensive,' 'expenses were more cheaper,' and 'school were free.' Some of these responses reflected children's own family lives.

- “ there was no money and every one was equal.” (10, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)

School was improved

The world would also be better according to some children if improvements were made to school. This more specifically involved things like no homework, cheaper or free school, more PE lessons and sports facilities, fewer assignments, and less stress. Other suggestions included 'there was a pet day in school,' and 'kids could teleport to school to make it easier for parents.'

- “ school was less stressful, and there was less assignments. Then, there would be less conflict (kids) and more time to have fun!”
(11, boy – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Independent)
- “ If every school had a hockey court, cricket pitch, soccer field, footy oval.” (10, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)
- “ Everything was Free so we can get into good schools.” (10, girl, Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ kids could learn english, math, and what ever other subject they want to learn.” (11, girl – Murray and Mallee, Government)

Some children wrote that the world would be better if there was more support available at school, such as 'more programs for kids

who don't understand maths.' For other children, improving school meant shorter or fewer school days because 'the weekend should be longer' and they wanted more time at home.

“ school only went for five hours insted of 6 so we get more time at home in daylight hours.” (10, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)

Other children thought the world would be better if there was no school at all. Some wrote that it would be better if 'all schools were banned' and 'there was no school (Duh).'

“ School didn't exist and if we had time to be kids. School doesn't teach me anything useful.” (11, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)

“ We didn't go to school because we speak english. history is our grand purnts. Math parnts. Reading we are reading this now. Spelling gogle.” (8, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

Grownups listened more and children had more choice and freedom

Echoing what children want grownups to know, children also wrote that the world would be better if grownups listened more, and children had more choice and freedom. They wrote that the world would be better if 'Grown ups would listen to us' and 'Grownups don't tell kids what to do.'

“ if children have a say for saving our planet and that chilren that are diffrent get treated the same.” (11, girl – Adelaide Hills, Catholic)

“ kids were free to leave their house or choose they want to do.” (12, boy – Far North, Government)

And so much more...

Children had many other suggestions for ways to make the world better. Some wanted there to be no smoking, drugs, and alcohol, more sports and physical activity, more screen-based activities (or, in the case of a smaller number of children, fewer screen-based activities), everyone was happy, and children get what they want.

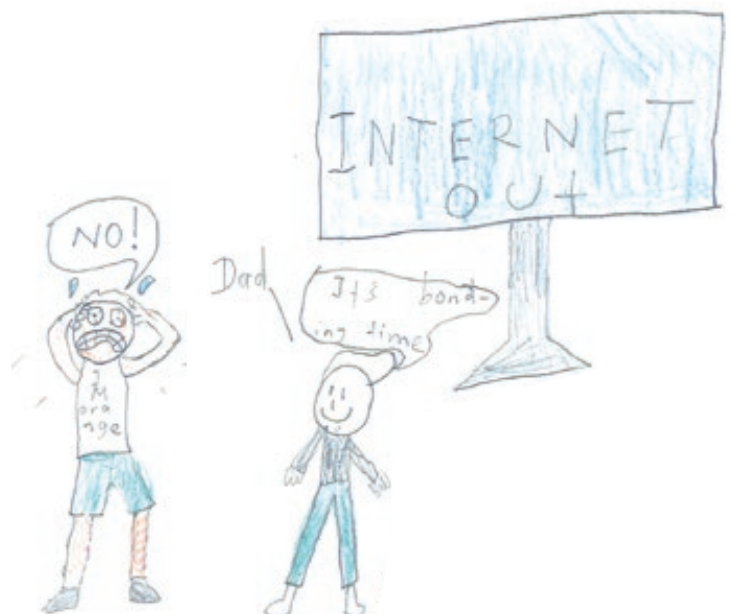
“ Every body had the life they wanted and there was no such thing as drugs (the naughty one).” (11½, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)

A small number of children wrote more personal responses, wanting improved family situations or more facilities for their local area.

“ mum and dad didn't break up.” (9, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)

“ Wallroo had a bigger skate park. At the moment the one we have is small, old and broken. If we had a bigger skate park kids could be more active.” (12, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

Only a small number of children thought things were fine as they were, writing 'It is the same as today' and 'things are good.'



Reflections on gender

There were a similar number of girls and boys who completed a postcard in 2022. A small number of children were non-binary or gender diverse. While acknowledging the diversity of children's genders, this report is only able to make some reflections on gender in relation to girls and boys.



For each postcard question, the most common broad responses were usually the same for girls and boys. This highlights similarities in responses between genders on the key issues that are often important to many children. However, there were also some differences between girls and boys when looking at their responses grouped by gender. This is likely to reflect a broad range of social norms and expectations around gender.

In terms of the best thing about being a kid, more girls than boys wrote about not having adult responsibilities, particularly in terms of no worries and no bills. Not having adult responsibilities was also mentioned by many boys, although they were slightly more likely to write about playing and having fun, particularly in terms of sport and screen-based activities. While girls and boys both wrote about friends and family, girls were more likely to mention these. Other topics, such as going to school and learning, were written about by both girls and boys as being the best thing about being a kid.

Girls and boys were both worried about the future and growing up, the environment and climate change, dying and getting hurt or sick.

While written about by both girls and boys, girls were more likely to write about friends and bullying than boys as well as about family, school, and school transitions.

Girls and boys had similar responses in terms of what they wanted grownups to know, with both most often wanting them to know more about who they are. Similar numbers of girls and boys mentioned other key responses such as children being responsible and having ideas, and that grownups should know more about what school is like.

Kindness, equality, and no bullying or fighting, along with caring for the environment and acting on climate change, were the top responses written about by both girls and boys to make the world better. However, girls wrote about these even more often than boys. Boys were more likely than girls to write about their desire for no wars, only peace.

Several other responses to making the world better were made in similar numbers by both girls and boys. These included there being no sickness or death, no hunger or homelessness, school improvements, and the need for grownups to listen more and for children to have more choice and freedom.

Conclusion

My annual Postcards initiative highlights the importance of asking children about their lives. Participating in Postcards enables children in the 8-12 year old age range to share their views and experiences, an opportunity which is often not provided to this age group.

Children's responses highlight the value they place on enjoyment and having fun, family and friends, and kindness and equality. They also reiterate the significance of school in their lives, whether liked or disliked.

While most children wrote positively about their lives, there were many who shared the less positive experiences they have and expressed their ideas about things they want to see change.

Even those who wrote positively in their responses to some questions offered suggestions for ways to make the world a better place. Some of their key concerns related to the environment, death, sickness, and getting hurt, bullying, wars, and poverty.

Children wrote much about their desire to be heard and taken seriously, to be treated with respect, and to have their ideas valued.

There were clear themes and topics that were common across many children's responses to this year's questions, but it is also important to consider the diversity of children's responses and how these demonstrate their different experiences of school, home life and social lives. Children live in diverse family situations and communities and have a range of experiences that reflect the personal and contextual factors specific to their lives.

Their responses emphasise those aspects of their lives about which they are most concerned and include personal issues as well as global issues. Some are focused on their individual lives and circumstances, while others have a big picture view of the world. Those whose responses are focused more on themselves are describing and sharing their experiences in relation to their family and friends, and to other issues such as bullying, health and wellbeing, and/or school life.

Some children highlighted that gaming, being online, and being on their electronic devices is an important way for them to learn, relax, and connect with others. Some children wished they could spend more time outside and be more physically active. Others wished that adults would spend less time on their devices and more time with them. Some children wanted both – more time using their devices and more time outside.

Their responses highlight the complexities of children's lives, making the Postcards initiative a crucial way in which we can gauge what matters most to 8-12-year-olds across South Australia.

To complement this report, I will also be producing regional summaries that will look more closely at children's responses by location.

As in all previous years, the children's responses communicated via this initiative will continue to inform my advocacy work.

But my Postcards initiative works well beyond just participation. Adults need to place more value on what children say about their lives, using their responses to inform the ways in which children are treated and the opportunities which are made available to them.

This in turn builds trust and a cycle of positive relationships with adults that set children up well for their teenage years – they are more willing to seek out support from adults if they know grownups will listen and act on their ideas and views.

Each year I encourage more schools to support their students to become involved so that I can advocate for the rights of all children across South Australia, living in diverse circumstances and with diverse experiences and views.

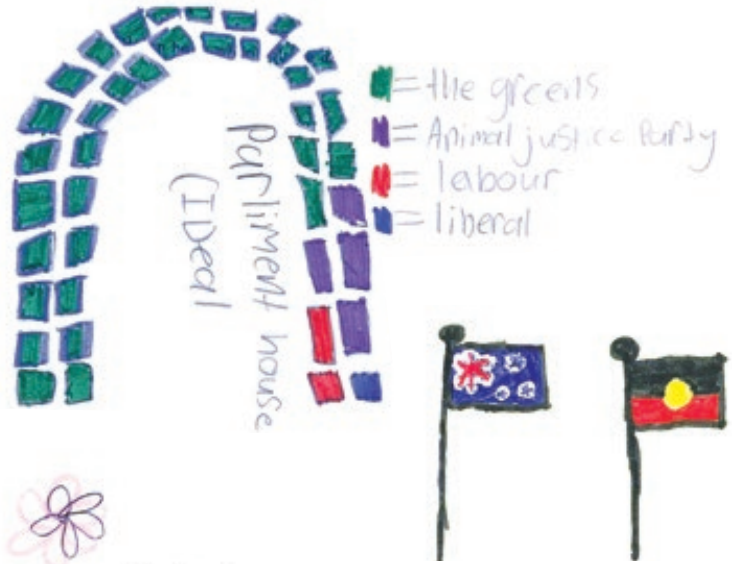
I am pleased to see that ever year the numbers of schools and postcards received continues to climb. Again, I extend my appreciation to the educators and teachers who are committed to children's voice and agency and have supported their students' participation in this initiative.

This engagement with this age group is a privilege that cannot be underestimated. It is our responsibility as adults – from educators to policymakers and beyond – to act on the information contained in this report.



Adults need to act on what children suggest will make their lives better now and in the future, and continue to listen to children, advocating on their behalf, and acting in their best interests.

Everyone IS Important!



our life mean people (sad)



kindness kind people



there's not that many people that are kind and not that many people want to change



A tell Helen building. eg- someone to tell all your worry's to. someone who you feel safe with.



Draw a picture for them here when you're done



HARMONY

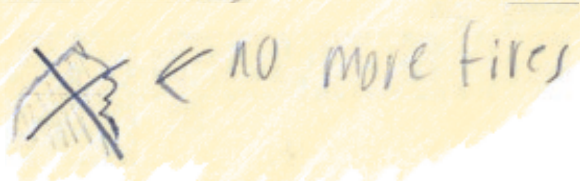
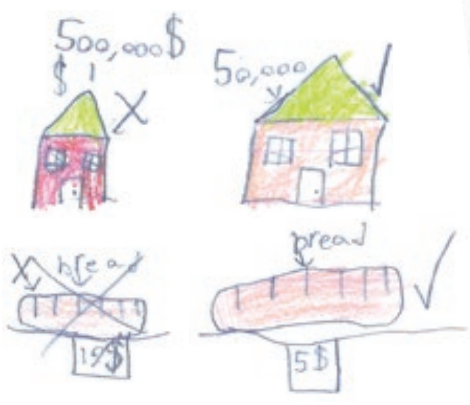


more free time for mental health

HELP CLEAN THE EARTH



children have feelings too!





IF KIDS NEED HELP OR SUPPORT they SHOULD get it For Free

SAVE THE WORLD BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

DON'T PUSH KIDS TO GROW UP TOO FAST. KIDS ARE KIDS

Climate Change Cloud

HELLO HELEN

I love School!

Capybara (my favorite animal)