



## What SA Children say about the C word

- ✓ The world would be better without COVID
- ✓ Need to know more about vaccines
- ✓ Missing loved ones and social occasions
- ✓ We all need to do the right thing

Across government, business, and community, the views, perspectives, and experiences of primary school aged children need to be included. This snapshot is designed to support this to occur.

The findings have been drawn directly from consultation undertaken in 2021 with South Australian children between the ages of 8 and 12 years. It is presented in this snapshot form to inform decision makers, researchers, policy makers, and others who have an interest in understanding what children in this age group think and need.

Regardless of where they live, 8 to 12 year olds share many of the same interests, passions, aspirations, and ideas for ways to make the world a better place. Although their postcard responses were consistent with those received in 2019 and 2020, there were differences between those living in regional, rural, and metropolitan communities, reflecting the diversity of the social, cultural, and economic contexts in which children live.

Children across all regions wrote about the importance of being taken seriously and being given more opportunities to have a say about decisions affecting them at every level of decision-making. In their homes, schools, and local communities, through to all levels of government and service systems they want to be heard and have their ideas acted upon. They were clear that adults listening to their unique imaginations, creative perspectives and big ideas not only improves their own



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wellbeing, self-confidence, and trust in adults, it also benefits their whole school and community.

Climate change, natural disasters, mental health, and a global pandemic are just some of the complex issues that permeate their lives. While new and emerging trends have always shaped children's experiences, the differences between 2021 postcards compared to those from 2019 and 2020, reveal how the fast pace of technological, cultural, political, and environmental change is impacting on children growing up in the twenty-first century.

If we fail to listen to what children in this age group are telling us, we risk alienating them at a time in their lives when they're seeking reassurance that they can place their trust in adults. By listening, empathising, and validating their life experiences, we help to build enduring relationships with children that are grounded in trust and hope for the future, reinforcing the message that they are valuable stakeholders and important citizens who have rights that must be upheld.

## WHAT SA CHILDREN SAY ABOUT THE C WORD

COVID-19 vaccinations became available in 2021, and children expressed diverse views which echoed the broader public debate around their use. These views ranged from welcoming vaccinations as an important part of protecting people's health, to voicing concerns about a lack of information being made available to children in a format they can understand about how they can access the vaccines, and how they may be affected by them over the short or long term.

A significant number of 8 to 12 year olds expressed the view that the world would be better if COVID-19 'was gone', 'wasn't a thing' or 'never existed'. They wrote about wanting 'COVID to go away' so that 'I can see my nana', 'hug my friends at school' or 'stop worrying about my dad dieing'.

Children shared a range of concerns related to COVID including fears about 'lots of people getting really sick' to being tired of wearing masks or being distressed about the separation from loved ones who lived across national and international borders.

**“ Covid was gon. so that my step Dad could come back from India.”** – 10 year old, female, Barossa, Light and Lower North

A number of 8 to 12 year olds reflected on feeling both fear and anticipation at the prospect of state borders being re-opened at the end of 2021. These were views shared alongside mask-wearing and people's overall health, as well as the need for continued isolation and separation from loved ones who they wanted to see in person.

Others were frustrated by the ongoing impacts the pandemic on their social lives and wanted to be able to go to 'more parties' and 'do the things I love' again. While most children wrote about wanting the borders to re-open and for the lockdowns to end, there were some children who felt there should be more done to 'get rid of COVID', including enforcing lockdowns if these were necessary.

As was the case in the postcard responses received in 2020, children in regional South Australia were more likely than those in metropolitan Adelaide to write about the pandemic. They focused on the impact restrictions were having on their relationships and on their ability to participate in the things they love doing. COVID-related postcards from metropolitan areas focused more on the wearing of masks and getting vaccinations.

Other children wanted everyone to 'take Covid more seriously' and 'do the right thing' to reduce the risk of COVID transmission. This included adhering to social distancing, practising better hygiene, and wearing masks more often, and correctly.

Given that the distribution of the 2021 postcards coincided with the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines in South Australia, some children wanted there to be 'no anti-vaxxers' and for more people to 'get jabbed' to 'protect the community'. Others were concerned about needing to get vaccinated and wanted vaccines to be tested more for children their age before being made available.

**“ we didnt have covid-19 stoping us from doing the things we love.”** – 11 year old, female, Yorke and Mid North

**“ there where (were) not any corona virus and no ristrictions, nothing is cancelled.”** – 11 year old, female, Eyre and Western

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- [What SA Children say about Wellbeing](#)
- [What SA Children say about Looking After the Planet](#)
- [What SA Children say about Grownups](#)

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