



Tips for children and young people engaging with the media

Many children and young people have experienced unfair judgement by people and some say that this, in part, is caused by negative stereotyping of young people in various forms of media, such as television, newspapers, and magazines. Why is the role of the media so important? Because it plays a major part in creating public opinion, which in turn can affect which policies and laws are created. Negative stereotyping can also affect how you feel about yourself.

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian thinks it's important that the media shows you as you are, so you have a voice and can be heard. Your perspectives should be included in reporting on issues affecting children and young people to create a fair and balanced view of what it's like to be young in today's society. In this fact sheet, we provide you with some guidelines to help you in your interactions with the media.

It's also a great idea to get involved with creating your own media and participate in media that encourages the voices of young people to be heard, such as your local community radio station and online media.





Tips for interviews

- Be aware that what you say in interviews can sometimes be taken out of context. If you are asked to do an interview, ask the reporter what angle they plan to take with their story.
- It is important that you feel comfortable during the interview and are allowed enough time to respond. If you feel the reporter is rushing you, let them know.
- You may want to have an adult or someone you trust present when you are being interviewed. This could be your parent/s, your teacher, a sports coach, etc. Where possible, you should let your parents or guardians know you've been approached to be interviewed, and discuss it with them beforehand.
- If you are interviewed for a story, you have the right to protect your privacy. This means you can remain anonymous and can refuse to have your photo taken. You must let the reporter know **before** the interview takes place if you want to remain anonymous.
- Always ask what personal details will be mentioned in the story – your name, age, suburb, etc – and if you're not comfortable with this, let the media organisation know before they interview you.
- In some circumstances, it might be wise to protect your identity. If you can, discuss this with the reporter or media organisation while your parent or guardian is with you.
- Get the reporter's contact details and ask them to provide you with a copy of the finished story. This can be asked for by email or over the telephone.

Create your own media

In recent years, there has been a growth in the number of young people creating their own media, and organisations helping young people to become involved in writing, filmmaking, and forms of online media. If you want to have a say on issues which matter to you and challenge views and attitudes that portray children and young people in negative ways, create your own stories in a medium that appeals to you. You'll find some helpful links to organisations that help you to do just that at the bottom of this fact sheet.

How to make a complaint

If you see a story on children and young people in the paper, on TV or radio, which you feel creates negative stereotypes or which you find offensive, you can make a complaint. Remember, it's best to make a complaint as soon as possible after the story has aired or been published.

For a complaint to be taken seriously, be clear what you are complaining about and why. Make sure you include the date, page number and name of the paper the story appeared in, or the date, time and channel on which the TV program was broadcast. Let the organisation know what you want them to do in response to your complaint; if you believe a correction should be printed, for example, say this in your complaint.

If you're not happy with the way the organisation responds, you can complain to the following organisations which monitor particular media. Making a complaint reminds organisations that they have a responsibility to publish fair and balanced stories.





- **For stories in the printed press:**
Australian Press Council www.presscouncil.org.au
- **For stories on the radio:**
Commercial Radio Australia www.commercialradio.com.au
- **For stories on TV:**
FreeTV Australia www.freetvaust.com.au

If you think a particular reporter is printing or broadcasting unfair or unbalanced stories, contact the organisation which manages journalists – the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance – at www.alliance.org.au/media/ethics_breach.htm

When you make a complaint about stories on issues affecting young people that appear to be unfair or biased, it reminds organisations that they have a responsibility to publish fair and balanced stories.

Positive feedback is a good way to let people know that they are on the right track. If you read or see a story in the media that you agree with and think is reported well, speak up by writing a letter to the editor or send the organisation or journalist an email. This is the kind of feedback organisations value, as it tells them they're on the right track.

For more information

Act Now www.actnow.com.au

Behind the News www.abc.net.au/tv/btn

Express Media www.expressmedia.org.au

Lightning Bug www.lightningbug.com.au

Medley Mag www.medleymag.com.au

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