

LITTLE

RAINBOWS

A resource developed by young
people for young people



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rainbow Families acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which this resource was developed, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. As a national resource, we also acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of country across Australia and pay our respects to them, their cultures and their respective Elders, past and present.

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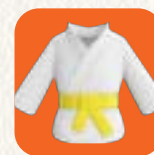
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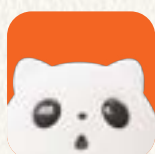
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PREFACE



The voices of young people are *fundamental* to our organisation.

We are proud of the clever, creative and capable young leaders who have developed this resource by and for children of rainbow families.

Our young people love being around other rainbow families. These relationships connect them and provide a space to talk about their rainbow families, and what it means to be a part of them.

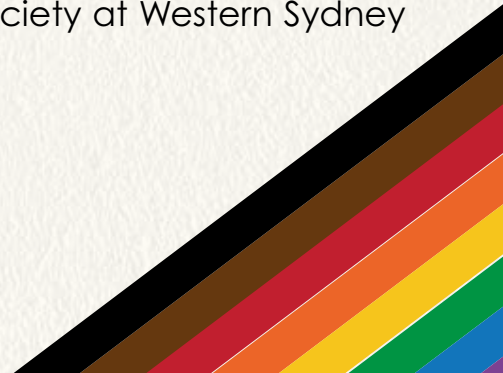
We hope this resource connects young people with other rainbow families and provides a touchpoint that values who they are and respects them and their families.

On behalf of the Rainbow Families Board we thank the Youth Advisory Council for sharing their stories, jokes and find-a-word in this fabulous resource. We'd also like to thank Vanessa and Ashley for guiding this resource from conception to completion – what an awesome job. Thank you to the team at Aurora Group and the Young and Resilient Research Centre in the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University for supporting this work.

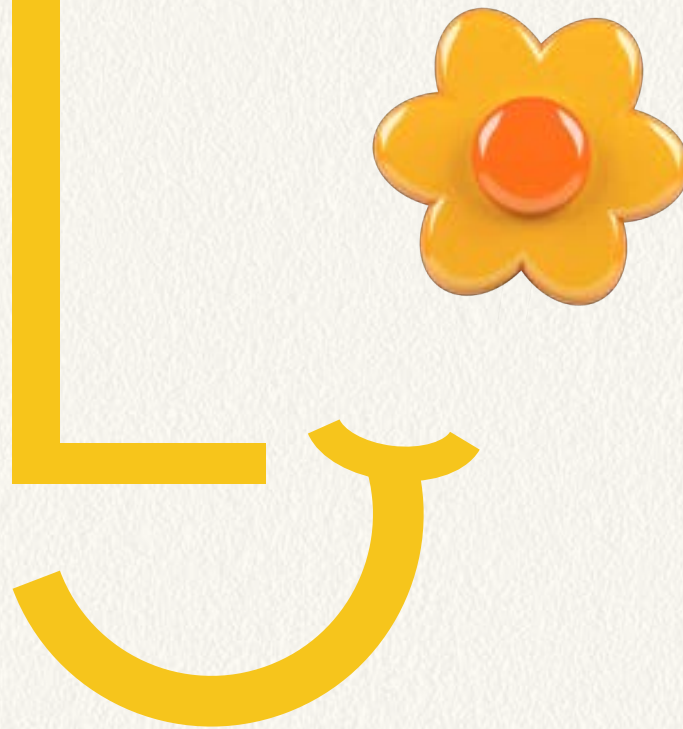
We hope you are as inspired by Little Rainbows as we are.

Scott Brunelle
Co-Chair

Kylie Gwynne
Co-Chair



WELCOME



Dear Reader,

The Rainbow Families Youth Advisory Council created this resource in hopes that other children of Rainbow Families and queer/LGBTQ+ identifying people can feel connected, and to celebrate the diversity in our lives. Included in this resource are stories of children and young people living in rainbow families, ways that we've dealt with different challenges, and suggestions about how we can all be our authentic selves with our loved ones by our side.

We hope you enjoy what you find in this resource. In particular, we hope to see children use this resource to feel safe, included and seen, and for others to understand and empathise with these stories.

With hopes this resource is useful to you,
Rainbow Families Youth Advisory Council (YAC)



WHAT IS A RAINBOW FAMILY?



Families come in all shapes and sizes.

All families are a little bit quirky.

And families can change over time. Sometimes our parents or carers stay together and sometimes they separate and live on their own or find new partners.

One or more of your parents might identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, gender diverse, non-binary, or asexual. You might also have a sperm or egg donor or a surrogate, or you might have been fostered, adopted, or conceived by your parents.

You get the picture...

There are more kinds of rainbow families than there are colours in the rainbow!

You can define your family how you want to. There is just one important ingredient for a family:

Love makes a family.

What kind of family is yours? What really annoys you about your family?
What makes your family special to you?



STORY 01

Zela, 10

My name is Zela and I am ten years old.

I'm a sporty kind of person. I'm always moving. I like gymnastics a lot. I did classes three years ago and I often lie around on the floor and stretch and turn my body into all sorts of different shapes. It's fun. I also play basketball and soccer, and I go swimming. I do swimming club once a month with my friend, Luka. I really love sport because you get to be active.

I have two mums and two dads and a younger brother, a dog, a cat and two guinea pigs. I also have seven grandparents! We have eighteen first cousins. One of my dads comes from Scotland so I have a grandfather who lives in Scotland but we haven't seen him for a while. I think two of my uncles are also gay but I could be wrong about that. I haven't really talked to them about it. So, as you can see, I have a very big, happy family.

The best thing about growing up in my family is that if one parent says no, there are three other parents to ask!

I also like that my family is different – it's good to be different.

But I don't really ever find it hard that my family is a bit different to other families. Actually, we are different but we aren't really that different from other families anyway. We all love each other. Sometimes we argue (especially when my brother annoys me). It's just that no one else at my school has four parents. But that's not a big deal.

Sometimes my friends ask how I have two mums and two dads. I just tell them that my mums wanted to have a baby but they needed a dad so they asked my dad and he and his partner said yes. It's pretty simple to explain.

We mostly live with my mums but we go to our dads' place every Sunday for two nights. Dads live about twenty minutes away in a different house, with our dog to keep them company.

I'm mostly a pretty normal kid. I have a group of eight close friends at school. I have other friends outside school. I probably move around a bit more than a normal kid. Did I already tell you that I don't really like sitting still?

If I was going to give advice to others growing up in rainbow families, I would remind them that it's good to be different. Be kind to people and take pride in who you are.

TIPS: HOW TO EXPLAIN YOUR FAMILY TO FRIENDS



So, your friends at school have questions about your family... How much do you want to explain and what do you want to explain? There are no hard and fast rules about how to explain your family, because it's different for everyone. But here are our top tips:

- 1** Be honest about your family. It takes all kinds of families to make the world go around.
- 2** Only answer the questions you feel comfortable answering. You don't have to tell people everything.
- 3** Be prepared that the people you tell might not know how to react. It's ok if things are a little bit awkward at first. And don't worry if they react badly. They'll get used to it.
- 4** If you're struggling, maybe just change the subject. Or get your parents to talk to your friends or their parents and help you explain.
- 5** If people are not accepting of your family, or if you are teased, make sure to tell an adult you trust so they can help you work out what to do (and check out our other tips on page 28).



STORY 02

Gemma, 9 (she / her)

I love to laugh. I would say that I'm funny. I like it when people do funny things. I can also be kind of shy - like if I'm around people that I want to be friends with but I don't know how to ask them to play.

My friends would say that I am kind. But there are also times when they annoy me. Actually, I tend to get mad at little things, like when I'm painting and I make a mistake.

I like to draw. I usually draw before I go to bed. In particular, I like to draw a character I've invented called Lizzie. She has black hair and she does everything that I want to do! So, for example, she visited Hello Kitty Land in Japan. (I love Hello Kitty. It's so cute. My favourite characters are Kuromi and My Melody). Lizzie also got a Golden Retriever puppy, which I named after my grandmother.

Anyway, I draw cartoons and 8 pictures on paper. I generally just leave them on my desk at home and they mysteriously disappear and I forget about them.

I do swimming lessons every week and I like to play baseball. But I hardly ever play baseball, even though it's my favourite sport, because my mum hasn't been able to find a club.

I go on my iPad a lot. I like to watch music videos on YouTube. One of my friends knows a lot of music. I try to learn the words to the songs but, actually, the only one I know all the words to is 'We Don't Talk About Bruno'. When I sing it, I get my friends to join in a big chorus for the crescendo at the end.

I like to read fantasy and graphic novels. But, at school, we're only allowed to read chapter books. I find chapter books a bit hard because there are so many words. At the moment, I'm reading *The Little Wave*, which is about these three characters who all have complicated things going on in their families. It's a good book and it's pretty easy to read.

My teacher this year is very strict. I don't get in trouble from my teacher unless I haven't finished my work or if I'm talking or sitting with my friends when I'm not supposed to. When my friends and I get in trouble during class, though, usually I am the one that gets moved. Not fair!

I have two mums and an older sister who is fourteen. My sister is in the teenager stage and she's sometimes... well... she can be really rude! – like when I ask her to play Roblox with me and she doesn't want to. She'll grow out of it soon, I hope.

I have a cat called Winnie that we adopted from a shelter. Winnie just turned seven. She's an indoor cat. Sometimes we let her out but, when we do, she usually tries to escape over the fence. Winnie growled when the cat from up the street came into the garden!

My family goes for walks together or we watch movies. I don't like walking miles and miles because my legs get really sore. I chose not to run the cross country at school because I was worried it would give me a stitch! I also don't like driving places with my family because I get motion sickness. I have to eat to stop myself from feeling sick.

One of my mums is from New Zealand. I haven't met my grandparents who live in Australia but I know the ones in New Zealand well because before the pandemic we used to go to there for holidays a lot.

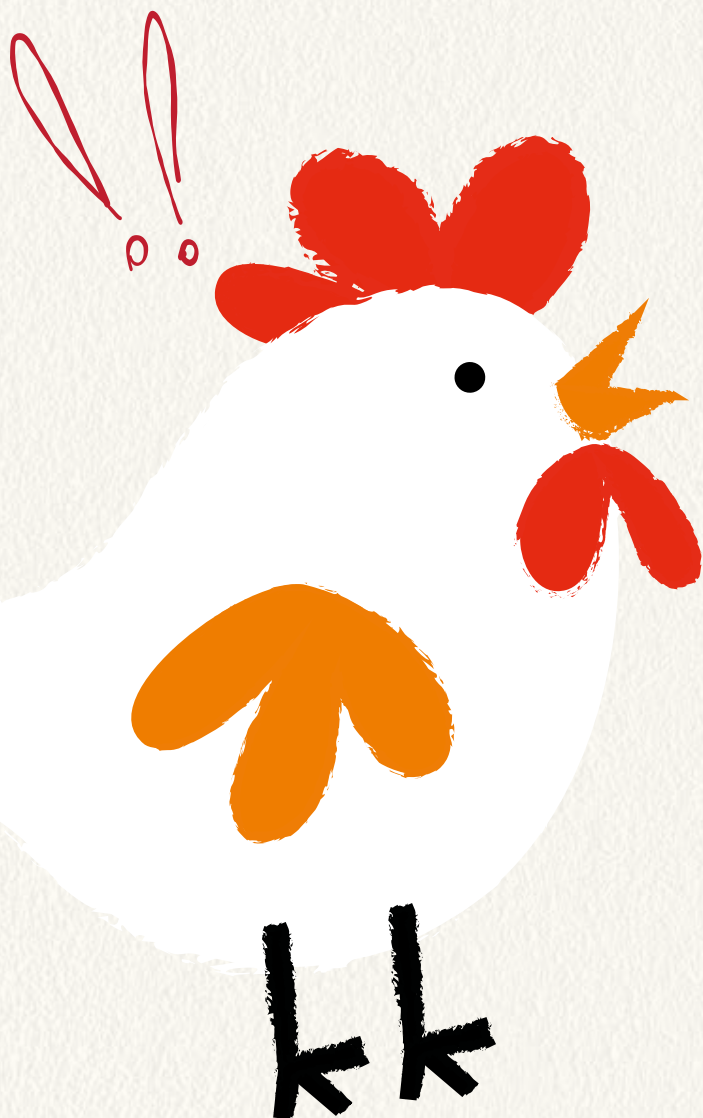
I was born in Australia but New Zealand is the place where I feel safe and most at home. New Zealand is in the Ring of Fire so I should feel less safe there but I don't.*

We have a big paddock at my relatives' house where I can run around. I think one day I might live in New Zealand. I want to raise my children there.

People don't really ask me about my family. Sometimes people ask me which mum is which or they ask if I'm talking about my mum who used to be a boy or the mum who is my natural mum. That really annoys me. Two people I know at school think that being gay or lesbian is weird, which makes me kinda sad. I can sort of see why they think it's a bit weird because it's like marrying your own gender. But it's not weird.

Actually, people more often ask me about my eye than about my mums. I have a red spot on my eye because I poked it as a baby. I like to make up different explanations for the spot on my eye. So, today when my friend asked me about it, I told her I was attacked by a chicken. She didn't believe me though!

*The Ring of Fire is a part of the Pacific Ocean where a lot of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions happen.





STORY 03

Mikayla, 19 (she / her)

I have 2 mums, 2 dads, a sister Abby, a brother Kurt, and lots of extended family. I live in Northside Brisbane, near the beach.

The story goes that my nan, Vicky, met my dad, Rob, through work many years before I was born. They were at a party at the Opera House, and she asked him to be a sperm donor for her daughter, Amanda. Amanda is her only child and, being lesbian, I think nan was trying to be helpful in finding someone to help my mums have children. She's a kind of Fairy Rainbow Godmother.

I think the conception happened quickly, and that a vegemite jar was involved. That's how I came about, and later my sister. Chris, my mum, carried me and Amanda, my mama, carried my sister Abby.

Rob was supposed to be an 'uncle' figure in our lives, but that all changed when he met his now husband, Scott, when I was three. Scott always wanted to be a dad and when he met me, he fell in love. Soon after this, my sister was born and they became fathers to both me and Abby.

Rob and Scott moved interstate to be closer to us and we lived near each other for a year and then in the same house for another year. My dads lived upstairs and my mums lived downstairs. I'm sure they would have their own stories to tell but, as for me, I remember that time being exciting.

My dads later moved back to Sydney and had my brother, Kurt, with the help of a surrogate and egg donor. We've always visited and stayed with them. I think it's given Abby and I different experiences. Scott has helped me a lot with my career and going to uni. My mums also placed importance on learning and being a nice person.



As a kid we went to a little Catholic School, and we were the only ones in a rainbow family. It was a great little school. When I was young, I didn't tell kids much about my family. Maybe that was some survival thing as I knew that if I was open about my family, I could get bullied. Abby, my younger sister, has always been more open. When we used to fly to Sydney as unattended minors to stay with our dads, Abby talked away and shared who was in our family with everyone. She would tell the flight attendants our whole life story. Very friendly Qantas flights to Sydney – the flight attendants loved it!

As I got older, I started dropping my family structure into conversations more frequently. I would say to others, "I'm going to see my dads this weekend," and then I would get a "what??" back from them. People were confused or asked questions, but they accepted it. It took some kids a little while to understand.

*I explained it like a battery;
minus plus minus equals a positive,
you know.*



My dads got married in New York back in 2011, before it was legalized here. My mums had a commitment ceremony because that's all they could do in 2001.

A favourite childhood memory is spending holiday time with family in my dads' holiday house in Gerringong. My mums would come down, along with my aunts, uncles, cousins and all of our family in NSW. I still love time with all of our family, together in NSW.

I am studying a double degree in Business and Design at uni, have a boyfriend, lots of friends and work part time in a pet store. We grew up with lots of animals. My mums were always fostering dogs.

TIPS #2: HOW TO COME OUT TO YOUR FAMILY



If you or someone else you support needs to come out to their family, here are some tips on how to do it:

- 1** Do it when you are ready.
- 2** Think about what you want to say before you say it.
- 3** If you don't want to do it face-to-face, think about doing it via a note or a text. Sometimes writing it down gives you a chance to say it how you really want to say it and gives the person you're telling a chance to process the information in their own time.
- 4** If you think you are at risk of being kicked out of home or subjected to violence, maybe it's not the right time to come out. If you still want to, make sure you have a friend who can support you or who you can stay with and agree to this with them beforehand.
- 5** If you want to learn about other people's experiences, you can find stories online.
- 6** It may have taken you time to come to terms with who you are. In a similar way your family may also need time to process the information. Even though it might feel hurtful at the time, it can help to try and understand things from their point of view too.
- 7** You can also give your family resources to help them understand what is going on (for example, you may suggest they go to PFLAG to meet other parents, seek help from a queer-friendly counsellor, or provide online resources to your family members).
- 8** Finally, if you want some help on how to come out, talk to:
 - Wear it Purple:
<https://www.wearitpurple.org>
 - Kids Helpline:
<https://kidshelpline.com.au>
1800 55 1800
 - Minus18:
<https://www.minus18.org.au/>
 - QLIFE:
<https://qlife.org.au/>
1800 184 527





STORY 04

Joel, 10

I'm ten years old and I live in the inner west in Sydney. I have two mums, a dad and a brother. I know my dad but I don't see him very often.

I have two homes. One of my mums lives at one house and the other mum lives at the other house. I have a cat at one house and a rabbit at the other.

While I was growing up, I didn't realise my family was any different from other families.

We went to Mardi Gras when I was five years old and I met heaps of different kinds of families there. Since then I've made lots of new friends through Rainbow Families.



I really like living in a rainbow family. It's unique – or as Kath and Kim would say:

*noice,
diff'rent
and unyoozhual*

I think it's fun to tell people about my family and to see their different reactions.

One thing I love about my family life is that we travel a lot together. One of my mums has a Latin American and Spanish background, so we've visited Argentina and Spain (olé!). My other mum took me to visit the Philippines. I really like seeing the world and learning about other cultures.





STORY 05

Nico, 30

My mums met in Vancouver, and some months later I was born. My mum was trying to fall pregnant before meeting my other mum. She tried clinics but got pregnant by a private donor in the end.

My brother, Ralph, was born to my other mum and a different donor. Sometimes I'm asked if that creates space between us. I don't think so. When you're raised with someone they are your brother, and brotherhood goes much deeper than blood. My brother's donor made it clear that it was going to be an anonymous thing and didn't want any contact. Mine was not clear about that. I have had a curiosity about him. I did try to find him. Not that I feel there is a hole in my life or that there should have been a man in my life. But I am curious.

When I was at school, Ralph and I were the only kids with lesbian parents. It helped living in the Blue Mountains. I don't remember my parents explaining about my family. Living in an accepting community, it wasn't an issue.

I got a negative response when I moved to England in high school. I had always been very comfortable saying, "oh yeah, I have 2 mums". I remember when I first told that story there, I could tell by their reactions, that they were not cool with it. It was a tough year.

After I finished high school and I started meeting people my age, sharing that story became cool. It's something interesting about me. I have used it to set myself apart. Girls are interested that I have two mums.

Both my parents are really strong women. There is nothing I would not to talk to them about.

When I was 18, I got my first tattoo. I was in a rugby match and saw a guy with a "mum" tattoo. I thought, "I could do that – but put the plural in. That would be funny." I did it to be funny. But as the years went on, I went out into the world, meeting people. And having that on my back is a strong statement about where I've come from. I'm proud of that.



JUST JOKES

For those times when you need a secret weapon to fight back against dad jokes or mum jokes, or if you just need a giggle, here's a selection of jokes for you. (And, ok, we admit it, some of them are pretty terrible).



Q: What did the number eight say to the zero?
A: What happened? Lost your belt?

Q: What did the mushroom say to the fungus?
A: You're a fun guy.

I got fired from my job at the bank today. An old woman asked me to check her balance. So I pushed her over.

Q: Why did the meatballs and spaghetti go to bed?
A: Because it was pasta their bed time.

Q: Why do seagulls fly over the seas?
A: Because if they flew over the bay, we'd have to call them bagels (bay-gulls... get it?)

Hot Tip: Never tell a person with COVID-19 to stay positive... boom tish!

My friend told me that an onion is the only food that makes you cry. So I threw a coconut at him...

Q: How do dog catchers get paid?
A: By the pound.

Knock knock
Who's there
What's 5Q + 5Q?
10Q
You're welcome.

My mum was chopping up Onion today. Such a shame.
He was such a good boy.

Q: What did the traffic light say to the car?
A: Don't look. I'm changing.



STORY 06

Molly, 17
(she / her)

My family consists of my two mums, my brother Max, cat Ginny, and Paddy our dog. Pauline is my birth mum and Anne is my other mum. I call Pauline 'mummy' and Anne has always been 'mum-mum'. So, mum twice. Paddy had a new haircut the other day. I did a DIY haircut with a Kmart grooming kit.

I have another half-brother Zach, who lives in Lismore. We have the same donor father. I am not sure how my parents found out about him. We've met twice. I remember one time we stayed with them when I was 8, and another time they came to visit us in the Blue Mountains. Knowing that Zach is a half-brother, I sometimes wonder "Are there more half siblings I don't know about?"

Our family lives in the Blue Mountains. Our house is in the middle of the bush. Lots of native plants, native animals. There are wallabies and echidnas, as well as snakes, unfortunately.

When I was younger, I only ever knew two other LGBTQIA+ families. It was never really an issue for me at school. I definitely have the memory of people asking about it, but no-one had a problem. People were curious. Lots of questions like: "What do you call them?"; "Which one is your birth mum?"; "Do you know your father?"; "How were you created?"; and questions about my half siblings.



In primary school, when people asked about my donor father, I told them he was an anonymous donor. Sometimes people ask if I want to meet him. I don't know. I am not sure how it works to find him. I know I can find out soon, when I turn 18. But it's my HSC year, so that's not my priority.

I am very fulfilled with my family and knowing who my family is.

I don't feel any pressure to find out. That might be different for my brother, Max. I think he is curious. I tried to find out how to go about it, but it's not easy. I'm curious about my ancestors.

People always assume that Anne is both Max's and my mum. When I was younger, I was probably closer to Pauline as she spent more time at home. Anne was working in the city and doing her PhD. Pauline is a teacher and good to talk to. Anne loves to cook. She's the one that coordinates the holidays, the shopping, and social things. Now that I am older and an art student, Anne takes me to art galleries. We both share that interest. They are different and I enjoy different things about them.



Max is my annoying older brother. He is older by 4 years. He is interested in film and media, and recently politics and philosophy. He's definitely on a cool journey. We were really close when we were little. We spent weekends building huge Lego sets. We would put up trestle tables and take over the house with Lego. We both liked Star Wars. When he went to high school, we had less in common. We are close again now. I know he loves me. He volunteers to drive me to work. He shows me he can be caring as much as he can purposefully annoy me at the dinner table. I think he's interesting and I like the films he makes.



In 2017 I was in Year 7. That year was filled with all the anxiety of starting Year 7, making new friends, and then the plebiscite about equal marriage. I wasn't feeling very confident. My high school had LGBTQIA+ clubs and days to celebrate Pride. That was all big and new and interesting to me. I remember the day it was being announced if the law would be passed. People were doing a countdown in the library. I had a friend who identified as lesbian. We went outside the school library to see the result. We both felt timid, so we didn't go in, just watched from the outside. I wish we could have enjoyed that moment.

I got a flurry of text messages from my mums that day. We went out to dinner that night. After that date, Anne would tease Pauline about getting married. Pauline's not really interested in marriage. She has the perspective that she has spent all this time without it, that she has her own value in their partnership. I respect that, I find that very cool.

Both my mums grew up in religious households and had to deal with coming to terms with their own identity during an oppressive time. I have inherited progressive views from them, like being concerned about climate change. I am also very open to people's difference. I naturally question any gender stereotype in career and abilities.

What I can and can't do because of my gender does not exist in our household.

The way they have raised Max and I those gendered ideas are silly to us.

I didn't know it at the time, but I think it was important that when I did meet another person with a family like mine. I didn't have other people like that, and luckily it didn't affect me.

In 2018, we went to New Zealand as a family. It was the year after Max graduated. We drove all across New Zealand from the North Island to the South Island. My mums rented the cheapest, rickety, smelly travel van. After that first night of horrible sleep, we stayed in hotels. We did the Kepler Track, a four-day, 60km long hike. There was snow on the top of the mountain. It was an amazing bonding experience. It was hard for all of us. As a family we are now planning another multi-day walk in Tasmania.



PRONOUNS

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Pronouns are how we refer to people, such as you, she, him, they, etc.

When someone asks you to use a certain set of pronouns for them, it means that when you talk about them, they want you to refer to them using those pronouns. For example, if you use she/her/hers pronouns, you'd be referred to like "she is" or "that's her" or "that's hers".

Here are some of the common pronouns that people might use:

Pronoun	When it's used	Examples
She/her	When you're talking to someone who identifies as female	She has just arrived. That's her over there.
He/him	When you're talking to someone who identifies as male	He is really nice. You should talk to him.
They/them	When you're talking to a person who identifies as gender diverse or non-binary (someone who doesn't identify either as male or female)	They are really awesome. You should hang out with them.

Sometimes, using different pronouns for someone than the ones you have in the past can be tricky, such as using they/them pronouns for a singular person. If you're having particular trouble with they/them pronouns, a trick to use could be to pretend there's a ghost following the person using they/them pronouns, and you have to include the ghost when you're talking to them or about them. Another tip is to use their name.



PRONOUNS

PRONOUNS



STORY 07

Lars, 14 (they/them)

Some people might say I'm a nerd. I don't really fit society's idea of a nerd who's a bit plain and simple and one dimensional. I'm definitely quirky.

I would say I'm also caring because I enjoy looking after and helping people. I'm the parental figure in my friendship group – the one who always remembers to bring the snacks, who always has a spare mask and some sunscreen in their bag.

I have a close group of friends that I sit with in class or at lunchtime at school. My best friend is also a family friend who goes to my school. We've been close for about three or four years.

I walk for exercise and I try to ride to school at least once a week. I find walking calming. I like walking past different houses and getting a glimpse into people's lives. I find people quite interesting.

I enjoy reading and writing stories in my spare time. I'm currently developing a fan-based show that's in the Star Wars universe with my friend. We are developing characters and doing some stunt training for the series at the local park. We discuss the actions we will do and then work up the choreography together.

I like reading mostly young adult fiction, fantasy and dystopian literature. I also read classics. I've read *Anne of Green Gables*, the Nancy Drew books, and Enid Blyton. Occasionally, I don't mind reading a philosophical book, like *Fahrenheit 451*, which by the way was a bit tedious but also very relevant for our times.



I'm growing up with two mums (mum and mama), one dad and two younger brothers. My mum and dad used to be married but they divorced when I was about four. My middle brother transitioned from female to male when he was about three or four so, when he went to school, he didn't have to worry so much about being misgendered. My two mums had my littlest brother about five years ago.



I have lots of aunts and uncles and 14 first cousins. I haven't seen my cousins on my mum's side for a very long time because they live interstate. I see the cousins on my dad's side quite often – we get together every second Christmas but we also visit my aunt's family reasonably often because they live near my grandparents. We tend to see my mama's side of the family twice a term. It's a big family but we have all been quite close from a young age.

My family are a very funny community, whether they know that or not. My mums have an adorable interaction. It's sweet to see them together.

My biological mother is a very naturally goofy person who has a way of making people laugh, even if she doesn't realise it. And my mama is very interesting to talk to. She's always up to date with science and culture and politics and it's very interesting to talk to her about philosophical and everyday matters. We often bond over books, even though we like different genres.

My dad is also a very goofy person with a lot of love. He loves embarrassing me. He's very silly sometimes. It's really nice to see him having fun and being a parent at the same time.

The worst thing about living in my family is that I don't get to see all of my family all of the time. It would be nice if my dad lived closer and I could spend more time with him. Being separated makes it a harder relationship in some ways. But we have developed ways of communicating and staying in touch. We send each other memes and things on social media that we think each other would like. We tend to message daily. My friends who have families that aren't separated often comment that I communicate a lot with my dad. But I like to hear what he's up to, what kind of day he has had, and how he's feeling. My dad and I don't have a stereotypical father-child relationship. We have a friendship.

Actually, I have a bit of a friendship with all of my parents. We talk to each other openly and, most of the time, I feel comfortable sharing with them about what's going on for me. Sometimes we argue – but all families argue about stuff. We tend to work through our problems in a healthy and respectful way. I really appreciate being able to talk and not feeling restricted. I know it's not like that for everyone, though.

It's sometimes quite hard for me to explain my family. When people think of rainbow families, they mostly think of the classic two mums or two dads. But it's a bit more complicated than that for me and people don't always understand my family until I explain it really carefully. I have to tell them that my mum and dad made a mutual decision to get divorced and that then my mum came out.

I also often have to explain that my mum isn't dating my dad – or that my mama isn't my step-mum. My mama has raised me from when I was very young and so I really think of her as my parent. Sometimes step-parents aren't respected as part of the family. I don't want it to be like that for my mama.



If I was going to give advice to other young people living in rainbow families, I would say that the most important thing is to make sure you look after your own wellbeing.

That's a really important part of feeling comfortable with your family and with your identity. If you have worries or you get frustrated explaining things, it's really important to talk to your family and work through things together. But if you feel uncomfortable or unsupported in your family, you can also seek help from a psychologist or a youth service.



STORY 08

Sammy, 15 (he/him)



I am 15 years old and I love find-a-words and Harry Potter. My favorite house is Ravenclaw. I have two mums and a brother. I also have a kitten who is 17 weeks old. Last year I went to see *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. I am going again this year. I have watched the movies a lot. I like to march in Mardi Gras. I have marched with Rainbow Families. I like getting dressed up and waving to the crowds and going live on Instagram. Enjoy the find-a-word!

- Harry
- Scarf
- Cloak
- Alley
- Ravenclaw
- Magic



- Ron
- Bertie
- Slytherin
- Wand
- Ginny
- Hufflepuff



A	E	A	Y	C	F	R	A	C	S	C	L	O	A	K
L	I	C	M	H	U	F	F	L	E	P	U	F	F	A
L	T	S	M	A	G	I	C	P	T	C	F	F	W	C
E	R	A	H	R	A	V	E	N	C	L	A	W	A	C
Y	E	C	H	R	O	N	Y	N	N	I	G	A	N	S
B	B	S	L	Y	T	H	E	R	I	N	B	N	D	D



STORY 08

Lionel, 7

My name is Lionel and I'm seven years old now but I will be eight later this year.

If I was going to describe myself, I would say that I'm funny. I like my friends. I especially like talking to them. I once got told to go to reflection time in class because I was talking too much! But I don't really get in trouble much at school. I went to the naughty corner once, and once I went to the Principal's office – yikes!

I like going to after school care a couple of days a week and then coming home and watching TV. On other days after school I go to swimming, basketball, parkour or martial arts. I'm a yellow belt. I'm pretty busy!

My favourite subject at school is maths. I like it because you get to learn new things. It's like a puzzle. Every time you have another lesson you need to figure out a question. I also like writing, especially stories that I have made up. I like drawing too.

I have two mums and two dads and an older sister and lots of grandparents and cousins. My family is fun and they make me laugh, We go on bushwalks together. Sometimes we go and play mini-golf or

other fun stuff. I watch TV with my sister, mostly Netflix and Disney.

My family likes to travel. This year we are going to Europe for holidays. My sister does not want to go to Italy for her birthday. How is that even possible for anyone?!

I don't really feel like my family is different to other families. It's just a bit different because I have four parents instead of two and we go to Mardi Gras and sometimes to Rainbow Families things. No one ever really asks why I have two mums and two dads. They just accept it.

The most important thing about families is that everyone loves each other.

My advice for other kids growing up in rainbow families is to stay positive. But when you don't feel good, get a hug from one of your parents or ask a friend to give you a hug.





TIPS #3

So, are some people giving you a hard time?

Here are some things you can do if you're being harassed face-to-face:

- 1** If you can, it's best to ignore people who say stupid stuff about you.
- 2** If people are saying things that make you feel bad, tell someone you trust about it. It might be an adult, or a friend. Anyone who is good at listening.
- 3** If you can't think of someone to tell who will listen without judging you, try reaching out to a hotline. There are links to some good ones at the end of this resource. Of course, if you are at risk of immediate harm, call Triple Zero (000).
- 4** Do something you enjoy to make yourself feel better - like go for a walk, or meet up with friends.

Here are some other things you can do if you're being bullied online:

5 You can use your privacy and security settings to make sure you only see stuff from people that you want to see.

6 Resist the urge to respond. Block people who are being nasty.

7 Take screen shots of what happens online in case you need to show someone or report it.

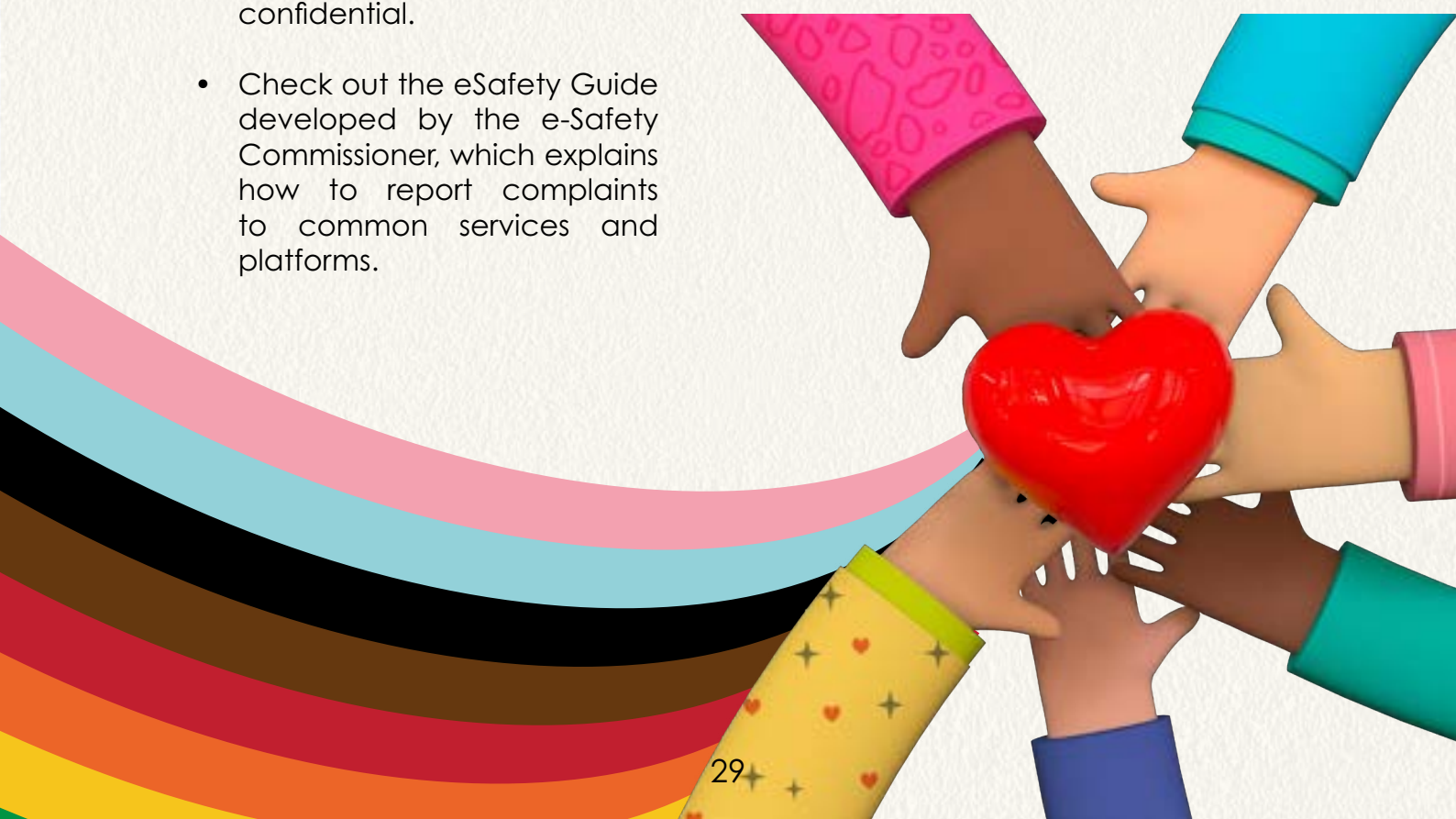
- When reporting, you should first report to the service or platform where the hurtful and harmful content is appearing. This usually means using the 'report content' feature. If it is not removed, you can then report it to eSafety. Your report will be kept private and confidential.
- Check out the eSafety Guide developed by the e-Safety Commissioner, which explains how to report complaints to common services and platforms.

8 Resisting the urge to respond can be good for some people. However, you can also try and educate the bully on why they are being hurtful. You should only do this if you are up for it, as people might not listen, and could say more nasty things. Be polite, and engage in a way that focuses on making a positive difference.

9 Make sure you reach out for help before things get too bad. It's never too soon or too late to ask for help.

You can find more information about how to deal with bullying online and other bad behaviour here:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>





STORY 09

Riley, 10
(he/him)



My name is Riley and I am ten years old.

You could say I am quite musical. I play viola, saxophone, tenor sax, ukulele, recorder and piano. Sometimes I get confused because I play a lot of different instruments and they're all in a different pitch, which can make reading the music challenging. I play music at school and at home, and I soon will start taking viola lessons with my friend at his house. I like different melodies. They make me feel calm and relaxed and creative. Actually, it's a little known fact that, if you play music, more pathways open up in your brain. If you listen to music it relaxes you but, if you play, more brainwaves switch on compared to the average person.

I have a Switch that I play a lot, especially on long road trips. Video games are fun but also addictive. I like that there lots of different genres. I especially like gun games but my parents aren't really keen on me playing them. My favourite car racing game at the moment is *Asphalt 9*. I also play this thing called *City Simulator*,

where you build a city. So far, I've built a house in a town near the city, a pizza shop, and an apartment, and now I'm building a big, fancy, suburban house.

I really love animals and I have a pet dog and two birds. There are also a couple of rats in our back yard. I've seen them running across our deck. Sometimes they stop on the deck and stare at me. Our neighbour's cats also wander through our yard. Last night, there was a black and white cat crawling along the window and it gave me a fright!

I read quite a lot – mostly graphic novels and books by Ahn Do. I like that there aren't too many words in graphic novels but lots of pictures instead. My favourite graphic novel is *The Odds*.

I like getting dressed up in nice clothes to go to formal events. My favourite outfit is a classic blazer and pants, with a nice t-shirt.

In my family, I've got two dads, a brother, my pets and me. I never really have to explain to anyone why I have two dads. It's normal to have two dads. My dads got married a long time ago in Canada because they couldn't do it in Australia. I wasn't born back then, though.

I also have two grandparents who live just outside Wollongong, an aunt and uncle who live in Wollongong, and two uncles who live just up the road from us. I also have a big family in Canada, because one of my dads comes from there. I don't get to see them all that often, but they spoil me when they see me, especially if it's Halloween. I like having Halloween in Canada because it's fun when you get to march through the snow.



The worst thing about living in my family is ... well, nothing!

I am the youngest child so I get away with quite a bit.



The best thing about my family is that they are very fun.

They take me on a lot of holidays and also give me a lot of treats. We go to places like Canada and to Disney Land. But mostly we do long road trips around Australia. A couple of years ago we went to Cooberpedy and Broken Hill. Those trips are pretty cool but sometimes I get bored in the car because there is no internet reception.

At home, I try to help my dads out by taking out the trash. I vacuum, sweep and dust. I don't mind doing those jobs.



STORY 10

Stella, 9
(she/her)

My family is dad, papa and my sister Pia and me.

Having two dads is annoying, but there are good things too. For example, they take me to have Messina ice cream.

I was born in India. My parents wanted to have children so they needed help with surrogacy.

We once went to India for a holiday, it was big and beautiful. We ate lots of spicy curry. I have some saris from India.

My sister was born when I was three. I can't remember but I saw videos on my dad's phone and she was cute! We are different. I am a bit shy. She was born in Thailand. She likes *Wild Kratts* and I like to watch movies. Sometimes she copies me. If I go outside, she follows. One time she wanted to be twins with me, dress the same. We play tickle monster and tips.

My dads work with food. I love all of it. I can cook chocolate cake, cookies, and shepherds pie. It's not hard.



We do lots of things with Rainbow Families. I like the lollipops at Fair Day.

One year we marched in Mardi Gras and we all wore the same t-shirt and my dads put on glitter.

My legs were sore afterwards!

Dad and I went to Canberra with Rainbow Families to ask for marriage equality. We went to Parliament House. It was a bit boring. My papa and dad got married after marriage equality. Pia and I wore dresses to the wedding. We ate a big cake.

When I grow up I want to be a cook. That is my passion.

STELLA'S SHEPHERD'S PIE

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup (60ml) olive oil
500g lamb mince
1 large onion, finely chopped
3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
2 tsp Vegemite
2 tsp tomato paste
2 cups beef liquid stock
1 ½ cups warm mashed potato

METHOD

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Step 2

You may need an adult to help with this step. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a saucepan. Add mince and cook, breaking up any lumps with a wooden spoon, for 3-4 minutes until browned. Stir in the 1 teaspoon of Vegemite. Transfer the lamb to a bowl and leave it there for a bit.

Step 3

Put 1 tablespoon oil in pan. Add the onion, garlic, and carrot. Cook for 3-4 minutes until soft.

Step 4

Mix in the Vegemite, tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce and stir. Return the meat to the pan and add the stock. Stir and add salt if you want.

Step 5

Put the meat mixture in a baking dish then top with the mashed potato. Pattern mash with a fork.

Step 6

Bake for 20 minutes or until the top is nicely browned. Yummo.



STATEMENTS

OF

SUPPORT





Anne Hollonds
National Children's Commissioner
kids@humanrights.gov.au



Dear reader

I am very pleased to support the Rainbow Families Youth Resource that aims to help children and young people from Rainbow Families feel a sense of community and deal with challenges in their lives. The Resource is a great way to celebrate the diversity of families in Australia. I really enjoyed reading your stories and advice for other kids.

As National Children's Commissioner, my job is to promote and protect the rights and wellbeing of all children and young people in Australia. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child says that all children should be able to enjoy their rights without discrimination, no matter what their (or their parent's) sexual orientation or gender identity.

The best part of my job is that I get to speak with kids in communities across Australia. I know that families come in all shapes and sizes, and all families experience both joyful and challenging moments. Love and trust and respect is what matters most. And I know that families are really important to kids!

We need to make Australia a safe and inclusive place for everyone, which is why marriage equality for same-sex couples was such an important step. But there is much more to do so that Australia can be 'the best place to be a child and the best place to raise a child'.

Children have a right to express themselves and speak about issues that are important to them, and their views should be listened to. I am especially excited that this Rainbow Families Youth Resource has been created by young people themselves using their own experiences and stories from their own Rainbow Families, in order to reach out to other children and celebrate their families.

I look forward to hearing more stories from kids in Rainbow Families in the future.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Hollonds". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anne Hollonds
National Children's Commissioner



Julie Inman Grant
eSafety Commissioner
esafety.gov.au



Hi everyone!

eSafety is responsible for keeping all Australians free from harm in online spaces. My name is Julie Inman Grant and I'm the current eSafety Commissioner. The agency helps keep Australians safe in three ways – prevention, protection and proactive change. This means we try to stop negative online experiences happening in the first place – but also have legal and investigative powers to help if things do go wrong.

eSafety recognises that families come in all shapes and sizes and commends Little Rainbows Youth Resource for elevating the lived experiences of Australia's diverse people and communities. We appreciate there is beauty in difference and that every family deserves kindness and respect.

The Little Rainbows Youth Resource responds to the changing online safety needs of Australia's young people. It recognises and celebrates that we all have a role to play, both online and offline, to help keep young people happy and safe from harm – especially our most vulnerable and especially in those times when respect and kindness go missing in online interactions.

We know that during tough times, young people often turn to their friends, and that the very act of storytelling and sharing experiences can build confidence and resilience amongst peer groups. The stories captured in the Little Rainbows Youth Resource provide an authentic insight into our rainbow communities. They are a powerful reminder that, through sharing, we foster understanding and improve people's lives.

eSafety believes the online world should be inclusive of young people from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. We admire the young people for sharing their stories, and for speaking out against online harm. It is an important step towards building help-seeking and supportive behaviours in every community. The Little Rainbows Youth Resource will help develop a new generation of positive online contributors and improve digital cultures and experiences by bolstering young people's support networks.

eSafety remains dedicated to Australia's Rainbow communities and committed to serving and supporting them through information and reporting opportunities.

Go well - online and offline!

Julie Inman Grant
eSafety Commissioner



Ashley Scott
Executive Officer
Rainbow Families



Rainbow Families is a charity that supports, connects and empowers LGBTQ+ parents and their families. The Youth Advisory Council is a special place within our community for young people to connect with other young people from diverse families. Our Youth Advisory Council was started after our community fought so hard for and won marriage equality. A passionate and engaged group of young people were actively involved in the marriage equality campaign. While their parents were emotionally exhausted these young people were looking forward to continuing the momentum they have been part of.

Rainbow Families Co-Chair at the time Vanessa Gonzalez saw the potential in this group of teenagers and wanted to support them by creating a safe and inclusive space specifically for young people in Rainbow Families. Over the past five years, while members of the Youth Advisory Council may have changed, the goal of the group has remained - offering support to other people just like them. Vanessa has guided this amazing group who have now developed this ground-breaking resource for young people, by young people. Vanessa thank you for your dedication to the Youth Advisory Council, and for all of your work for the Rainbow Families community.

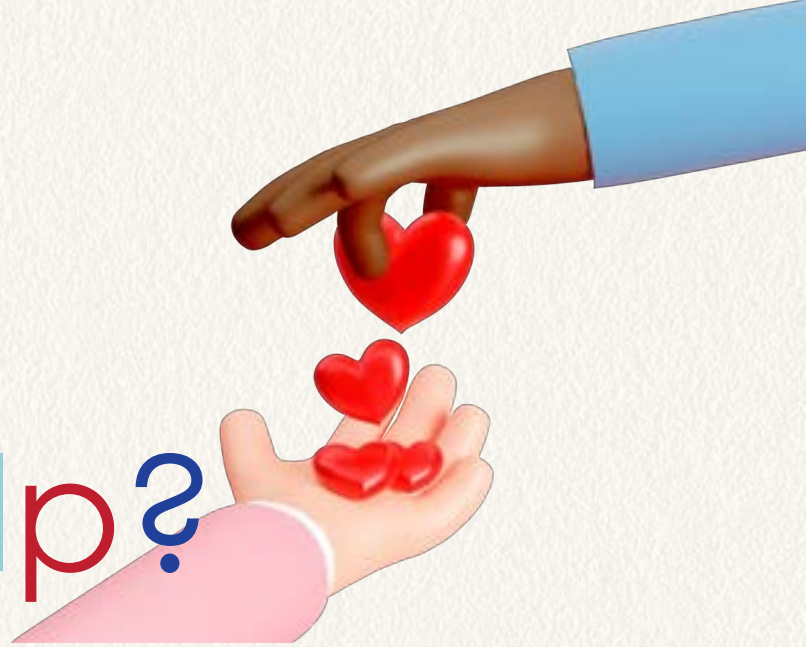
We will continue to support everyone in Rainbow Families, particularly our children - the future leaders of our community. I look forward to the Youth Advisory Council growing as more of our children get older, and the Youth Advisory Council members explore other ways to support their peers.

This resource would not have been possible without the funding from The Aurora Group who saw the need in our community and financially supported the project. Thank you for your support. The team at the Young and Resilient Research Centre at Western Sydney University has taken the Youth Advisory Council's vision and helped them to develop this amazing resource. Amanda, Shiva and Ben, thank you.

Finally thank you to each and every member of the Youth Advisory Council and to all of the additional contributors to this resource. What an amazing resource you have created for your community. You should be proud of yourselves. I certainly am very proud of you.

Ashley Scott (He/Him)
Executive Officer
Rainbow Families

Need some help?



Here are some places we recommend to look for information or support.

If you need someone to talk to about challenges you're facing or how you're feeling, you can reach out to any of the following and they will help you or make sure you can find a service that can help you:

Kids Helpline

A National free private and confidential counselling

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

☎ 1800 55 1800

Beyond Blue

Free and confidential calls and chats with trained mental health professionals.

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

☎ 1300 22 4636 (24 hours)

Minus 18

A national organisation providing support to young LGBTQIA+ young people 12 - 18

<https://www.minus18.org.au/>

QLife

A phone and webchat support line offering LGBTQ+ peer support and referrals.

<https://qlife.org.au/>

☎ 1800 184 527



If you are being bullied or harassed or abused online, the eSafety Office can help you. You can report the incident here:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/report>

Wear it Purple strives to make sure that there are safe, supportive, empowering and inclusive environments for rainbow young people.

Check them out here:

<https://www.wearitpurple.org/>

If there other issues that children and young people like you face, and you need someone to change a law or something like that, it's a good idea to let the National Children's Commissioner know, as it's their job to listen to children and young people and work out how to make sure they can do everything they need to do to live and grow well.

You can contact them at:

kids@humanrights.gov.au

And come along the next Rainbow Families event, or get involved with our Youth Advisory Council.

Just email:

yac@rainbowfamilies.com.au

Rainbow Families

<https://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/>

