

# Alternative Education

Access to education is a right, not a privilege. Education systems need to provide inclusive settings with opportunities for young people to learn and develop in ways that recognise and respond to their diverse strengths, backgrounds, learning styles and individual needs. The school leaving age in the ACT is 15 years.

(**Note:** The Government is proposing to increase this age to 17, with the *Earn or Learn* initiative. For more information visit [www.chiefminister.act.gov.au](http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au)).

There are many reasons why a young person may have difficulties at school such as poverty, family difficulties, health, and social and environmental factors. It's important to support young people, their families and schools to find solutions to these barriers. Suspension or exclusion from school may not be the best response and could lead to further exclusion and isolation of a young person.

It's the responsibility of workers and the community to know and action young people's rights. Workers need to be aware of young people's rights in education and support them to stay in mainstream education where possible.

In this section you'll find:

- □ Tips on supporting young people in transitioning to alternative education;
- □ Alternative education services; and
- □ A contact list of additional alternative education services.

The following sections also contain alternative education resources: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Employment and Training; Health and Sexual Health; Multicultural; Youth Centres; Youth Support and Youth Support in Secondary Schools.

## Ways of Working

### Supporting Young People in Transitioning to Alternative Education

Entering alternative education can cause significant changes and upheaval for young people and may also be accompanied by other issues, such as a history of negative education experiences, associated feelings of failure, fear or insecurity, as well as outside issues. Planning for transition into alternative education is a process that can help young people prepare and work towards achieving their future directions and goals. Workers can assist young people to develop a transition plan.

Transition planning is a process that:

- □ Promotes a smooth transition to alternative education;
- □ Is empowering;
- □ Maximises choices;
- □ Informs decision making; and
- □ Provides direction and purpose.

Transition planning is not a single event or meeting. It should start early to allow the young person to plan for a smooth and successful transition to alternative education.

In collaboration and partnership with family and other support people, young people should be encouraged and supported to play a leading role in their own transition planning. The questions below help explore key issues when developing an individual transition plan with a young person.

1. Identify and work towards the outcomes and goals the young person wants to achieve from the education program.

- Why do I want to study? What are my expectations?
- What do I want to achieve?
- What direction might I like to take in the future?
- What programs are around that I might be able to participate in?

2. Identify the changes and challenges this may have for the young person, and strategies to help cope with these.

- Why didn't it work for me last time?
- What type of program best suits my current lifestyle?
- What might have to change in my current lifestyle?
- How much will it cost?

3. Identify people that will support the young person to achieve their outcomes and goals in alternative education.

- What support do I need from other people?
  - Do I need help with transport to and from the program?
  - Do I need help with the cost of the program?
  - What if I need to talk to someone about problems I might be having with the program or its impact on my life?
- Who can help support me with these things?

## Services

### Canberra College Cares (CCCare)

Provides an education and support program for young carers, pregnant and parenting students in the ACT.

<b>Phone</b>	(02) 6205 6787
<b>Mailing Address</b>	CCCare C/O Canberra College, Weston Campus, Fremantle Dr, Stirling ACT 2611
<b>Email</b>	jan.marshall@ed.act.edu.au
<b>Website</b>	www.canberrac.act.edu.au/special-programs/cccares
<b>Location</b>	Canberra College, Weston Campus, Fremantle Dr, Stirling
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Canberra College, ACT Department of Education and Training

#### Who Can Access:

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	14 – 20
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	No
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes

<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes
<b>How to Access</b>	By phone and email, 8am - 5pm, Monday - Friday. Drop in hours 9am – 3pm, Monday - Friday.
<b>Programs</b>	Provides information, advocacy, emergency relief (food, nappies, transport), case management and referrals. Transport is provided two days a week to and from the school. Emergency transport is also available. Outreach can be organised on a needs basis. Groups have been run on nutrition, sexual awareness, and for multicultural young people. A Maternity and Child Health (MACH) nurse is on site each week and the antenatal nurse visits monthly. Activities have included free excursions. Computer and Internet is available.
<b>Personal Support Other</b>	Provides support beyond program activities. Year 10 and 12 certificates, information and communication technology programs, Road Ready and additional support are also provided.
<b>Families</b>	Can liaise with families.

### Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) Vocational College - Learning Options & Access10 (Year 10 alternative)

An accredited flexible learning program to achieve a Year 10 certificate.

<b>Phone</b>	(02) 6207 4872
<b>Mailing Address</b>	CIT Vocational College, Canberra Institute of Technology, GPO Box 826, Canberra City ACT 2601
<b>Email</b>	judy.southwell@cit.act.edu.au
<b>Website</b>	www.cit.act.edu.au
<b>Location</b>	Bruce Campus, Haydon Dr, Belconnen & Southside Campus, Cnr Hindmarsh Dr & Ainsworth St Phillip
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT)

#### **Who Can Access**

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	16 years and over
<i>Income required</i>	Fee paying. Concessions available if receiving Centrelink, evidence required at enrolment. Pay for subjects as you study. CIT Student Association Fee and material fees.
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Bruce campus has childcare facilities

#### **How to Access**

By phone:  
*Phillip campus:* 9.30am – 12pm Monday - Friday, 2.00pm – 4.00pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.  
*Bruce campus:* 8.30am – 1pm Monday - Friday, 2pm – 5pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

#### **Programs**

*Learning Options* Program may be used as a starting point to vocational training, employment, Year 10 or Year 12

<i>Program</i>	programs or to involvement in community or work-related activities. Offers support for those who need assistance with basic literacy, numeracy and computing skills.
<i>Access10 Program</i>	Provides flexible learning opportunities to achieve a Year 10 equivalent relevant to intended learning or training pathways.  Program enrolment is advertised in <i>The Canberra Times</i> , to find out dates, contact CIT student services hub on (02) 6207 3188. There is a direct enrolment which requires the student to attend at the time specified. A teacher will do an interview to assess learning needs and ensure placement into the appropriate program. Enrolment is by term. Study can be part-time or full-time during the day or evening at either campus. Contact to put name on waiting list.
<b>Personal Support</b>	Does not provide support beyond program activities.
<b>Other</b>	CIT Student Services offers a wide range of services to students to assist them in the successful completion of their studies and to enhance their personal lives. These include: Careers Advice, Counselling, Disability Support, Employment Options, Financial Assistance, Equity, Indigenous Student Support, an Information Centre & Migrant Support. CIT offers the following preparatory programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> ACT Year 12 Certificate</li> <li>• <input type="checkbox"/> English – spoken and written</li> </ul>
<b>Families</b>	Does not work specifically with families.

## Galilee Education Service

Provides education and support for young people experiencing homelessness.

<b>Phone</b>	Galilee Education Services (02) 6296 3410 Galilee Main Office (02) 6290 2191
<b>Mailing Address</b>	PO Box 205, Mawson ACT 2607
<b>Email</b>	Susan.christiansen@galilee.org.au
<b>Website</b>	www.galilee.org.au
<b>Location</b>	Lions Youth Haven, Kambah Pool Rd, Kambah
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Galilee Inc.

### Who Can Access

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	12 - 16
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Case by case
<i>Income required</i>	No

<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Case by case

**How to Access** By phone and email, 9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday for main office; 9am - 5pm, Monday - Friday for Galilee Education Services. A phone referral is necessary and young people can self refer. Enrolment throughout the year.

**Programs** Provides accredited programs, information, advocacy, case management, peer education, counselling and referrals. A breakfast and lunch program is provided for participants, and various groups and activities can be provided. The service works in partnership with local high schools. Transport can be arranged to and from the services for participants, and they have a school holiday program. Computer and Internet is available.

**Personal Support** Provides support beyond program activities.  
**Other** A respite program for secondary school students is available.

**Families** Can liaise with families.

### Connect 10 (Formerly known as SITE)

Alternate education setting for year 9 or 10 students, available at Lake Ginninderra, Lake Tuggeranong and Dickson College.

<b>Phone</b>	(02) 6205 6455 – School Directorate -
<b>Mailing Address</b>	c/o Dickson College, Phillip Avenue, Dickson ACT 2602
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:gillian.finch@ed.act.edu.au">gillian.finch@ed.act.edu.au</a>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dicksonc.act.edu.au/faculties/focus_program">www.dicksonc.act.edu.au/faculties/focus_program</a>
<b>Location</b>	Dickson College
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Department of Education and Training

#### Who Can Access

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	Years 9 - 10 with preference to students completing their Year 10 Certificate
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Case by case basis
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes, but no childcare facilities at school

**How to Access** By phone 9am – 4pm, Monday - Friday. Student can self refer. A selection panel interview with the student and a parent/guardian is required. Enrolment as per school year.

**Programs** Provides an opportunity for students to gain a Year 10 Certificate and preparation for continuing studies at college, Canberra Institute of Technology or in

employment. Provides the opportunity to access mainstream college courses while completing a high school program. The program has courses of study in the core areas of English, Mathematics, Science, Physical Education and Studies of Society and the Environment. Information Technology is integrated in all courses where possible.

**Personal Support Families** Does not provide support beyond program activities. Can liaise with families.

## YARDS

Transition program that provides opportunities to work toward education and employment goals through a 10-week program.

<b>Phone</b>	(02) 6205 4778
<b>Mailing Address</b>	GPO Box 826, Canberra 2601
<b>Email</b>	kevin.ruddick@cit.act.edu.au or ariel.ford@cit.act.edu.au
<b>Location</b>	CIT, Ainsworth St, Phillip
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Canberra Institute of Technology

### Who Can Access

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	15 – 25
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Case by case
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	No

**How to Access** By phone, email and drop in, 9am - 3pm, Monday - Thursday. A referral is necessary and young people can self refer. Enrolment is per school terms.

**Programs** Provides case management, groups, counselling and referrals. Outreach can be arranged to people involved in the program. Also have pathways to Canberra Institute of Technology, Access10 Program.

**Personal Support Families** Provides support beyond program activities. Can liaise with families.

## Youth Education Program (YEP)

Provides an opportunity for young people disengaged from mainstream education for a minimum period of 3 months, to gain their year 10 and year 12 Certificate.

<b>Phone</b>	(02) 6232 2433
<b>Mailing Address</b>	PO Box 287, Civic Square, ACT 2608
<b>Email</b>	@anglicarecg.org.au
<b>Location</b>	Club 12/25, Cnr Ballumbir & Petrie Sts, Civic
<b>Parent Organisation</b>	Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn

### **Who Can Access**

<i>Gender</i>	Females and males
<i>Age</i>	15 – 19
<i>Young people under the influence</i>	Case by case
<i>Income required</i>	No
<i>Disability access</i>	Yes
<i>Children of clients</i>	Yes

### **How to Access**

By phone, 9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday. Young people can self refer or be referred by family, friends or services. Assessment required.

### **Programs**

Provides education and training which may include the development of numeracy and literacy skills, the attainment of accredited certification (including Year 10 and Year 12 Certificates), Road Ready or other educational options - and develops a Transition Plan to address them.

Also provides case management, personal support, recreational opportunities, information resources and access to skills development.

### **Personal Support Families**

Provides support beyond program activities.  
Can liaise with families.

### **The following services also provide alternative education programs and/or support:**

- Galilee LIFT Project (Youth Support)
- Learning for Life (Youth Support)
- Menslink (Youth Support)
- Open Family Australia (Youth Support)
- PASS Homework Program (Multicultural)
- Urayarra Indigenous Youth Skills and Education Program (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- See also the Youth Centres section

## **Resources**

### **More Services**

This is a contact list of additional alternative education programs in the ACT. Some programs are attached to schools, others operate independently.

#### **Adolescent Day Unit**

*Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services*

Provides a support service to young people between 12 - 25 who have health issues that are precluding them from completing their educational pathways. Health issues may include depression, anxiety, self harming and attachment disorders and are supported in conjunction with appropriate agency interventions.

**Phone:** (02) 6205 5211

**Email:** Rish.Lefterys@act.gov.au

**Numeracy & Literacy Program**

*Gugan Gulwan Aboriginal Youth Corporation*

Offers basic numeracy and literacy to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander young people to assist them to access other education options.

**Phone:** (02) 6231 9555

**Email:** malcolm@gugan-gulwan.org.au

**The Cottage**

*Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Mental Health ACT*

A therapeutic day program for young people who have moderate to severe mental health issues and who are experiencing difficulties in mainstream schooling because of these issues. Referrals through CAMHS, call for further details.

**Phone:** (02) 6205 1128

<b>More Information</b>
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**ByUs4Us Books**

*Centre Education Program, Brisbane*

A series of books written by young people (aged 12 to 16 years) for young people who struggle with reading but want to read something that is of interest to them. The books cost \$9.00 each.

**Phone:** (07) 3808 6800

**Email:** Linda.houston@centred.qld.edu.au or cassie.benjamin@centred.qld.edu.au