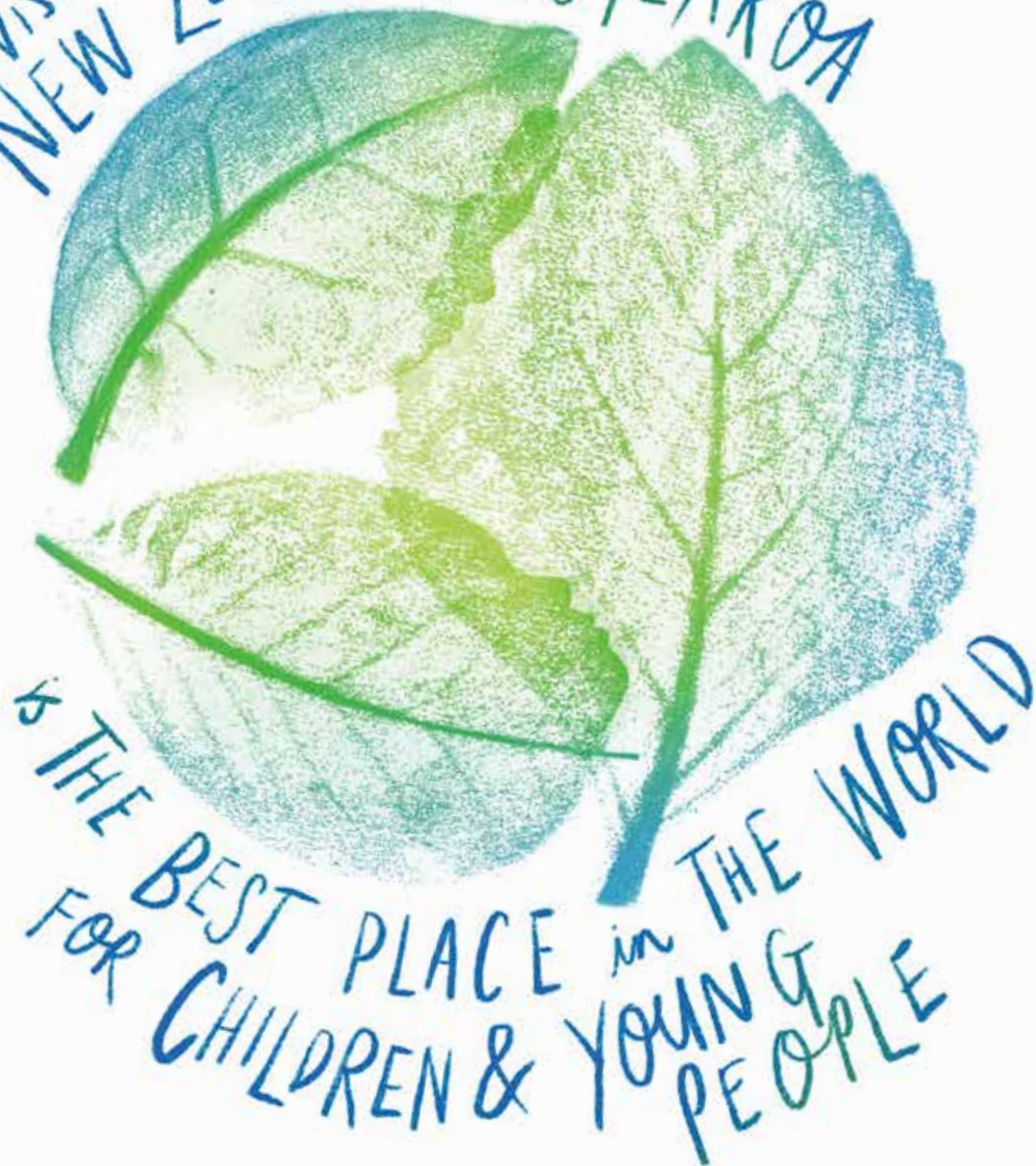


OUR
VISION
NEW ZEALAND, AOTEAROA



**Child and Youth
Wellbeing Strategy**

Summary Document 2019

WHAKATŌNGIA TE KĀKANO
AROHA I ROTO I Ā TĀTOU
TAITAMARIKI KIA PUĀWAI I
ROTO I TŌ RĀTOU TUPURANGA
ARANUI ORANGA

Plant the seed of love in our children and they will blossom, grow and journey towards the greatest pathway of life.

FOREWORD: THE OPPORTUNITY

The way we treat children and young people, the way we look after their wellbeing, and ensure their lives are full of opportunity says so much about what kind of country we are.

Our vision for the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy is a bold one – that New Zealand is the best place in the world for children and young people. Never before has there been a better opportunity to realise this aspiration.

This Strategy puts children and young people at the centre, and will transform the way Ministers and agencies work together to improve the wellbeing of children and young people. It seeks to remove barriers to wellbeing and support collaboration across all settings – from the Cabinet table to the kitchen table. While the Government is committed to achieving the outcomes contained in this Strategy, we know we need everyone's help. We all have important roles to improve child and youth wellbeing – families, whānau, hapū, iwi, community groups, service providers, the business and philanthropic sectors, government and local government.

This Strategy provides a unifying framework and way of aligning our efforts. Together, we can ensure that all children and young people receive the support they need to achieve wellbeing in every area of their lives.



Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern
Minister for Child Poverty Reduction



Hon Tracey Martin
Minister for Children



THE STRATEGY

With the help of over 10,000 New Zealanders, including 6,000 children and young people, Government has developed a national strategy that sets out a shared understanding of what all children and young people want and need for good wellbeing, and what we can all do to help.

The Strategy focuses on all young New Zealanders under 25 years old. It includes a vision to aspire to, nine principles to guide the way we work and six wellbeing outcomes to set the direction. It also includes a current programme of action that agencies are delivering on, and indicators for measuring progress over time.

The Strategy draws together thinking from wellbeing models and frameworks, the best evidence from social science, and input from thousands of New Zealanders.

For the full Strategy and current programme of action, go to childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz

Purpose

This Strategy is our collective call to action. Its purpose is to:

- set out a framework to improve child and youth wellbeing that can be used by anyone
- drive government policy in a unified and holistic way
- outline the policies the Government intends to implement
- harness public support and community action
- increase political and public sector accountability for improving wellbeing
- improve wellbeing outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

Outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) will be a strong and empowering feature of the Strategy. This means transforming systems, policies and services to work better for Māori, supporting Māori to deliver solutions for Māori, and empowering local communities to make the changes that work best for them.

The Strategy also recognises tamariki and rangatahi Maori in the context of their whānau, hapū and iwi. It encourages a whānau-centred approach be applied to policy and service design and delivery.

Prioritising the greatest needs first

The future that young New Zealanders aspire to requires dramatic improvement in the opportunities and outcomes of those most disadvantaged.

While most children and young people in New Zealand experience wellbeing, too many children and young people and their families face social challenges like poverty, inequality, violence, addiction, and poor mental wellbeing that impact them and their future prospects. Solving these often complex and compounding issues requires a widespread and dedicated response.

This Strategy reflects the strong call to urgently reduce inequity of outcomes and improve the wellbeing of those children and young people with the greatest needs. It includes new policies and initiatives to:

- reduce child poverty and mitigate the effects of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage
- improve the wellbeing of children and young people of interest to Oranga Tamariki and address family and sexual violence
- improve the wellbeing of children and young people with greater needs, with an initial focus on learning support and mental wellbeing.

Success will mean addressing broader social inequities and determinants of health and wellbeing, including systemic racism and discrimination.

Work already underway across government is targeted at addressing child poverty, family violence, and inadequate housing, and improving early years, learning support and mental wellbeing for children, young people and their families and whānau. This work is captured in the current Programme of Action, which will be regularly updated.

"MONEY MAY NOT BE THE KEY TO HAPPINESS BUT IT IS THE KEY TO LIVING AND I KNOW MANY PEOPLE WHO STRUGGLE."

CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE...



... are LOVED, SAFE and NURTURED



... have WHAT they NEED



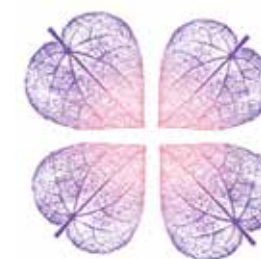
... are HAPPY and HEALTHY



... are LEARNING and DEVELOPING



... are ACCEPTED, RESPECTED and CONNECTED



... are INVOLVED and EMPOWERED



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following nine principles reflect the values New Zealanders have said are important. They guide the development of the Strategy and its implementation:

1. Children and young people are taonga.
2. Māori are tangata whenua and the Māori-Crown relationship is foundational.
3. Children and young people's rights need to be respected and upheld.
4. All children and young people deserve to live a good life.
5. Wellbeing needs holistic and comprehensive approaches.
6. Children and young people's wellbeing is interwoven with family and whānau wellbeing.
7. Change requires action by all of us.
8. Actions must deliver better life outcomes.
9. Early support is needed.

These principles promote wellbeing and equity for all children and young people. They outline the importance of working together for real impact, and of developing strong relationships with tangata whenua and involving children and young people in decision making.

They also underpin our efforts to achieve the following six interconnected wellbeing outcomes. These outcomes reflect what children and young people said was important to them.



Outcomes for Child and Youth Wellbeing



This means:

- they feel loved and supported
- they have family, whānau and homes that are loving, safe and nurturing
- they are safe from unintentional harm
- they are safe from intentional harm (including neglect, and emotional, physical and sexual abuse)
- they are able to spend quality time with their parents, family and whānau.

The best place for a child is in the safe, loving and stable care of their family or whānau. A stable and quality home environment with love and trust influences a child and young person's wellbeing, learning and development on a daily basis, and their ability to form attachments to others. Lasting and nurturing relationships are critical to many other aspects of wellbeing and the building of resilience and social skills.

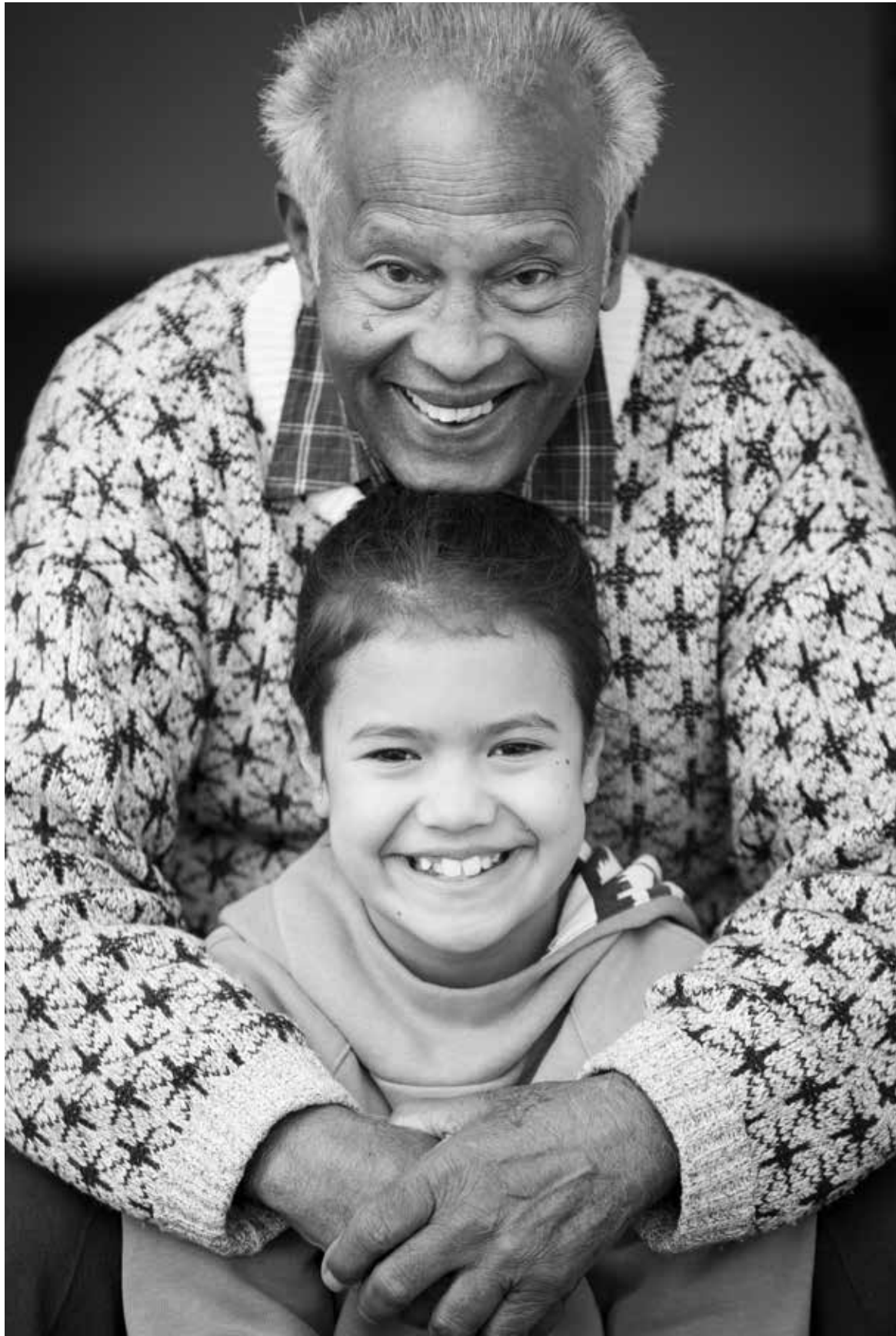
"A CHILD NEEDS TO GROW UP FEELING LOVED AND WANTED. THIS INCREASES THEIR CHANCES OF GROWING UP TO BE HEALTHY PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. A STRONG TREE GROWS IN GOOD SOIL. WITH THE RIGHT FOUNDATION WE CAN ALL HAVE BRIGHTER DAYS."

Focus and key actions

Our focus is on supporting families and whānau to provide safe, loving and nurturing homes, and preventing children and young people experiencing abuse or neglect, or being exposed to family or sexual violence.

There are already a number of actions underway to:

- support parents, caregivers, families and whānau (eg: extending paid parental leave; expanding Whānau Ora; launching a nurse-led family partnership prototype; and developing new models of intensive intervention)
- prevent harm and abuse (eg: developing a national strategy and action plan to address family and sexual violence; early years violence prevention sites; a work programme to prevent online child sexual exploitation and abuse)
- support victims and their families and whānau (eg: initiatives to improve access to services and the quality of support for victims and their families and whānau; improve response to victims of sexual violence)
- improve the quality of State care (eg: Oranga Tamariki Action Plan; National Care Standards; improve outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori within the system).



This means:

- they and their parents / caregivers have a good standard of material wellbeing
- they have regular access to nutritious food
- they live in stable housing that is affordable, warm and dry
- their parents / caregivers have the skills and support they need to access quality employment.

All children and young people deserve to grow up in families and whānau that have the resources they need for everyone to thrive. Unfortunately, too many families and whānau don't have enough money to meet basic material needs, which excludes them from a minimum acceptable standard of living in New Zealand.

Improving the material wellbeing of households constrained by poverty will have significant impact on other wellbeing outcomes, and help unleash the skills and capabilities of our children, young people and their whānau.

"EARLIER SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PARENTS SO THAT THEY MAY PROVIDE A POSITIVE AND BETTER LIFE FOR THEIR CHILDREN - I RECKON THAT IF MY DAD HAD THAT SUPPORT EARLIER WE WOULD'VE BEEN LIVING MUCH BETTER EARLIER."

Focus and key actions

Our priority is reducing child poverty by improving the material wellbeing of households in poverty and hardship. This focus has the potential to break the cycle of disadvantage and intergenerational poverty, and improve many other wellbeing outcomes.

The current work programme includes:

- improving earnings and employment (eg: increasing the minimum wage; additional employment support, including support for people with disabilities and health conditions)
- creating a fairer and more equitable welfare system (eg: implementing the Families Package; indexing main benefits to wages; repealing s192 of the Social Security Act; overhauling the welfare system)
- improving housing affordability, quality and security (eg: establishing 6,400 new public housing places; Healthy Homes Standards; Warmer Kiwi Homes programme; strengthening Housing First; funding for continued provision of transitional housing)
- helping families with the cost of essentials (eg: free school lunch prototype, initiatives to reduce the cost of schooling; implementing lower-cost primary healthcare).



This means:

- they have the best possible health, starting before birth
- they build self-esteem and resilience
- they have good mental wellbeing and recover from trauma
- they have spaces and opportunities to play and express themselves creatively
- they live in healthy, sustainable environments.

The key to happy and healthy children and young people is strong, healthy connections to people who love and nurture them. Good parental mental health is important during and after pregnancy, so parents can establish a deep and loving connection with their baby.

Children and young people also need time and spaces just to be themselves, to play, explore and create. Good physical, spiritual and mental health are critical to achieving other aspects of wellbeing, such as developmental milestones, the ability to participate in activities and benefit from learning, positive social interactions and developing resilience.

"HAVE ALL SCHOOLS LINKED TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE BECAUSE DEPRESSION & BULLYING PLAY A BIG ROLE IN EVERYDAY LIFE."

Focus and key actions

Government is prioritising work to improve youth mental wellbeing, the maternity system, and support in the early years.

There are a number of actions underway including:

- re-designing maternity and early years support (eg: the Maternity Whole of System Action Plan; reviewing the Well Child Tamariki Ora programme; expanding the Pregnancy and Parenting intensive support service)
- inspiring active, healthy and creative children and young people (eg: Healthy Active Learning programme; extending and enhancing nurses in schools, implementing the Strategy for Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation; and a Creatives in Schools programme)
- increasing support for mental wellbeing (eg: expanding access and choice of primary mental health and addiction support; forensic mental health services for young people; suicide prevention strategy; promoting wellbeing in primary and intermediate schools).



This means:

- they are positively engaged with, progressing and achieving in education
- they develop the social, emotional and communication skills they need as they progress through life
- they have the knowledge, skills and encouragement to achieve their potential and enable choices around further education, volunteering, employment, and entrepreneurship
- they can successfully navigate life's transitions.

Learning opportunities and experiences develop social, cultural, emotional and cognitive competencies, including resilience, critical thinking and the ability to relate well to others. While learning and development begins at home, quality education has an important role in supporting the development of knowledge, competencies and characteristics to be successful in life and to contribute to family, whānau, and communities.

"IT IS UNFAIR FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES TO MISS OUT ON SCHOOL ACTIVITIES DUE TO FINANCIAL REASONS."

Focus and key actions

Government has launched a programme of review across the education sector – early learning, compulsory schooling, learning support and tertiary education – to improve equity and ensure no-one misses out. An immediate priority is children and young people who need extra support in the education system.

Current actions under this outcome include:

- improving quality in education (eg: developing a statement of National Education and Learning Priorities; improving data quality, availability, timeliness and capability; responding to the review of home-based early childhood education; vocational education reform)
- increasing equity of educational outcomes (eg: Equity Index to provide more equitable resourcing to schools and kura; Learning Support Action Plan; improving and accelerating education outcomes for Pacific learners; Fees-Free Tertiary Education and Training)
- supporting life transitions (eg: new services to support transition out of care or youth justice custody; programmes to support young people into employment, education or training).



This means:

- they feel accepted, respected and valued at home, school, in the community and online
- they feel manaakitanga: kindness, respect and care for others
- they live free from racism and discrimination
- they have stable and healthy relationships
- they are connected to their culture, language, beliefs and identity including whakapapa and tūrangawaewae.

Children and young people in New Zealand want to live in a country where culture and diversity is not just accepted, but embraced and celebrated in all environments. Children and young people need safe spaces and time to explore and develop their identities. It's important that they're accepted for who they are without having to fit into narrow and limiting norms.

A strong and positive sense of identity builds higher self-esteem and resilience. Knowing your heritage or whakapapa helps you understand your identity, connections to others and sense of place, land and time.

"TO BE ACCEPTED, TO BE UNDERSTOOD & TAKEN SERIOUSLY. IT'S IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT GIVES YOU CONFIDENCE IN YOUR UNIQUENESS."

Focus and key actions

Everyone deserves to see their culture and identity celebrated in positive ways. We want to build cultural competency into the design and delivery of services, and promote a society where all children and young people feel accepted and included.

Our current work programme includes:

- addressing racism and discrimination (eg: policy and legislative work programme; restarting Te Kotahitanga to support equitable outcomes for Māori learners)
- increasing a sense of belonging and cultural connection (eg: implementing a strategy for Māori language revitalisation; improving capability in the education workforce to better integrate te reo Māori across the education system; specific considerations for tamariki and rangatahi Māori in the Oranga Tamariki system; actions to support Pacific realm languages and culture).
- encouraging positive and respectful peer relationships (eg: supporting initiatives to prevent and respond to bullying in schools; expanding programmes to secondary school students).



This means:

- they contribute positively at home, at school and in their communities
- they exercise kaitiakitanga: care of the land and connection to nature
- they have their voices, perspectives, and opinions listened to and taken into account
- they are supported to exercise increasing autonomy as they age, and to be responsible citizens
- they, and their families, are supported to make healthy and informed choices around relationships, sexual health, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Young people are experts in their own lives and need to be heard on matters that affect them. Feeling a sense of value and belonging is a powerful motivator to contribute at home and in communities and in initiatives that influence change. Young people need opportunities and information to exercise kaitiakitanga.

"LET US SPEAK OUR MINDS BECAUSE ONLY WE KNOW WHAT WE WANT TO HAVE GOOD LIVES. THIS CAN BE DONE BY GETTING TO KNOW US AND TALKING TO US."

Focus and key actions

We want to ensure children and young people are listened to and taken seriously when decisions are made that affect them, including at school, in State care, and in decision-making more broadly. Children and young people deserve good, accessible information to help them make informed choices about their lives.

Current policies and actions under this outcome, are focused on:

- increasing child and youth voice and participation
eg: developing a Youth Action Plan; Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey; Youth Voice project)
- advocating for children and young people's rights
(eg: building public service competency and capability in children's rights; implementing the Child Impact Assessment Tool across government; strengthening independent oversight of Oranga Tamariki and the advocacy system)
- encouraging positive choices and contributions
(eg: investment in community-based youth justice facilities; using a Whānau Ora approach to support Māori in the Corrections system; and increased support for children and young people with concerning or harmful sexual behaviours).

NEXT STEPS

This first ever Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy is an exciting step forward. It makes headway on addressing complex problems, consistent with what New Zealanders identified as important to them. The Strategy is supported by a Programme of Action which details current work across government that will help achieve the wellbeing outcomes. This programme will be regularly updated.

Government will continue to engage with others on the Strategy and support them to develop responses that work for their communities.

Annual reporting to Parliament on achievement against the Strategy's outcomes will ensure transparency, and collective Ministerial accountability for the Strategy. The Strategy will be reviewed at least every three years, to address emerging issues and new areas of focus.

What you can do to help

Most New Zealanders already support the wellbeing of children and young people - in their homes, marae, schools and other learning centres, churches, clubs, businesses, and in health and social services and local government.

The Strategy framework provides a shared understanding of what children and young people want and need to live a good life, and what we can all do to help. Those working with children and young people and their families and whānau are invited to:

- align their planning and actions to the child and youth wellbeing framework
- seek out and incorporate children and young peoples' voices and feedback into planning and delivery processes and governance arrangements where appropriate
- seek out partnerships and relationships with other organisations that support children, young people, their families and whānau.

Go to our website to find the full Strategy, including the current Programme of Action. The website also showcases some innovative and community-led initiatives. We hope it both inspires and activates others to help make New Zealand the best place in the world for all children and young people.

childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz





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For more information go to childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz

