



New Zealand's Agenda for Children Summary Report



AGENDA FOR

Children

Mahere rautaki mā te Hunga Tamariki

Making life better for children

June 2002



WHAT IS THE AGENDA FOR CHILDREN?

The Agenda for Children is about making New Zealand a great place for children. It has a vision, a set of principles to guide decision-making, a new way of developing child policies and services, and a programme of action for the Government. These were developed by talking to New Zealanders, including children and young people, and people working for the Government.

The Agenda raises children's status in society and promotes a "whole child" approach to developing government policy and services affecting children. It also invites individuals, families and whānau, schools, local government, community, iwi/Māori organisations and other groups to think about what they can do to help make life better for children.

A VISION FOR CHILDREN

**New Zealand/Aotearoa is a great place for children:
we look after one another**

We will have achieved this vision when all children have:

- security of care – all children are loved, protected, cherished and nurtured by the people around them;
- economic security – no children live in poverty;
- security of identity – all children know who they are, and feel respected and valued;
- security of opportunity – all children are able to access education and health care and reach their potential; and
- security of participation – all children have a say in the decisions that affect them and their views are given due weight in accordance with their ability and level of understanding.



KEY PRINCIPLES FOR GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND SERVICES

At the heart of the Agenda for Children are ten principles. These are that government policies and services affecting children will be:

- consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC)
- child focused
- family and whānau oriented
- inclusive
- evidence based
- preventative
- well co-ordinated
- collaborative
- community focused
- culturally affirming

WHAT IS A WHOLE CHILD APPROACH?

The Agenda promotes a whole child approach to addressing children's issues, which means:

- focusing on the big picture – on the child's whole life and circumstances, not just isolated issues or problems;
- focusing from the outset on what children need for healthy development, rather than simply reacting to problems as they arise; and
- getting government sectors to work together to support children's healthy development.

In line with UNCROC, this approach emphasises children's rights and interests and recognises that:

- children largely depend on others, but they are also continually learning and developing the skills they need to look after themselves and make their own decisions;
- children are shaped in part by the settings they live in, but they also shape their own lives through their thoughts and actions; and
- children are citizens in their own right, but also need to be seen within their environment – with their parents, family and whānau, with friends and peers, in school, their community and in other important social and cultural settings.



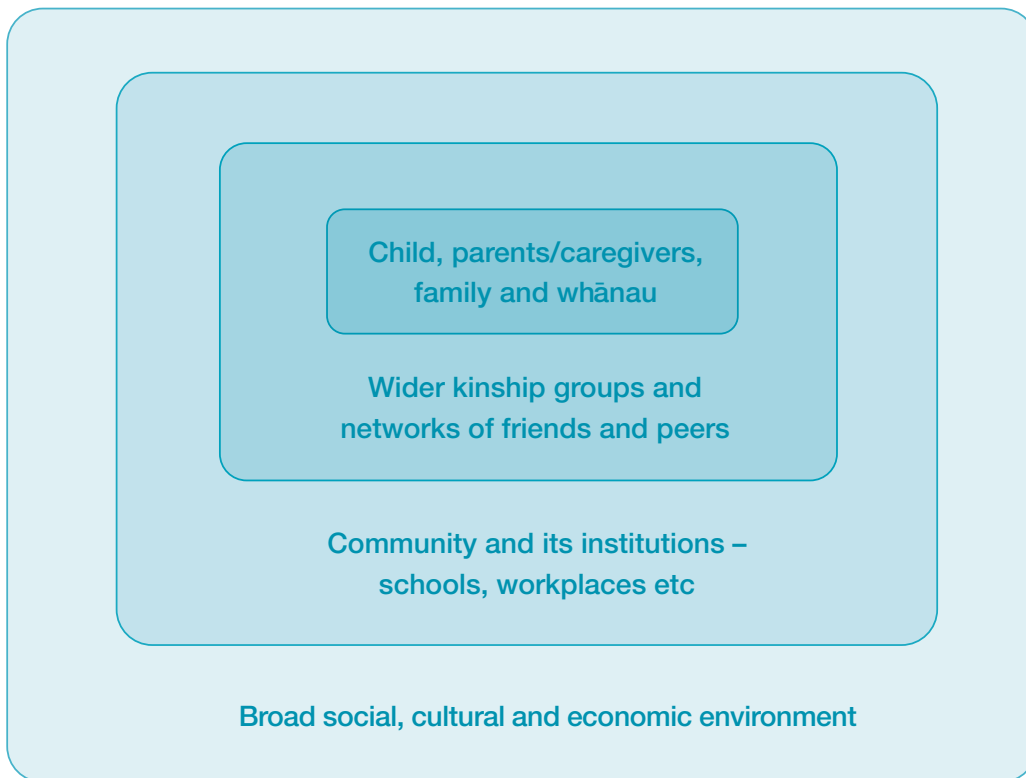
KEY ACTIONS: TAKING THE AGENDA FOR CHILDREN FORWARD

The following table outlines the key action areas for the Agenda for Children, including those that are being worked on jointly with the implementation of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa under the Government's Action for Child and Youth Development. The Agenda for Children work is being led by the Ministry of Social Development in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth Affairs, which is leading the work on the implementation of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa.

	Key Action Areas	Taking it Forward: Specific Actions	Timeframe	Organisations
ACTION AREA 1	<p>Promoting a whole child approach</p> <p>The Government has a clear role in promoting a better understanding of children and a whole child approach to policy development and service planning and delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The public service is now required to apply a whole child approach when developing policies and services affecting children, in conjunction with the youth development approach outlined in the <i>Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa</i>. The report, <i>New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making Life Better for Children</i>, is a practical resource which will help government agencies to do this. - Develop further information and training resources for public service organisations to help them build a shared understanding of children's issues and improve the way policies and services respond to children's interests, rights and needs. 	<p>From May 2002</p> <p>2002/03</p>	Social Development, Youth Affairs
ACTION AREA 2	<p>Increasing children's participation</p> <p>A key priority is to improve children's opportunities to participate, particularly in government and community decision-making processes that affect them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop resources on how to enhance children's participation in decision-making processes, with particular emphasis on increasing opportunities for Māori and Pacific children, children from ethnic minority groups and children with disabilities. - Increase children's participation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessing the effectiveness of national and political participation models; • improving opportunities for children to have a real say in decisions that affect them in their local communities; and • identifying and sharing positive ways to enhance children's participation in school life and how their schools are run. 	<p>2002/03</p> <p>2002/03</p>	Social Development, Youth Affairs, Internal Affairs, Education, Education Review Office, Te Puni Kōkiri, Pacific Island Affairs, Ethnic Affairs, Disability Issues Directorate, Local Government New Zealand, local authorities
ACTION AREA 3	<p>An end to child poverty</p> <p>A key goal identified in the Agenda for Children discussion document was to give priority to addressing child poverty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen the Government's efforts to eliminate child poverty by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • putting in place a programme of research on child poverty to guide policy work; and • looking at the option of a new longitudinal survey of children which could provide information about children moving in and out of poverty. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2002/03</p>	Social Development
ACTION AREA 4	<p>Addressing violence in children's lives with a particular focus on reducing bullying</p> <p>The Agenda for Children work aims to support other government strategies that are working to prevent violence in children's lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen current approaches to reducing bullying in schools and the community by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • looking at how different anti-bullying programmes work together and link with wider education and violence prevention strategies; and • working with the Ministry of Education and the Education Review Office on the best ways to create a positive school culture where there is no bullying. 	2002/03	Social Development, Youth Affairs, Education, Education Review Office, Police, Health, Child, Youth and Family, Te Puni Kōkiri, Pacific Island Affairs, Ethnic Affairs, Disability Issues Directorate
ACTION AREA 5	<p>Improving central government structures and processes to enhance policy and service effectiveness for children and young people</p> <p>The Government has identified a need for better structures and processes for developing policies and services for children, young people and young adults across the 0-24 age span.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make government policies and services more responsive to children's and young people's interests, rights and needs through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a joint work programme between the Ministries of Social Development and Youth Affairs. The programme will focus on improving the wellbeing of children, young people and young adults; and • establishing a Child and Youth Development Leadership Group of senior public service staff to encourage agencies to work together on issues affecting children, young people and young adults. 	<p>2002/03</p> <p>From July 2002</p>	Social Development, Youth Affairs, Child, Youth and Family, Education, Health, Te Puni Kōkiri, Pacific Island Affairs, Internal Affairs, Labour, Treasury
ACTION AREA 6	<p>Improving local government and community planning for children</p> <p>The Government is working to improve service planning for children at a community level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with local government on ways to involve children in community consultation on long-term council plans and local strategies such as traffic safety and recreation. - Develop in partnership with local authorities and communities "best practice" guidelines for consulting with children. 	2002/03	Social Development, Youth Affairs, Internal Affairs, Local Government New Zealand, local authorities
ACTION AREA 7	<p>Enhancing information, research and research collaboration relating to children</p> <p>We need a robust base of information that can be used to develop future public service policies and services for children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get public service agencies working together on research about children, with a focus on addressing gaps in research. - Develop a regular report of indicators of children's wellbeing to help New Zealand in reporting to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. - In consultation with relevant public service agencies, look at whether it is a good idea to undertake a new national longitudinal study of children, given the large amount of time and money needed, and what we can learn from other studies that have been done. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2005</p> <p>2002/03</p>	Social Development, Youth Affairs, Health, Education, Statistics, Te Puni Kōkiri, Treasury, Pacific Island Affairs, Women's Affairs, Child, Youth and Family, Labour, Justice, Housing New Zealand Corporation, Accident Compensation Corporation, Internal Affairs, Research, Science and Technology



KEY SETTINGS FOR CHILDREN



HOW THE AGENDA WAS DEVELOPED

The Agenda was developed in consultation with New Zealanders. The process began with a public Seminar on Children’s Policy in July 2000. It involved contributions from a joint reference group of community experts and government officials, as well as nationwide consultations with children and young people and adults. The response was wonderful and provided us with valuable insights and ideas on how to make New Zealand a better place for children. Many of the ideas we received helped shape the Agenda’s action areas.



IMPLEMENTING AND REVIEWING AGENDA FOR CHILDREN WORK

The Agenda for Children is part of the Government's broader "Action for Child and Youth Development" work programme, which combines work on the implementation of the Agenda for Children and the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa. This work is being led by the Ministries of Social Development and Youth Affairs.

Early work under each of the seven action areas is underway and includes developing ways to monitor and evaluate specific projects. Each year the seven action areas will be reviewed and updated to make sure the Agenda for Children stays relevant.

LINKS WITH THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AOTEAROA

The *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* was released in February 2002 and is available from the Ministry of Youth Affairs, PO Box 10-300, Wellington, or on its website www.youthaffairs.govt.nz. The youth development approach, outlined in the Strategy, is similar and complementary to the whole child approach outlined in the Agenda for Children, but is for the older age group (12-24 years inclusive).

For further information on the Agenda for Children please refer to the full report:
New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making Life Better for Children.

For information on consultation responses please refer to:
Agenda for Children: Submissions made by children and young people and by adults: A summary report; and
Agenda for Children: What you told us (Children's version).

These documents, plus additional information about the Agenda for Children can be found on the Ministry of Social Development website www.msd.govt.nz.

For paper copies, please email: agendaforchildren@msd.govt.nz
or write to: Agenda for Children, Ministry of Social Development,
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