

It's Good to Vote! Vote for Children and Family Wellbeing!

Wellbeing for Children and Families can be achieved when this is the overall goal of government policies. Housing is number one for the 2017 election. This means affordable housing which is secure, warm and dry, and big enough for the family. Child poverty has life-long effects on work opportunities and employment.

Good housing policies mean making sure there is social housing and emergency housing for more vulnerable people.

Housing is linked to good education and good health for families. Cold homes mean far more risk of ill health and this in turn is linked to power prices and being able to afford heating for a warm house. Warmth is important for the enjoyment of a home.

Insecure rental housing has very detrimental effects on

health and education. At one election event a housing advocate told of a family in Upper Hutt who had to leave their rental property. They had a new, premature baby and a child at a school. No low cost rental was available and they stayed with friends and were supported by family. The baby developed an infections cough. Then they had to move and were advised to stay at a marae! The only emergency house offered was in Porirua, a long way from their family. The child had to change school, and the family had to move away from all community support.

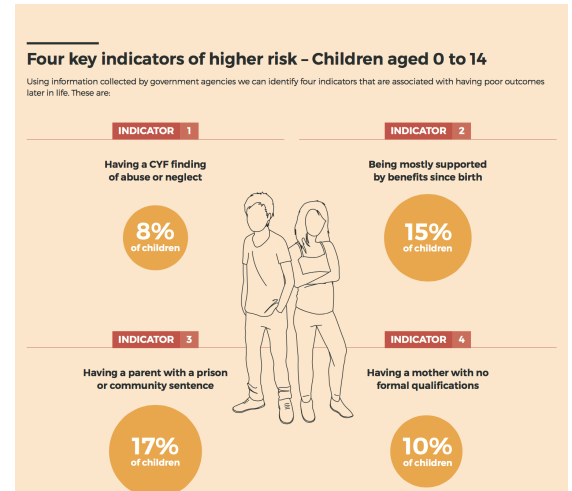
Education is a key to life-long wellbeing. One of the key indicators of risk for children is leaving school with no qualifications. In New Zealand, 22% of children leave school with no qualifications.

Income is a core of family wellbeing. The Living Wage is an important contribution to better incomes. The fact that Wellington City Council and Auckland City Council and some employers are implementing the Living Wage shows it can be done more widely. The Living Wage is on the agenda for some political parties – thanks to pledges made at a Wellington election forum.

Child Poverty Action recommends systemic changes to the tax system so that beneficiaries are included in income support at a level to ensure wellbeing for all. At present those who receive benefits are disadvantaged by low income that does not cover basic needs and by the punitive system.

Investing in Children is a key policy focus for family wellbeing. Social Investment has much to commend it if applied for the purpose of long term wellbeing. The present interpretation of social investment is a narrow actuarial approach with highly targets systems for cost savings outcomes. Investing in Social services is one dimension of investment that should go hand-in-hand with wellbeing for all.

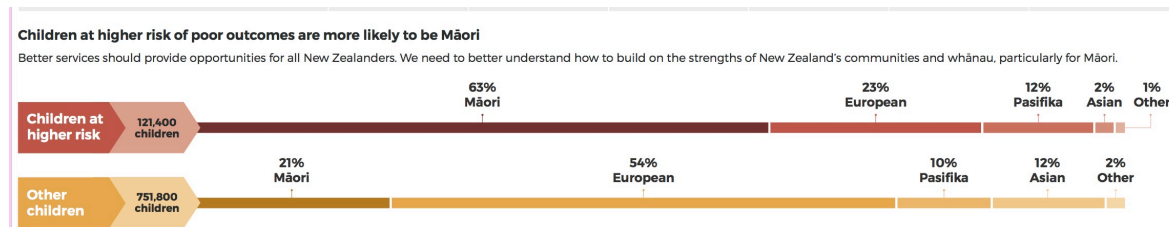
‘The technical policies with solutions that would work are known. What is needed, is a shift in our political and economic ideology to be able to put these policies into practice. It would mean the investment approach, which not only provided a safety net for those who need it, but also investment in those in the poverty trap to lift them out.’ We need an upgrade in our economic thinking. (CPAG 2016)



NZ Treasury

Māori Whanau, Pacific Fanau

Wellbeing for families in New Zealand also means stopping inequality, and while we discuss income inequality in the election information in inequality, we must keep vigilant about disproportionate inequality for Māori whanau, and for Pacific fanau. NZ has 25% of our children growing up in poverty half of these are Māori and Pacific while they are 15% and 12% of the population respectively.



NZ Treasury <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/research-policy/ap/2016/16-01/ap16-01-infographic.pdf>

Strengthening investment in Whanau Ora is significant for enabling whanau to be strengthened. There also needs to be significant investment in education to achieve at least equity in educational qualifications for Māori and Pacific young people

Elections and Good Policy for Child and Family Wellbeing guidelines:

- Which party understands the links between housing, health, education, income level and has designed policies which integrate these with clear concrete ways to address all areas need to ensure wellbeing.
- Which policies and parties have a specific agenda of stopping poverty? The analysis of most reputable organizations includes the need to redistribute wealth. How will this be done? Which tax policies are designed for the capacity to invest in child wellbeing, and to be proactive in raising outcomes for Māori and Pacific families.
- How will parties and policies ensure good education for ALL New Zealand children?
- There needs to be an overhaul of benefit levels, attitudes to beneficiaries, and a review of Working for Families. Which policies identify these changes with a view for greater equity? Is the payment of a Basic Social Income on the agenda of any policy?

Further Information

NZ Treasury <http://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/research-policy/ap/2016/16-01/ap16-01-infographic.pdf>

Basic Social Income <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/journals-and-magazines/social-policy-journal/spi09/constructing-a-universal-basic-income-and-social-wage.html>

Spinoff <https://policy.thespinoff.co.nz/topic/Incomes#Wages and Working Conditions>
<https://policy.thespinoff.co.nz/topic/Te%20ao%20M%C4%81ori#Te Reo Māori>
<https://policy.thespinoff.co.nz/topic/Education#Tertiary Education>

Child Poverty Action

<http://www.cpag.org.nz/assets/170227%20CPAG%20Children%20and%20the%20living%20wage.pdf>
<http://www.cpag.org.nz/assets/Summit/161017CPAG%20Summit%20Proceedings%202016%20.pdf>

Salvation Army

http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/sites/default/files/uploads/20170814sppuelection_series_brochure_children_web.pdf

On The Fence <http://www.onthefence.co.nz/>

Public Issues www.facebook.com/PublicIssuesNetworkAotearoaNZ/