



Giving 2 Kids – 4: Safe and healthy homes

Housing quality and affordability are big issues facing New Zealanders, and are particularly critical for children in poverty. Some low income families pay more than half their income on rent. Many cannot afford to heat their homes which contributes to dampness and mould. Poor quality housing and over-crowding are causes of many health issues for children, such as respiratory illnesses and spread of infectious diseases. Healthy housing is particularly important for babies and pre-schoolers as they spend most of their time at home.

#	Ideas for investment	Why this matters	Target age
2.1	<p>Help make the home safer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support families to baby-proof their homes by providing advice and installation support. • Fund practical measures to make the home safer - i.e. cupboard latches, fire guards, smoke detectors, insulation, mould/cleaning supplies • Provide tools for community groups who can do good quality installations of safety measures for families living in poverty 	<p>Providing information on how parents can create safer home environments empowers them to keep their babies safer. Babies and toddlers spend a lot of time at home and are at greater risk if the home is not safe.</p> <p>Inspections in the home can also identify significant health risks (e.g. unflued gas heaters) which, if solved, would be a preventative health measure.</p> <p>Families who have to move a lot due to tenancy insecurity or work obligations may be unable to afford practical safety measures, or may not have the tools to install them in a way that is consistent with tenancy agreements.</p>	pregnancy - 4 yrs
2.2	<p>Help keep homes in good repair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support families living in poverty to have homes in good repair, working with landlords to ensure children and babies are not suffering in poorly maintained homes. • Do home repairs for families in need, providing support through community groups and local businesses 	<p>Families living in poverty often suffer from living in homes that are in poor repair due to a lack of incentive by landlords to keep them well maintained. This can include cracked window panes, leaking window sills, doors that don't lock, windows that don't open.</p> <p>Most repairs need a number of tools that many families living in poverty simply can't afford to accumulate. Because families living in poverty are more likely to be renting their home, and choosing the cheapest rentals, they suffer the worst effects of poorly maintained housing.</p>	pregnancy - 4 yrs

#	Ideas for investment	Why this matters	Target age
2.3	<p>Help make the home healthier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice on making the home healthier (through ventilation, mould removal etc) • Work with 'healthy homes' initiatives, insulation and ventilation installation programmes, and other community groups to provide practical supports. • Provide and install home needs (curtains, rugs, energy efficient heaters, extractor fans, beds and bedding) to improve the warmth and ventilation of homes to make them healthier for children. • Provide warehousing, distribution and installation to match donations from those giving practical supports to people in need. 	<p>International and New Zealand research shows improving ventilation and reducing overcrowding will result in reduced hospitalisations. Poor health in unhealthy homes is usually as a result of insufficient heating, mould and dampness. Insulating homes has substantial benefits for the children, because it makes it more cost-effective to warm the home.</p> <p>Healthy homes initiatives have been able to refer families (with children suffering ill health due to a poor housing environment) for further practical support from NGOS. However, demand is exceeding supply, e.g. curtain banks running out of donated goods and there is often a lack of local infrastructure to manage and grow donations as well as to distribute supplies.</p>	pregnancy - 4 yrs
2.4	<p>Help reduce fuel poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work alongside energy businesses to support eligible families suffering the effects of fuel poverty by providing power subsidies or offering regular-low cost payment schemes to help even-out the costs weekly. 	<p>Fuel poverty is less recognised in New Zealand due to our temperate climate. Many people from all social strata live in un-insulated homes that may feel cold. However, people living in unheated homes with damp and overcrowding suffer from poor health and children suffer the most.</p> <p>Functional overcrowding is when people sleep in one room to keep warm because they can't afford to heat the house. This increases the spread of infectious diseases.</p> <p>Energy companies often have punitive energy rates for families who are suffering the worse fuel poverty. This can arise when families have to 'pay as they go' for power, because of poor credit histories, for example. This means they end up paying the highest rates for their energy.</p>	pregnancy - 4 yrs
2.5	<p>Support social housing providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support community social housing development with investment for new housing units and for the provision of wrap around services to families living in social housing. 	<p>There is a shortage of affordable housing in New Zealand and there is not enough supply of social housing for those most in need.</p> <p>There is a changing landscape in social housing provision, and providers are relying more on philanthropic giving to keep up the supply. Community organisations could play a greater role in housing development and social housing provision to support families, as well as the capital investment required for housing development.</p>	All

#	Ideas for investment	Why this matters	Target age
2.6	<p>Advocate for tenants' rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support tenants to live in safer homes by advocating for their right to live in homes that are clean and safe, with a reasonable standard of home heating and insulation. • Work with landlords to install efficient heating such as panel heaters or heat pumps for priority families. 	<p>Most families living in poverty are in rented accommodation. This is particularly the case for those in persistent poverty, who are susceptible to the minimum standard of service from landlords, as they seek the cheapest tenancies.</p> <p>Children in New Zealand are known to move relatively frequently in their early years, and those in rentals move the most. Lack of secure tenancies results in tenants making less investment in the home because of the potential to lose their improvements.</p> <p>Landlords can be more pro-active in enabling healthier homes by keeping them well maintained and cleaned between tenancies, and by upgrading the standard of accommodation through installation of ventilation, insulation and efficient heating.</p>	All