

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

# ***"Treat me with respect like a taonga"***



**Submission on the green paper for vulnerable children from young people in residential care as told to staff from the Office of the Children's Commissioner during December 2011 and January 2012**

The title and artwork created for this submission was written and drawn by young people as part of this consultation process.

## Key Messages

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The young people who are currently being cared for by Child, Youth and Family in the residential units have experienced firsthand the care system in New Zealand. Because of this the Office of the Children's Commissioner (the Office) believed it was important to seek their views on the Green Paper for Vulnerable Children: Every child thrives, belongs, achieves (the Green Paper).

***The key messages to come from this consultation were that young people wanted to feel like they were respected and cared for. They also wanted to be involved in decision making and to have opportunities to have a say in their lives and that of the environments they find themselves in, such as their school and community.***

We believe this submission offers a valuable contribution to the Green Paper and thank you for taking the time to consider this submission. We would also like to thank the young people, from around New Zealand, who gave up their time to talk to us about their views on the Green Paper

## Introduction

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In order to promote children and young people's participation in submissions to the Green Paper; the Office sought out the views of children and young people in residential care in New Zealand.

In conjunction with staff from Child, Youth and Family, Office staff visited each of the eight Child, Youth and Family run residences<sup>1</sup>. We spent between two and four hours with each group seeking their views on the four major sections of the Green Paper.

Children and young people in care and protection and youth justice residences were invited to take part in one or all of the following activities:

- Draw a picture;
- Participate in a group discussion facilitated by advisors from the Office;
- Participate in small focus group discussions facilitated by advisors from the Office;
- Fill out an online questionnaire;
- Fill out a handout questionnaire; and
- Record their views on what is important for children and young people in New Zealand on a portable audio recorder.

At the start of each session all of the groups were informed about the process the consultation would take, that their feedback would be presented anonymously as a submission and that they had a choice in participating. Consent for the consultation was agreed to by Child, Youth and Family's General Manager – Residential Care.

The views expressed in this paper are those of the children and young people who took part in the consultation and are not necessarily the views of the Office. The views of the participants have been summarised by Zoey Caldwell, Senior Advisor at

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<sup>1</sup> There are eight Child, Youth and Family run residences in New Zealand; we spoke to approximately 100 young people from residences in Auckland, Rotorua, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

the Office who recorded the consultation. Direct quotes are written in italics and quotation marks. A full copy of the feedback gathered during the process is available on request from the Office.

## **General Questions**

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These general questions were used as a warm-up to generate further discussion about the Green Paper and were asked in all of the sessions we facilitated with young people in residential care. These questions were always asked as part of a large group discussion.

### **What makes a good childhood?**

Firstly, in all of the groups, the young people spoke about the need for affection and love. They discussed the importance of growing up with hugs and cuddles, spending time together with people who care about them. They highlighted the importance of being in an environment where there is a lot of laughter and fun. They also spoke of having access to entertainment such as sports clubs, TVs and play-stations.

They also highlighted the need to have good parents who were compassionate, trustworthy and encouraging; parents who were respectful and positive influences on them. They also spoke about the need to "break negative cycles and ensure they have jobs so they can provide for their family". They spoke of the need for their families to be free from abuse, they described abuse free houses as being free from neglect, violence, gangs and drugs and alcohol.

Young people also spoke about basic needs such as food, warmth, shelter, regular exercise, money and friends and family. They highlighted the need to have regular celebrations of their birthdays and holidays such as Christmas with fun, lollies, games and play-time.

They also wanted regular access to a good quality education that provided them with positive guidance and support and gave them opportunities for the future.

Some young people spoke of the importance of access to their faith, prayers and religion.

Young people also spoke generally of having their rights respected; they said it was important to have opportunities to be heard, be treated as equals and to feel secure.

Some young people felt unable to answer this question. They said they hadn't had a good childhood and didn't know what one looked like. They found it hard to imagine what would be considered 'good'.

*"I like it when you come home from school and someone asks how your day was"*

*"Washing machines"*

*"Being interested in the kid"*

*"Brain development – reading to your kid"*

*"Spending time together"*

*"Not smoke drink and stuff til they are old enough – it just gets you in trouble"*

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"Child, Youth and Family not just to walk in and take you away from your family"*

*"Drug-free houses"*

*"More time with family no abuse"*

*"Take the gangs, drugs and alcohol out of families"*

*"Good upbringing, no stealing, no crime, no violence, no drugs"*

*"You need a family to make a good childhood – mum/dad"*

### **What does being fair mean to you?**

Young people had a good understanding of fairness and were clear on what they felt wasn't fair. Most of the concepts they described were big picture or overarching rights such as respect, patience, responsibility and independence. They felt strongly that young people should have freedom, especially the freedom to have a say and make their own choices. They also felt that fairness was about celebrating successes, sharing with one another and being generous. They said that if all of the 'needs' mentioned in the question above were being met that things would be fair for all children. But most importantly they felt that everyone should get the same things, including opportunities and basic needs.

They felt things in New Zealand could be fairer if the taxes were lower and things such as food, public transport, power, cars and petrol, education and rent were more affordable. They felt that benefits and wages should be more even.

Many spoke of the fact that if New Zealand was less racist things would be fairer.

*"Make sure there is enough for everyone"*

*"Being included"*

*"Recognise that everyone is unique"*

*"Don't have the same expectations for everybody"*

*"My parents splitting up isn't fair"*

*"Being blamed isn't fair"*

*"Treating each other the same"*

*"Accepting people's differences"*

*"Respect other people's point of view"*

*"Live honourably and live with honour, is being fair"*

*"Being told what's happening with our lives"*

*"Free public transport or much cheaper"*

*"Kids have a right to free preschool"*

### **What do all children need to thrive, belong and achieve?**

Most of the responses to this question were similar to those elicited from the questions about what makes a good childhood. The young people mentioned the phrase TLC (tender loving care) a lot.

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

In respect with how young people feel like they belong young people spoke about having access to their culture, and stated that knowing who you are and where you are from is important. They also spoke about celebrating their uniqueness.

They spoke about having positive role models, although many young people couldn't identify who the important role models were in their lives. But they wanted goals and things to aim for and they wanted to have a say in developing and setting these.

*"Knowing who you are, where you are from"*

*"Reading to me in bed"*

*"Encouragement"*

*"People to cheer you on"*

*"Belonging in your community"*

*"Being interested in the kid"*

*"Appropriate living area"*

*"People that lead and don't follow"*

*"Finding my place in the world"*

*"Using knowledge to make it somewhere in life"*

*"Ta moko – cultural beliefs"*

*"Respect, fairness and compassion thinking of others and their feelings"*

*"Living essentials like hygiene, food, nutritional care and health care"*

*"Our own special room with the stuff we like in it"*

*"Doors, windows, locks, your parents keeping you safe – a safe home"*

*"Pride – mana"*

*"Acceptance – regardless of race"*

*"To have a say in how you're going to get there"*

*"A purpose to the things you do"*

## **Parents and Families**

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These questions were asked of most of the groups. However we did not have time to complete these questions with every single group. These questions were asked in a variety of ways; using an internet survey, individual handouts (with or without adult support) and large group discussions.

### **How do you think parents and families should help young people thrive, belong and achieve?**

The main themes to arise from this question were the need for families to support and encourage young people. The young people we spoke with were all living away from their families at the time so many spoke of wishing their family could be together.

The young people wanted their families to be more involved in their education and homework; and spend time with them outside of the home doing fun activities. They

also said families needed to provide basic needs and help young people learn about their culture. They also felt it was the family's role to teach young people right from wrong.

*"Take you to school, be involved in school, know their teachers and know how to help"*

*"And make sure you have food and that, a bed, shelter; a heat pump, warm; good clean clothes; and talk to kids more"*

*"Good food, vegetables, vitamins D&E, dental checks and medical checks, immunisations, warm home with no mould, no damp"*

*"Stop hitting your kids"*

*"Persuading children what's wrong and right and help kids be true to themselves and others"*

*"Buying food first and smokes, drugs and alcohol last"*

*"Feed them breakfast and pack them lunch for school"*

*"Just helping each other and keeping each other safe and strong"*

*"Making them feel that they belong here and that they fit in"*

### **What happens now that works?**

Many of the young people we spoke to they found it hard to identify with what happens now that works and tended to offer up examples of what could be done differently.

However, the main themes to arise from this question were having families that offered support, encouragement and respect.

*"I'm not sure because I have not been around them"*

*"They help us"*

*"Love us"*

*"Food, water, warmth, care and love"*

*"Showing us what's right and wrong"*

*"Going out with clean clothes"*

### **What could parents/families do differently to make it better for young people?**

Many of the young people spoke about wanting to be together with their families. There appeared to be a great sense of loss at not being near their families, even from those young people who wished their home life offered a healthier environment. The young people also spoke about wanting to spend time together and be encouraged by their families.

They said they wanted their families to not expose them to drug and alcohol abuse and for their family to provide a better and safer environment.

Many young people also stated that they wanted to have more freedom and be able to smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol and smoke marijuana.

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"Spend time together help one another"*

*"Stay together not with STRANGERS!!"*

*"Not let their children be exposed to drugs and alcohol"*

*"Socialise with their children more – do things as a family"*

*"Stop family violence"*

*"Don't yell at us when we are trying hard"*

*"Government give us more money so we can do things, so we can eat, get help, stop hitting"*

*"Locked up in residence for the wrong reasons its not fair"*

*"Parents should be working to get money to feed their kids"*

*"Legalise cannabis and change drinking age to 16"*

*"Shouldn't be hitting kids instead use a naughty corner or time out"*

*"A better environment for us to be in with no violence, pay more attention to the kids and not their friends and make sure your kids have a better education"*

*"To keep me safe; no violence in my community; no patched members; no alcohol or drugs; be a family; no fighting (I hate seeing my younger cousins set up because of fighting)"*

## **Schools**

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These questions were asked of most of the groups. However we did not have time to complete these questions with every single group. These questions were asked as part of a large group discussion or by using individual handouts (with or without adult support).

### **How do you think schools help young people learn to be good people?**

Many of the young people we met were disengaged from education and found it hard to answer these questions, with some stating that they hated school and always would. Others felt like they had been let down by their school and teachers and had a sense that 'education' didn't like them.

Those not disengaged felt that schools should support young people to get a job and get ready for their future. They felt schools should teach young people right from wrong and help them to develop useful life skills (*note: some young people were very clear that this should be a family responsibility not that of schools*).

They also felt that schools should be responsible for helping young people develop and uphold their rights such as independence, responsibility, manners, the ability to share and respectfulness.

*"They don't; they just teach math etc"*

*"Because you get a good education and get a job when you're older"*

*"Respect, honesty, tolerance and manners"*

*"Showing them life skills that they'll need for the future"*

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"They don't it's too complicated"*

*"Teaching them how to behave by role modelling good behaviour and not doing drugs and alcohol"*

*"Most schools don't give us time or help us they just expel us straight away"*

### **What do they do well?**

The young people spoke of finding schools that focused on positives an easier environment, such as those that offer rewards and encouragement. Young people wanted help to get prepared for their future and noted they needed different things from different teachers and subjects. They wanted school to help and respect them.

*"Break times, lots of play, different things this helps me focus on the next task"*

*"Preparation – give us the knowledge for our future ahead"*

### **What do you think they could do differently?**

Most young people felt that schools did not respond well to individuality, they asked for more variety based on each individual's interests and strengths and for these to be presented in more practical ways.

They felt that schools did not offer any second chances and that they often felt judged. They wanted schools to communicate better with them to ask more questions and listen to the answers. They felt that schools would benefit from different school hours such as a shorter school day. They also noted that young people needed to be rewarded and encouraged more.

*"Work more around one to one work and also be more aware of how the children work"*

*"Give student chances"*

*"Teach us more important work. If we have a religion give us culture to separate classes to learn more about it. We can learn more sufficient work that we need to learn importantly, than like art and cooking"*

*"Actually listen to you. They shouldn't give you suspensions because it's just like being on holiday"*

*"Not focus too much on the brainy kids, help the kids who need it more"*

*"Learn by doing examples i.e. if you want to be a mechanic work on a car"*

*"Not judge people about smoking and doing what they do in their own time"*

*"Not kicking the students out, help them change"*

### **What makes a nice teacher?**

Even those young people disengaged from school were able to answer this question. Most had very clear ideas about what kind of teacher they would like. The spoke about important values such as one who listens, is fair, relaxed, understanding, calm, caring, encouraging, respectful and a good role model. Some were more succinct than that and just wanted someone who 'actually teaches you'.

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"One that isn't so stuck up and doesn't expect me to be like everybody else"*

*"One that listens and is nice and understands and accepts you for who you are"*

*"Words we can understand"*

*"Use SAS heroes"*

*"Relaxed"*

*"Listens to students opinions"*

*"Gangsta [top teacher, wicked, awesome, cool etc]"*

*"Kind – relates well with young people, understanding, knowledgeable involvement"*

### **What do you think teachers and principals should do if they are worried about a young person?**

Most young people wanted their teachers or principals to talk to them first, although some acknowledged that there could be different rules for younger children. Only three of the 37 responses said that teachers and principals should do nothing.

*"Talk to the person instead of behind their back"*

*"Tell someone who can help with the problem and go to someone who cares about the child and tell them the situation"*

*"Tell parents, if a child is not safe it's important to tell someone and its OK to do it without the child knowing"*

*"Not getting CYFs involved – they take us from family"*

### **Do you think it is ok for them to talk to someone who can help?**

The young people we spoke with were very clear that adults needed to ask them first or talk to them. The young people felt that they had lost some control over their lives once agencies intervened and didn't feel this was fair.

*"Yes, only if they tell us first"*

*"No, if they want to know what's wrong they should come and ask me themselves"*

*"I don't reckon – not Child, Youth and Family – I'd prefer a hiding"*

*"Yes it is OK"*

### **What would be your ideal school?**

Young people spoke about school being a fun place with a lot of activities outside of the classroom. They spoke of the need for variety to help keep them interested.

They also spoke about the way they wanted to be treated at school and said their ideal would have no judgement or bullying and be a safe place where the teachers were in control of the behaviour of the students.

*"Full with a little bit of teaching work and more SPORT PLEASE!"*

*"One where they don't judge you like the schools here"*

*"No wagging, no drinking, no drugs or alcohol, better control, respectful, manners, trustworthy and good understanding."*

## **Communities**

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These questions were asked of most of the groups. However we did not have time to complete these questions with every single group. These questions were asked as part of a large group discussion or by using individual handouts (with or without adult support).

### **What do you do in your community?**

While most young people could name positive things to do in their communities, a large number of them were not engaged in any of these themselves. Mostly they listed the things they did as hanging out with friends and smoking and drinking, and committing crime.

Those that did state positive activities included things like socialising with their friends, using local skate parks and engaging in community sport clubs.

*"Hang out with mates, drink, shop, party, blaze, lax with mates, family, roam with mates, wag school"*

*"School, once a week swimming pools, hockey and touch, poly club"*

*"Smoke drugs get blown away. Kick it with the big boys, stealing, fighting, and driving drunk"*

*"Help out at the Community House and do the bread run and give to the community"*

*"Go to the gym instead of causing trouble"*

*"Swimming pools, schools, shops, library, skate parks, parks and an ice-skating rink"*

*"Smoke weed every day with all my mates. I'm sixteen and I wish we could all be doing better things. I would like all the crimes and bad things we do to stop as soon as possible. I'm trying to make things better for everyone in my town".*

*"I try and stay out of trouble but there's nothing to do"*

*"Play sports, rugby, touch, softball, hunt, fish, dive, computer"*

### **What is there for young people in your community?**

Many felt there was nothing to do in their community for young people, but those that did mostly discussed youth specific places such as youth groups, skate parks, one stop shops and courses.

*"Kids wagging school, teenagers drinking at a young age, teenagers having sex, fighting and lovers, exploring the community"*

*"Courses, qualifications, schools, friends, netball"*

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"Nothing much, drink and we wish things could be different. There is a centre but that's about it"*

*"Youth groups"*

*"Community touch tournament"*

*"Nothing really cause they don't want to do anything but get drunk smoke weed and be a criminal"*

### **What do you think should be out there in communities for young people?**

Young people spoke about wanting places where they feel welcome and able to just drop in as little or as much as they want. They wanted practical support such as places to get their drivers licence, youth health centres and one stop shops. They wanted these places to be welcoming and supportive.

They also spoke a great deal about fun places. Many asked for legal tagging walls.

*"Somewhere we should be able to go for free and learn new life skills"*

*"Skate park, playground, the worlds longest hydro-slide, pools, good people doing good things and stopping bad things happening"*

*"Counselling for relationships, drugs and alcohol, violence"*

*"Free wall to draw on"*

*"A place where you can go and kick back with friends when you don't feel comfortable in the community"*

*"Buses, gyms, friends, hospitals, counselling, youth workers, good vibes, malls, whanau, fun places, pools"*

*"Activities, education things and things that could stop us from doing what we do my home town "*

### **How do you think adults in the community should help young people?**

Young people spoke about the need for places to be supportive and safe. They wanted to feel like they would be given chances and not judged. They wanted places to be helpful in a variety of ways.

*"Yes! By helping them and making sure I get home safe and ask me what I need in my community"*

*"Not criticise young people"*

*"Respect"*

*"Keep you busy and out of trouble, listening to what kids want, talk to them and tell them why, become a caregiver"*

*"Start engaging us younger ones to do good, to do better and help one another"*

*"To encourage them to do something good and to get jobs or play sports stuff like that"*

**What do you think adults in the community should know about what kids like to do? About being helpful to kids?**

Young people want to be involved in these decisions and to be asked about what they want and need.

*"Sit down and talk to the kids"*

*"Ask young people what they like to do"*

*"Let us do what we want"*

**What do you think adults in the community should know about what young people need to thrive, achieve and belong?**

These questions elicited more comments about being treated as an individual. But most importantly young people talked about the importance of being listened to and asked what their opinion was. They wanted to be treated with respect and to be supported by the adults in their lives to do well.

*"Dream what they want"*

*"They should know that young people are all different"*

*"Where you want to be in life when you are older"*

*"Know something about me"*

*"Their background. What their goal is and what they like i.e. hobbies, interests"*

*"Don't judge us"*

*"Treat them better let them know they do have many talents and use them as well as you can and that this life only comes once but never again"*

**What would your ideal community look like?**

Young people spoke about restful relaxing places where they could kick back and feel free to do the things they wanted to do. They wanted places to be fun and where they could enjoy spending time with their friends. They wanted their community to be a place where everyone got along and had lots of opportunities to get involved and to participate in things that would be helpful for their future.

*"People helping other young people out"*

*"Heaps of legal graffiti walls and things to do like camping etc."*

*"I would want to make it in the things I like most. Be free from the struggles and troubles and feel like they have a future"*

*"Respect"*

*"Everyone would have money"*

*"Young people needs jobs or courses so they don't have to commit crime"*

## **Workforce**

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These questions were asked of most of the groups. However we did not have time to complete these questions with every single group. Some of these concepts were harder to answer so most of the time these questions were asked as part of an open discussion usually in groups of three to four young people.

### **What do you think adults who work with young people need to know?**

Young people wanted to work with adults who offered them respect and didn't judge them. They wanted to be included in discussions and decisions and be asked their opinion. Many spoke of the need to be treated how you wanted to be treated. They also wanted the adults in their lives to be good role models and offer them some support and advice for their future.

*"Understanding our background"*

*"Be themselves – don't fake it"*

*"Get to know them – it takes time"*

*"That we are nice people that we just made mistakes"*

*"About the person: who they are; what they like; hobbies and skills"*

*"That it really sucks to be away from friends and family"*

*"How much it hurts to be away from whanau not being able to see them and let us spend time with friends"*

*"Who we are"*

*"What we do"*

*"What we like"*

*"Get to know us"*

*"They need to know their background in order to get along with them"*

### **If adults are worried about young people, what do you think they should do?**

Again young people were very clear that they wanted adults to talk to them first. This was so that the adult was clear about what the issue was and didn't make any assumptions about the young person or their situation.

*"Ask what is wrong and help them"*

*"Sit them down and talk to them about why they are worried and what their suggestion is to help improve the matter"*

*"Ask them if they want to talk"*

### **How should they talk to young people?**

The word most often repeated as an answer to this question was 'respect'. Young people wanted to be talked to 'normally' and be treated like everyone else. They talked about strengths-based approaches and making sure that adults didn't take over but allowed the young person to find their own solutions with the guidance of an adult. They wanted to talk about things together and take a collaborative approach.

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"How they would like to be talked to"*

*"With a quiet, calm but firm and fair voice"*

*"Ask/talk to them"*

*"Check in with me, if I say don't worry check back in a couple of days"*

*"Spend time with them. Kick back make sure they are alright"*

*"Talk normally – don't try and be someone you're not"*

*"Don't try too hard but use words we understand"*

*"Talk to me like I have a brain"*

*"No shouting – doesn't matter who"*

*"Understand slang – our way of communicating"*

### **How would you feel if adults who were worried about you (not your mum or your dad) asked someone who they thought could help?**

Again young people said they wouldn't mind if adults asked them about it first, very similar to the feedback from whether it was OK for teacher or principals to pass on their concerns. Only one response (out of 30) said it was never OK. But mostly young people said they would feel angry if their information was passed on with someone speaking to them first.

*"I would feel a bit angry and frustrated because it is my problem"*

*"Would be ok if it was a baby or a toddler – just have to do something"*

*"OK if they talk to you first but different if it's dangerous"*

*"Sometimes we are old enough to make decisions for ourselves"*

### **How would you like to get help from adults?**

Mostly the young people talked about feeling grateful that adults wanted to support them. However they want the support to be offered in a way that is respectful and non-judgemental.

Many young people made comments about adults needing to follow through on promises or not say they will do something if they can't do it.

They talked a lot about respect, privacy, freedom and good communication.

*"No not really 'cause they always lie and let me down so how can I trust them"*

*"I would like them to come and see me"*

*"If you can't live at home send you to someone you know and make sure you can still see your parents"*

*"Don't talk down to us"*

*"Support us to change ourselves"*

*"Respect"*

*"Everyone needs someone to support them"*

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"Understand what its like to be us"*

*"Get to know us"*

*"Don't judge us"*

*"It would feel good that someone wanted to help me when I was small but when you're older its better if someone talked to me first"*

### **Who should help you?**

The young people we spoke with were able to identify a wide range of people that could support them. This ranged from friends and family through to Police and social workers. One young person also mentioned the Prime Minister. All agreed that it needed to be someone they trusted.

*"Someone who has been in the same shoes as you"*

*"Prime Minister"*

*"Social workers who do something helpful, that don't judge you, are kind and will talk to you and don't judge you"*

*"Friends, family, adults you like and get on with"*

*"Anyone that is closest to me or teachers"*

*"Something or someone who will listen"*

### **Government**

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These questions were asked of most of the groups. However we did not have time to complete these questions with every single group. Some of these concepts were harder to answer so most of the time these questions were asked as part of a open discussion usually in groups of three to four young people.

### **If things aren't fair, what should the Government do?**

The young people we spoke with wanted New Zealand's resources to be shared evenly. They wanted everyone to have the same opportunities. They wanted safe and secure environments to live in. They wanted to live in environments free from racism. They thought the government should lower taxes and change laws to make sure this all happened.

*"Give everyone the same stuff like give everyone a house"*

*"Government should pay for all the hospitals for everyone"*

*"Try and get unemployed people a job"*

*"Less taxes because people are struggling to live at these prices"*

*"Mums should be able to be full time mums and stay at home"*

*"Not have to get jobs because being a mum is a job – it's hard"*

*"Create more jobs so people have money"*

*"People need money to live e.g. benefit especially when there is no work"*

*"Job sharing – organise workers to cover shifts"*

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"Even if you are in care still get treats as you would get at home"*

*"Maori treated the same as English"*

### **How do you think the Government should help families and children?**

They spoke a great deal about families being able to stay together. They wanted the government to provide support, counselling and education for all New Zealanders. They thought we should have free or cheaper access to the dentist, doctor and preschool. They wanted healthy food to be cheaper. They also thought that there should be more opportunities to get work but if not the benefits should be increased to help families out.

*"Buy all kids under the age of 10 new toys and clothes"*

*"We shouldn't have Child, Youth and Family. The Police turn into Child, Youth and Family. Child, Youth and Family is the same as the Police with residences instead of cells. Child, Youth and Family are supposed to help me change but they don't. Child, Youth and Family should keep families together"*

*"The government should give us money for poor people"*

*"Teach them to be helpful, no violence, no abusive language, follow rules"*

*"Give them jobs because benefits makes them look lazy"*

*"Make sure that every family has a minimum income especially for those that have big families"*

*"Make adults go to places to help them get off alcohol and drugs"*

*"Get an education for the young people"*

### **How should the Government help kids do well (thrive, belong, achieve)?**

Mostly young people just wanted more opportunities. They talked about free education and help with their homework. They wanted access to free healthcare. They wanted healthy food to be cheaper. They wanted safer communities with better role models.

*"Education free"*

*"University free – higher education"*

*"Free doctors"*

*"Free healthcare"*

*"Support services for family and whanau especially for people who can't support themselves and their family"*

*"Have role models from their same context, culture and circumstances"*

*"Making sure everyone has access to a computer – ipads for high schools"*

*"Get people who want to help me – protective – treat me with respect like a taonga"*

*"Be more supportive to my caregiver so they can treat me with respect"*

*"treat me with respect like a taonga"*

## **If the Government was being fair to all kids what does that mean?**

Young people felt that the government needed to even things out. They wanted New Zealand to be safe and free from abuse. They also spoke about the need for equality, freedom, safety, education and fairness.

*"Make it cheaper to go to Doctor"*

*"Enough money to provide the basics, food, power, house, warm clothes"*

*"Heaps opportunities to do art, sports, sport clubs especially in the 'hoods' "*

*"Mr Key let us out, I'll be good when I get out, help us, give us money, get us a job"*

*"It would be a good thing if Government is fair to ALL kids"*

*"More schools – or different types of schools depending on what you like to do. Everyone have a say – freedom"*

*"More freedom, like later bedtimes, more off-sites, more opportunities and more food"*

*"That we can buy and drink underage but the rule is you get in trouble if you get caught on the streets drinking"*

*"Cancel all patched members, no more gangs, take patches off them"*

*"Cut down the taxes"*

