

# Mai World

Summary of engagements 2017-2018

June 2018





## **About the Office of the Children’s Commissioner**

The 1.1 million children and young people aged under 18 make up nearly a quarter of New Zealand’s population.

The Children’s Commissioner Judge Andrew Becroft and his office advocate for their interests, ensure their rights are upheld, and help them have a say on matters that affect them.

Email: [voices@occ.org.nz](mailto:voices@occ.org.nz)

[www.occ.org.nz](http://www.occ.org.nz)

Phone: 04 471 1410

PO Box 5610, Wellington 6145

Level 7, 110 Featherston St, Wellington.

Please respect the voices of the children and young people that have contributed to all of the engagements that form this report.

To reference this report, please include the full title: **Mai World: Annual Summary Report 2017-18**, and a link to the online version at **[www.occ.org.nz](http://www.occ.org.nz)**



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# Mai World: 2017-2018 engagements at a glance

**Mai World: Child and Youth Voices is a way for children and young people's views on a variety of topics to be heard by a range of audiences. Their voices can influence government and community decisions.**

Mai World was developed in 2015 as a way to enable more children and young people to have their voices heard. Every child has the right to have a say in matters that affect them, and to have their voice heard and given due weight, under the United Nations Children's Convention.

Childhood is a state of being in its own right. Children and young people need to be included in engagements and broader consultations, not as 'pre-adults', but as expert users in their own right, with their own worthy opinions and experiences. Rangatahi are rangatira of their own experiences.

In the 12 months from July 2017-June 2018, over **5,600** children and young people took the opportunity to provide their perspectives and opinions to us in seven separate engagements. This report gives a brief overview of the following:

- 1. Tama-te-ra Ariki**
  - 2. Ngā Manu Kōrero – Mana Mokopuna**
  - 3. Positive Connections to Culture**
  - 4. Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor Regeneration**
  - 5. Bullying**
  - 6. What's important to me: Children and young people's views in the lead up to the 2017 General Election**
- 'Education matters to me' series*
- 7. Key Insights**
  - 8. Experiences of tamariki and rangatahi Māori**
  - 9. Progress and Achievement**
  - 10. 'If I were the boss'**
  - 11. Transitions**
  - 12. Engagement**
  - 13. Emotional wellbeing**



This report includes many direct quotes from children and young people. When we can, we indicate information about them, such as the type of learning centre that the child or young person attends, their age and ethnicity.

For many reasons, categorising ethnicity can be subjective. In this report, some children and young people chose not to share their ethnicity. Ethnicities cited from face to face engagements are self-identified and based on the terminology used by the children and young people. Our online surveys use the StatsNZ Tatauranga Aotearoa ethnicity categories.

Throughout this report the terms 'tamariki / children' and 'rangatahi / young people' refer to all children.

When undertaking their monitoring of Oranga Tamariki, the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Monitoring and Investigations team also centre their enquiries on the lived experiences of tamariki and rangatahi, through the use of the Mana Mokopuna lens. These engagements are separate, and are not included in this summary report.

All of the engagements summarised in this report, as well as those completed in previous years, are available on our website:

[www.occ.org.nz/listening2kids/what-children-tell-us/](http://www.occ.org.nz/listening2kids/what-children-tell-us/)

**"It was good that they asked us as there would be no point putting things there that no-one wanted"**

*(An answer to a question asked during the Ōtākaro Avon River engagement)*



# 1

## Tama-te-ra Ariki

**“If you know your culture then it makes you stronger.”**

*(Rangatahi Māori in youth programme for 11 to 14 year olds)*

### What did we want to find out?

Tama-te-ra Ariki (as bright as the sun, and of high status) was a targeted engagement with a group of tamariki and rangatahi Māori, whose voices are least likely to be heard without focussed efforts to consult them.

As tangata whenua, it is vital the voices and opinions of tamariki and rangatahi Māori are heard at all levels of decision making and planning. ‘Achieving better outcomes for tamariki Māori’ was top of the five priorities set by the Children’s Commissioner for 2017. We wanted to find out more about the lived experiences of tamariki and rangatahi Māori, so we worked together with community organisations to provide this group with the opportunity to tell us about their childhood experiences. Many of the rangatahi involved also reflected on how tamariki Māori today might be empowered to overcome similar obstacles in their lives.

### How did we hear from tamariki and rangatahi Māori on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from tamariki and rangatahi through the following channels:

- A series of focus groups undertaken with 155 tamariki and rangatahi Māori aged between four to 18 years, delivered by a skilled facilitator. These young people brought with them a diverse range of experiences and perspectives; we involved rangatahi not engaged in education, employment or training, and those vulnerable to systemic risk factors outside their control, such as economic, social, mental, cultural and physical factors.
- In addition, we sat with 12 individuals and carried out in-depth interviews using activity-based engagement methods specifically designed for this work. Each young person met with a facilitator three to four times in order to share their stories at their own pace.

**“Hardout! Never shame to be Māori.”**

*(Rangatahi Māori in youth programme for 11 to 14 year olds)*



## What did we learn?

We heard unique and powerful stories from tamariki and rangatahi Māori, offering a perspective not often heard. They voiced strong, at times overwhelming, feelings for the adults in their lives. They were proud to be Māori and discovered they blossomed when they found stable adults who were able to connect with them in an authentic way. They spoke of violence and financial struggles, and of wanting the best for themselves and their families in the future.

From our analysis of the views gathered from the face to face engagements and the online survey, we identified five key insights:

1. My cultural identity is my journey
2. I need to feel safe and belong so I can reach my potential
3. I need adults who care about me
4. I want to take my mum's stress away
5. I travel the digital world

## Where to from here?

The aim of this engagement was to authentically reflect the voices of tamariki and rangatahi Māori, who are, at times, least likely to be heard. This would not have been possible without the support and assistance of the organisations who work closely with these young people on an ongoing basis. We recognise the importance of working with Māori organisations particularly in the communities we engage with.

This engagement, combined with a number of other engagements undertaken specifically with tamariki and rangatahi Māori in 2017, has again reminded us there is no one voice of Māori, but rather there are diverse views, experiences and perspectives. The life experiences and perspectives of the 155 tamariki and rangatahi we spoke with varied considerably. Each had their own story. While being Māori was a common element, how this shapes children's lives needs to be understood, not assumed. We are grateful to these tamariki and rangatahi Māori for sharing their stories with us.

## Read the full report here:

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/child-and-youth-voices-tama-te-ra-ariki/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/child-and-youth-voices-tama-te-ra-ariki/)

## Mana Mokopuna at Ngā Manu Korero

**“Whakapapa is going from generation to generation. It is important to know where you are from. It’s who you are.”**

### What did we want to find out?

‘Achieving better outcomes for tamariki Māori’ is top of the five priorities set by the Children’s Commissioner. As tangata whenua, it is vital the voices and opinions of Māori are heard at all levels of decision making and planning.

In September 2017 we attended Ngā Manu Kōrero, a national secondary school speech competition that encourages the development of skills and confidence of Māori students in both te reo Māori and English, connecting with rangatahi Māori and hearing their whakaaro and thoughts on a number of issues.

We used the opportunity to explore the principles of ‘Mana Mokopuna’ with tamariki and rangatahi Māori. The Mana Mokopuna lens is a child-centred approach for use in our monitoring of Oranga Tamariki. This lens has been developed from a Māori world view to learn about the experiences of children and young people and their whānau who have been in contact with the care and youth justice systems.

### How did we hear from tamariki and rangatahi Māori on this issue?

Attending Ngā Manu Kōrero for the full three days enabled us to gather perspectives from over 300 taurua Māori (students) through a stall, where:

- We spoke with rangatahi in kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) interviews
- Rangatahi could participate in an anonymous survey using tablets we provided
- Rangatahi could provide their perspectives on Mana Mokopuna through voting polls.

In total 46 students completed the online survey, and over 300 visited our stall to speak with us, and share their views through voting polls and casual discussions with facilitators. The Children’s Commissioner attended on the final day.

**“If you don’t have aroha – ka mate (you’re dead).”**



## What did we learn?

The majority of the tamariki and rangatahi we met at Ngā Manu Kōrero had strong connections to their whakapapa and were confident te reo speakers or listeners. Those who were competing in the speech competition were supported by large groups of whānau, teachers, friends, and kaumatua. The event celebrated the talents of tamariki and rangatahi, and was about them standing tall and adding the kinaki (ingredients) to the kōrero. It provided us the opportunity to hear the aspirations and views of rangatahi who were proud to be Māori, proud to belong, and proud to represent not only themselves, but their kura, their whānau, their hapū and their iwi.

**“You are the guardian of your language and your people.”**

## Where to from here?

We wanted to hear the whakaaro (ideas and thoughts) of rangatahi and tamariki on the values used in our Mana Mokopuna approach to monitoring state approved care services. We listened to what they said at Ngā Mana Kōrero and their responses have informed our on-going development in this area.

Lastly, this engagement, combined with a number of other engagements undertaken in 2017 specifically with tamariki and rangatahi Māori, has again reminded us there is no one voice of Māori, but rather there are diverse views, experiences and perspectives. The life experiences and perspectives of the 300 tamariki and rangatahi Māori we spoke to varied considerably. Each had their own story. While being Māori was a common element, how that impacts children’s lives needs to be understood and not assumed.

**“Aroha is the most important because it covers it all! You can’t have anything without aroha.”**

**Read the full report here:**

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/talk-about-mana-mokopuna/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/talk-about-mana-mokopuna/)

## Positive Connections to Culture

**“My culture is my family because it’s one of the things we all share together”**

### What did we want to find out?

We know cultural identity is important for people’s sense of self, belonging and how they relate to others. A strong cultural identity can contribute to overall wellbeing. Despite knowing cultural identity and belonging are important protective factors, we know very little about how young people understand, value and express their culture. We wanted to hear how children and young people feel about their culture when they have positive connections to it. So we asked them.

**“My grandparents gave it to me, and I want to give it to my kids”**

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives about young people’s associations to culture through the following:

- Face to face engagement and activities at 2017 Polyfest
- Online in-school surveys for intermediate and secondary school aged students
- In person engagement and activities with tamariki and rangatahi Māori at a marae event.

**“I know my school tries but I don’t think they really know our culture”**



## What did we learn?

We heard from more than 1,000 students about their culture, including many who are positively engaged. From our analysis of the views gathered from the survey and the face to face engagements, we identified four key insights:

1. My culture is a big part of who I am (and I wish I knew more about it)
2. My school supports me to have pride in my culture
3. My family connects me most with my culture
4. My culture is not well understood by the general public

## Where to from here?

1. Children and young people's voices can inform government decisions related to culture.
2. Good education policy and practice has a part to play in developing children and young people's knowledge and pride in their culture.
3. Opportunities for communities to foster and appreciate cultures are important in allowing young people to celebrate theirs
4. The insight that it is family that connects children and young people most can support informed policy and practice guidelines
5. Children and young people want to be asked about decisions that affect them, and have important contributions that can inform decisions.

**“He whanau kotahi tatou, he kaupapa rangatira e kui  
ma, a koro ma”**

## Read the full report here:

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/child-and-youth-voices-culture/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/child-and-youth-voices-culture/)

## Read a related case study here:

<http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/engaging-young-people-at-festivals-and-fairs/>

## Engaging Children in the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor Regeneration

**“It was good that they asked us as there would be no point putting things there that no-one wanted”**

### What did we want to find out?

Regenerate Christchurch was established under the Greater Christchurch Regeneration Act 2016 to lead the regeneration of Christchurch. The Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor is the organisation’s initial focus, with a Regeneration Plan due to be publically notified later in 2018.

As users of the services now and in the future, Regenerate Christchurch recognised the value in listening to and understanding the needs and ideas of children about the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor.

In partnership with Regenerate Christchurch, a series of engagements were developed to ensure that children and young people were also able to provide input into the future of the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor.

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

- We engaged with over 500 children aged between 6 and 12 years old at six primary and intermediate schools near the Avon River Corridor, through a 45 minute lesson plan specifically developed for this issue. The lesson plan focused on what children believed they needed from the Corridor and what would support them to be happy and healthy. The lesson also asked children to share their ideas on what they needed from the corridor on a postcard developed by the Avon Ōtākaro Network.

Collectively, almost 750 children shared 1862 suggestions for what they thought was needed from the corridor to ‘thrive’.



## What did we learn?

From our analysis of all the responses and comments we received, six key themes emerged:

1. Connecting with nature
2. Caring for myself and others
3. Fun with water
4. Fun on the land
5. Connecting with others
6. Learning and earning

These six key themes shared a strong correlation with the needs identified by adult residents.

## Where to from here?

It is not uncommon for adults to dismiss the ideas of children, especially those under 12 years of age, as idealistic and fantastical. However, this engagement challenged these assumptions. The majority of suggestions given by children were thoughtful and realistic, and, if eventuated, would be assets to the city now and into the future.

Engaging children in the Ōtākaro Avon River Corridor regeneration provided a unique perspective to Regenerate Christchurch, from a unique expert user group of the area. As a result of this engagement, some changes were made to the draft Regenerate proposal, assisting in the development of a stronger and more relevant plan responsive to both current and future needs. This allowed the children involved in the engagement to see how their ideas had been incorporated.

**“It was good that they asked us as there would be no point putting things there that no-one wanted”**

## Read the full report here:

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/ childrens-views-on-the-otakaro-avon-river/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/childrens-views-on-the-otakaro-avon-river/)

## Read a related case study here:

<http://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Publications/regenerate-christchurch-case-study-2017.pdf>

## Bullying

**“Sad and worried for the person being bullied, but also worried for the person who’s bullying”**

*14 year old student*

### What did we want to find out?

Bullying in its various forms is deliberate, involves a power imbalance, is usually not a one-off and is harmful. With increasingly online lives, children and young people can experience bullying not just in person, but also through a number of online avenues. We know from previous research that bullying occurs to some extent in every school in New Zealand.

Bullying was brought up as an issue by children and young people in a number of our engagements in 2017, whether we specifically asked about it or not. This is a summary of what we heard on the issue of bullying.

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from children and young people about bullying through:

- a curriculum based activity for secondary school students to write letters to the Children’s Commissioner about bullying
- a brief resource to support parents to engage with their children and help them share their views on, and experiences of bullying
- a number of our online surveys for primary, intermediate and secondary school aged students identified bullying to be a concern for at least some students in the school. Many of the comments about bullying were unprompted. Students wanted to bring up the issue of bullying even if it wasn’t specifically in the questions.

**“They are probably feeling sad or angry with themselves and the only way to get rid of those feelings is to bully other people”**

*11 year old student*



## What did we learn?

From our analysis of responses to the engagement, we've seen three key themes emerge:

- Children and young people are aware that bullying is a complicated issue which is not easily solved
- Tamariki and rangatahi are worried about bullying— for the victim and for those doing the bullying, and for how it is dealt with
- If bullying is happening, they need to know that an adult will take it seriously, deal with it, and that they'll be kept safe.

**"It would be really good to have someone to go and talk to but I'd be really scared if they couldn't do something about it."**

*(Primary school student, undisclosed ethnicity)*

## Where to from here?

Many children and young people want to talk about bullying; the impact it is having on them or their peers, and what can be done to reduce its impact.

The 2018 '[Bullying-free NZ Week](#)', held in May, had the theme "Let's Talk About It". The voices of children and young people contained in our bullying report triggered the idea for the theme, especially the insight that children and young people won't necessarily initiate conversations about bullying, therefore parents and teachers need to bring it up and talk about it regularly.

This important issue needs further exploration, so we will continue to ask questions about bullying in our future engagements.

**"Ultimately I believe is there's always a reason people do what they do, and we need to get to the bottom of it."**

## Read the full report here:

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/child-and-youth-voices-on-bullying-in-aotearoa/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/child-and-youth-voices-on-bullying-in-aotearoa/)

## What's important to me: Children and young people's views in the lead up to the 2017 General Election

**"I would create strategies and pass bills that would make our mental health services a hell of a lot better!"**

### What did we want to find out?

Children and young people are not able to vote, yet they are impacted by today's government decisions and will work and live in Aotearoa in the decades to come. Despite this, we know very little about children and young people's views on New Zealand's topical issues and there are very few attempts to hear them. In the lead up to the 2017 General Election, we wanted to hear what children and young people consider the most important issues facing us as a country; what they think can be done about those issues, and how they would like to share those views with the right audiences. So we asked them.

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

A total of 806 students took part – 129 primary and intermediate students aged 8-13 years, and 677 secondary school students aged 13-19 years. They took part through:

- Two online surveys, held in May and September of 2017.
- A poetry workshop held in September. The participants were engaged in conversations about life in New Zealand, and their responses recorded.

**"I remember the voting for the flags. I wanted one so bad though I wasn't allowed to vote"**



## What did we learn?

From the responses that we heard, we were able to form these four key insights:

1. New Zealand is a great place to live
2. Some things in New Zealand need to change
3. Talk to us in person to hear our views
4. We want to have a say

## Where to from here?

Although not currently allowed to vote, the vast majority of children and young people who took part in the survey supported lowering the voting age to at least 16 years of age. They are keen to take part in democratic processes and believe they are more than able. They are interested and invested in New Zealand and what happens here – now and in the future.

They voiced that as children and young people, they provide new ideas and perspective. As one young person expressed, *'the ones that are actually going to live through it should have a say in who controls their future'*. To not be allowed to vote seems unfair to many young people.

Many children and young people talked about having some kind of 'Civics Education' programme developed to sit alongside their right to vote. They suggested this could be available through schools or in the community, helping them feel confident and knowledgeable in their voting choices. It was important to many young people to feel sufficiently informed to vote. They took the prospect seriously.

**"I think the best thing about living in New Zealand is how there are so many different variety of cultures"**

## Read the full report here:

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/child-and-youth-voices-whats-important-to-me/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/child-and-youth-voices-whats-important-to-me/)

## Education matters to me: key insights

**"I am a library, quiet but filled with knowledge - it's dumb [that I'm not asked]."**

*(Student in alternative education unit)*

### What did we want to find out?

We wanted to make sure children and young people's opinions were available to contribute to the development of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, recently introduced into the Education Act. These Priorities provide direction to all schools over the next five years. We wanted to be confident that students' educational needs were at the centre of the development of these priorities—which meant we needed to know what children and young people considered their needs to be.

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from children and young people through:

- A series of face to face engagements with 144 children and young people, delivered by skilled facilitators
- Two online in-school surveys completed by 1534 children and young people.

### What did we ask?

We wanted to find out more about what works well and how things could be better for children and young people's education. From an existing foundation of child and youth engagement and research, we developed the following six areas of enquiry:

- Achievement
- Emotional wellbeing
- Transitions
- Engagement
- Experiences of tamariki and rangatahi Māori
- Key improvements children and young people would make to their school.



**“I feel like our class here is like a small family, like we are not separated as teachers and students, but we feel like we are working together and can achieve together. Our teachers really want to help us and recognise our strengths and when we do well.”**

*(Student in alternative education, undisclosed ethnicity)*

## **What did we learn?**

Children and young people across a diverse range of engagement groups spoke about three key factors, which they considered essential to a successful educational experience. These were:

- A great teacher
- A supportive and involved family
- Strong friendships.

In addition, when we analysed all the responses, there were six re-occurring themes that emerged as insights across all areas. These were:

1. Understand me in my whole world
2. People at school are racist towards me
3. Relationships mean everything to me
4. Teach me the way I learn best
5. I need to be comfortable before I can learn
6. It's my life—let me have a say

## **Where to from here?**

These insights are consistent with accepted good practice in education policy and practice; they align with the intentions at the high level of the National Education Goals and curriculum principles. The inconsistent and negative experiences we heard in this engagement process indicates that, despite decades of research, policy development and a plethora of initiatives and programmes, we are not achieving the consistently high standard of education we desire for all of our children and young people. Using these insights to develop the National Education and Learning Priorities provides an opportunity to apply a whole-of-system focus.



While these insights reflect the children and young people's views we heard, we know there is a need for further on-going and sustained engagement with children and young people to improve the education system. We are, therefore, encouraged by the Ministry of Education's recent increased focus on consultation and engagement across all age groups.

**"Racism exists – we feel little and bad."**

*(Student in alternative education unit)*

**Read the full report here:**

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-key-insights/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-key-insights/)

**Read the related case study here:**

<http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/case-study-the-education-matters-to-me-series/>

# He manu kai matauranga: He tirohanga Māori

## Education matters to me: Experiences of tamariki and rangatahi Māori

**"We are expected to know our language, to know songs and the haka but we aren't given the opportunity to actually learn it. It just makes me feel bad"**

*(Student in alternative education, Māori)*

### What did we want to find out?

This report was one of the six supporting reports providing more detail to the Education Matters to Me – key insights report. The education matters to me engagement was initiated to help ensure children and young people's voices contribute to the development of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, recently introduced into the Education Act. These Priorities provide direction to schools over the next five years. We wanted to be confident these priorities were responsive to tamariki and rangatahi Māori needs—which meant we needed to know what tamariki and rangatahi Māori consider their needs to be.

### How did we hear from tamariki and rangatahi Māori on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from children and young people through:

- A series of face to face engagements, including individual interviews with 82 tamariki and rangatahi Maori, delivered by facilitators fluent in te reo Māori
- Two online, in-school surveys completed by 280 tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

**"Just cause we are Māori doesn't mean we are stupid."**

*(Secondary school student, Māori/Pacific/European)*



## What questions did we ask?

To find out more about tamariki and rangatahi Māori experiences in education, we asked questions along the themes of:

1. What does achievement mean to you?
2. What helps you do well at school?
3. What could be better?

**"I felt I was ignored at other schools. I struggled a lot, if I asked for help I was told just to move on to the next one when I wanted to understand it so I wouldn't ask for help me next time"**

*(Student in teen parent unit, Māori)*

## What did we learn?

Children and young people across a diverse range of engagement groups spoke about three key factors, which they considered essential to a successful educational experience. These were:

- A great teacher
- A supportive and involved family
- Strong friendships.

Our analysis of the views gathered from the survey and face to face engagements also identified five key insights:

1. Toku reo, toku ooho (to understand me, understand my world and te reo Māori)
2. Tuhuratia te ao i te rangimarie (I want to feel safe and comfortable to explore my culture)
3. He kaikiri Māori, he whakaparahako etahi o te kura (People at school are racist towards me and judge me because I'm Māori)
4. Whakatungia te tangata, ka tu hoki te whanau (Supporting my whanau is important for my achievement)
5. He oranga ngakau te hakiri kai (food helps me feel comfortable and connected)

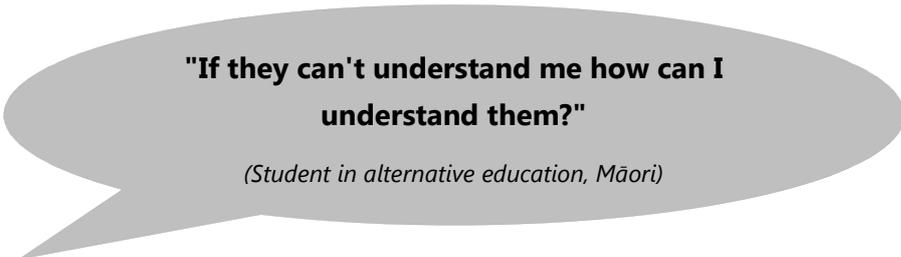


## Where to from here?

This engagement, combined with a number of other engagements undertaken specifically with tamariki and rangatahi Māori in 2017, has again reminded us there is no one voice of Māori, but rather there are diverse views, experiences and perspectives.

Racism occurring in schools is a confronting issue that must be addressed. This insight has been recognised by parenting communities, Ministry of Education and teachers. The Office of the Children's Commissioner will continue to raise racism in education as a key issue for our education priority.

This insight came from the rangatahi and tamariki Māori we heard from. We acknowledge that the voices of rangatahi from kura kaupapa and rural areas were missing from this engagement and they need to be included in future conversations. We are encouraged the Ministry have indicated they will be doing further engagement with all children and young people.



**"If they can't understand me how can I understand them?"**

*(Student in alternative education, Māori)*

**Read the full report here:**

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-experiences-of-tamariki-and-rangatahi-maori/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-experiences-of-tamariki-and-rangatahi-maori/)

# Education matters to me: Progress and Achievement

## What did we want to find out?

This report is one of the six supporting reports providing more detail to the Education Matters to Me – key insights report. The education matters to me engagement was initiated to help ensure children and young people’s voices contribute to the development of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, recently introduced into the Education Act. These Priorities provide direction to schools over the next five years. This report relates to the ‘progress and achievement’ area of enquiry from the engagement.

## How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from children and young people through:

- A series of face to face engagements with 144 children and young people, including a poetry workshop and individual interviews, delivered by skilled facilitators
- Two online in-school surveys completed by 1534 children and young people.

## What questions did we ask?

To find out more about children and young people’s experiences in education, we asked questions along the themes of:

1. What does achievement mean to you?
2. What do you want to achieve?
3. Does your *[learning environment/TPU/LSU]* help you with your goals?
4. What do you need to help you achieve and reach your goals?
5. How well is your school doing things that would help you?



## What did we learn?

Children and young people across a diverse range of engagement groups spoke about three key factors, which they considered essential to a successful educational experience. These were:

- A great teacher
- A supportive and involved family
- Strong friendships.

Our analysis of the views gathered from the survey and face to face engagements also identified seven insights:

1. I want to make my whanau proud
2. To help me, understand what my goals are
3. Recognise my strengths
4. My physical space impacts on my learning
5. I can't achieve without strong relationships
6. I feel stuck in the classroom and it doesn't work for me
7. Bullying happens so do something about it

## Where to from here?

A number of health or community organisations have supported our findings; they are the same themes that they are also hearing from children and young people.

We are encouraged by the Ministry of Education's increased focus on consultation and engagement across all age groups.

**"To finish school, to get an education and qualify for a job in the future. To raise my children better than I was raised. Have no violence around my children. To raise my kids in an environment that is healthy for them and keep my children in my care"**

*(Student in teen parent unit)*

## Read the full report here:

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-progress-and-achievement/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-progress-and-achievement/)

## Education matters to me: 'If I were the boss' - Improving our education

**"I love free play time and getting outside so that I can actually breathe"**

*(Primary school student, Kiwi/Canadian).*

### What did we want to find out?

This report is one of the six supporting reports providing more detail to the Education Matters to Me – key insights report. The education matters to me engagement was initiated to help ensure children and young people's voices contribute to the development of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, recently introduced into the Education Act. These Priorities provide direction to schools over the next five years. This report relates to the 'key improvements' area of enquiry from the engagement.

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from children and young people through the following channels:

- A series of face to face engagements, including group and individual interviews with 144 children and young people, delivered by skilled facilitators
- Two online, in-school surveys completed by 1534 children and young people.

**"Air conditioning. The classrooms get so bloody hot that they're unbearable..."**

*(Secondary school student, NZ European)*

### What questions did we ask?

To find out more about children and young people's experiences in education, we asked questions along the themes of:

1. If you were the boss what changes would you make?
2. If you could change anything what would you change?
3. What would make school better for you?



**“More support when we need it.”**

*(Secondary school student, Māori/Pasifika)*

## **What did we learn?**

Children and young people across a diverse range of engagement groups spoke about three key factors, which they considered essential to a successful educational experience. These were:

- A great teacher
- A supportive and involved family
- Strong friendships.

Our analysis of the views gathered from the survey and face to face engagements also identified six insights:

1. Change how classes are run
2. A better physical learning environment
3. Make learning relevant and fun
4. Prepare me for my future
5. Stop bullying
6. School is great

## **Where to from here?**

A number of health or community organisations have supported our findings; they are the same themes that they are also hearing from children and young people.

We are encouraged by the Ministry of Education’s increased focus on consultation and engagement across all age groups.

**“...more freedom in what we learn about.”**

*(Secondary school student, NZ European)*

## **Read the full report here:**

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-if-i-were-the-boss/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-if-i-were-the-boss/)

## Education matters to me: Transitions

**“Start things slow, get to know teachers and students - maybe do half days and get to know people outside of school.”**

*(Student in alternative education, Māori)*

### What did we want to find out?

This report is one of the six supporting reports providing more detail to the Education Matters to Me – key insights report. The education matters to me engagement was initiated to help ensure children and young people’s voices contribute to the development of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, recently introduced into the Education Act. These Priorities provide direction to schools over the next five years. This report relates to the ‘transitions’ area of enquiry from the engagement.

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from children and young people through:

- A series of face to face engagements with 144 children and young people, including a poetry workshop and individual interviews, delivered by skilled facilitators
- Two online in-school surveys completed by 1534 children and young people.

**“Teacher[s] need to be more understanding that not all students learn the same way so when we ask for help we are asking for a 1 on 1 time with you to explain not for you to tell us we already learnt this last year. Sometimes you should just let us dream a little instead of telling us our dreams are unreachable ...”**

*(Secondary school student, NZ European)*



## What questions did we ask?

To find out more about children and young people's experiences in education, we asked questions along the themes of:

1. What transitions (or times of change at school) have been easy for you?
2. What transitions (or times of change at your school) have been hard?
3. What helped make times when things changed easier for you?

**“Better integration between local primary schools and colleges, so the transition process is easier”**

*(Secondary school student, Māori/NZ European)*

## What did we learn?

Children and young people across a diverse range of engagement groups spoke about three key factors, which they considered essential to a successful educational experience. These were:

- A great teacher
- A supportive and involved family
- Strong friendships.

Our analysis of the views gathered from the survey and face to face engagements also identified five insights:

1. Help me get to know my new surroundings
2. When things change for me, relationships are really important
3. Support me when things change, or when they go wrong
4. Really listen to me
5. It's my life—let me have a say

## Where to from here??

A number of health or community organisations have supported our findings; they are the same themes that they are also hearing from children and young people.

We are encouraged by the Ministry of Education's increased focus on consultation and engagement across all age groups.

## Read the full report here:

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-transitions/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-transitions/)

## Education matters to me: Engagement

**“To have each student appreciate each other’s learning and culture...”**

*(Primary school student, Tongan)*

### What did we want to find out?

This report is one of the six supporting reports providing more detail to the Education Matters to Me – key insights report. The education matters to me engagement was initiated to help ensure children and young people’s voices contribute to the development of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, recently introduced into the Education Act. These Priorities provide direction to schools over the next five years. This report relates to the ‘engagement’ area of enquiry.

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from children and young people through:

- A series of face to face engagements with 144 children and young people, including a poetry workshop and individual interviews, delivered by skilled facilitators
- Two online, in-school surveys completed by 1534 children and young people.

**“Just talk to us, don’t see us as too hard.”**

*(Student in alternative education, Samoan)*

### What questions did we ask?

To find out more about children and young people’s experiences in education, we asked questions along the themes of:

1. What do you like about being here?
2. What makes you want to come here?
3. What makes you not want to come sometimes?



**“I would play games and do lots of learning like we normally do because kids need education.”**

*(Primary school student, Māori/Scottish)*

## **What did we learn?**

Children and young people across a diverse range of engagement groups spoke about three key factors, which they considered essential to a successful educational experience. These were:

- A great teacher
- A supportive and involved family
- Strong friendships.

Our analysis of the views gathered from the survey and face to face engagements also identified six insights:

1. Get to know me
2. Engage with me on my terms
3. We don't all learn the same
4. My friends are my go-to
5. Respect me, treat me as an equal
6. Recognise my potential, and give me hope

## **Where to from here?**

A number of health or community organisations have supported our findings; they are the same themes that they are also hearing from children and young people.

We are encouraged by the Ministry of Education's increased focus on consultation and engagement across all age groups.

## **Read the full report here:**

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-engagement/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-engagement/)

## Education matters to me: Emotional wellbeing

**“If you're trying to make a significant difference to the school, changing the socks is literally the last thing on the list of problems this school has.”**

*(Secondary school student, Māori/NZ)*

### What did we want to find out?

This report is one of the six supporting reports providing more detail to the Education Matters to Me – key insights report. The education matters to me engagement was initiated to help ensure children and young people's voices contribute to the development of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities, recently introduced into the Education Act. These Priorities provide direction to schools over the next five years. This report relates to the 'emotional wellbeing' area of enquiry from the engagement.

### How did we hear from children and young people on this issue?

Our team gathered perspectives from children and young people through:

- A series of face to face engagements with 144 children and young people, including a poetry workshop and individual interviews, delivered by skilled facilitators
- Two online, in-school surveys completed by 1534 children and young people.

### What questions did we ask?

To find out more about children and young people's experiences in education, we asked questions along the themes of:

1. How do you feel about being here [at the learning centre]?
2. What makes you sad here?
3. What could be better?
4. Do you feel as though you belong?
5. Did you feel that way at school? Why? What could have been better?



## What did we learn?

Children and young people across a diverse range of engagement groups spoke about three key factors they considered essential to a successful educational experience. These were; a great teacher, a supportive and involved family and strong friendships. Our analysis of the views gathered from the survey and face to face engagements also identified nine insights:

1. My friends are my go-to
2. I need my teacher to respect me
3. I need my teacher to recognise I have a disability that affects the way I learn best
4. My physical space impacts on my learning
5. I want to be comfortable in what I wear
6. How I'm feeling impacts how I'm learning
7. When bullying happens, I need to know you'll deal with it and I'll be kept safe
8. My social needs—preparing and sharing kai
9. Accept me.

## Where to from here?

A number of health or community organisations have supported our findings; they are the same themes that they are also hearing from children and young people.

We are encouraged by the Ministry of Education's increased focus on consultation and engagement across all age groups.

**"My Family made me happy by giving me everything i want and supported but also my friends helped me along the way."**

*(Primary school student, Māori/ NZ European/Pacific Peoples)*

**Read the full report here:**

[www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-emotional-wellbeing/](http://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/education-matters-to-me-emotional-wellbeing/)



## Conclusion

Children and young people are the experts in their own worlds. They have valuable experiences to share, and have a right to be involved in matters that affect them. By providing a safe space for children and young people to speak, and ensuring that their voices are heard and amplified, we have heard unique perspective from over 5,600 young people. We greatly appreciated the views they shared with us, and hope they felt validated from their interactions with our office.

It is important to note, the work we have done have limitations. Our processes are constantly improving as a result of the interactions we are having with children and young people, and how we share those voices. We will continue to build our networks to include ever greater numbers and diversity, and continue to make space for children, who otherwise may not be heard.

There is no one voice of children or young people, just as there is no single voice of Māori, Pacific People or any other group. Every child's lived experience is unique. We are grateful to the children and young people who shared their stories with us.

**“It affects the future generations so the ones that are actually going to live through it should have a say in who controls their future”** *Student, age 15, responding to a question about whether children should be able to vote*

More information on Mai World, including how schools and community groups can become involved, can be found on our website:

<http://www.occ.org.nz/4youth/maiworld/>