Child Impact Assessment: Best Practice Guideline

This tool has been designed to offer guidance to you as policy makers in New Zealand on how you can improve practice to consider the impacts of your advice on children and young people. The guideline has been designed in a way that makes it applicable to a range of policy settings and should be used in the way that is most appropriate for you and your organisation.

1. Impact of the decision*

- Will the proposal reduce access to services within the community?
- Will it affect a child’s right to leisure and recreation?
  - Will it affect an entire community or a segment of it?
- Does the proposal directly or indirectly affect any children living in that community? If so, how – positively or negatively?
- Will the proposal affect the dynamic of the family or whānau unit?
- Will it support or hinder the ability of parents/caregivers to nurture their children?
- Will it affect how the family or whānau unit functions on a daily/weekly/yearly basis?
- Will any children in that family or whānau unit be directly or indirectly affected by the proposal? If so, how – positively or negatively?
- Does the proposal affect the identity of the child or their sense of belonging?

Adequate income to meet needs (Articles 26 and 27)

- Could the proposal affect a parent’s income or their ability to use their resources to meet their child’s basic needs?
- If so, is there a possibility that this will have a positive or negative flow-on effect to any children or young people?

Education that develops the child (Articles 28 and 29)

- Does the proposal result in different levels of access or standard of educational services?
- Does the proposal affect the provision of education in any way?

Access to health services (Articles 6 and 24)

- Could the proposal affect a child’s access to healthcare?
- Could the proposal affect a child’s mental, physical or emotional health? If so, how – positively or negatively?

Safe, healthy environment (Article 27)

- Could the proposal affect a child’s environment or standard of living?

2. Differential Impacts

- Consider the impacts of your proposal on relevant groups, such as:
  - Māori and Pasifika
  - migrant/refugee
  - those socially isolated in urban areas
  - children in sole parent families or in different family structures, sizes and types
  - children in care/youth justice system
  - children with disabilities
  - different age groups
  - sexuality diverse young people; for example, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, those questioning their gender identity
  - children of parents with certain characteristics; for example, parents with disabilities or parents in prison

- How would the proposal impact children’s education?
  - Where the proposal targets a specific group of children, is there a rationale for a group of children being targeted over other groups?
  - Are there unintended consequences for the children being targeted or those left out? (For example, stigma or perception of unfair advantage.)
  - Where positive impacts of the proposal are identified, they should be highlighted.
  - Where any negative impacts or unintended consequences are established, provide some potential mitigations for them.

3. Voices of children and young people

- A key part of considering the impacts of policies and legislation on children involves seeking input directly from children and young people themselves.
- There are a variety of best practice methods and approaches.

- Organisations that can provide assistance on engaging well with children are:
  - the Office of the Children’s Commissioner
  - UNICEF New Zealand
  - Save the Children New Zealand
  - Ministry of Youth Development

4. What to do once you have completed your policy assessment

- The guideline should be used to inform your proposal:
  - Where positive impacts have been identified, they should be highlighted.
  - Where negative impacts have been identified, they should be noted, along with, where possible, mitigations for those negative impacts.

- Alternatively, if it is necessary for the proposal to proceed in spite of the negative impacts, the reasons for this should be explained, so there is an explicit understanding of the accepted trade-offs.

* The child impacts being sought in this guideline align with the outcomes in the Vulnerable Children Act 2014. For further information, please see pages 7 and 8 of the Word version of the guideline.

We are currently testing the guideline. Please provide comments on this tool to UNCROC@msd.govt.nz
The substantive rights in the Convention fall into three categories, Protection, Provision, and Participation - sometimes called the 3Ps. For more information go to:

UNCROC:  

Children’s rights and advice:  

Listening 2 Kids:  
http://www.occ.org.nz/listening2kids/