### 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

or negatively?

directly or indirectly

affect any children living

Stable,

nurturing

family

(Article 8)

Sense of

belonging

(Article 8)

in that community? If

so, how - positively

- 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?

• 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?

> > Adequate

- 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?
- 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?

income to **Education** meet needs that (Articles 26 develops and 27) the child (Articles 28 and 29)

How will this proposal affect me?

(Articles 6 and 24)

Access

to health

services

Safe, healthy homes (Article 27)

Safe, healthy environment (Article 27)

affect a Could the proposal impact stability of a child's home? or If so, how positively or

negatively?

child's home? If so, how positively negatively?

Could the

proposal

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

# **Differential Impacts**

- Consider the impacts of your proposal on relevant groups, such as:
  - Māori and Pasifika
  - migrant/refugee
  - those rurally isolated
  - 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

**Supportive** 

community

and play

(Article 31)

- 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 on disadvantage faced by these groups?
- 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
- Where any negative impacts or unintended consequences are established, provide some potential mitigations for them. Alternatively, explain why the proposal is required given the accepted trade-offs.

# 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

### 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.

#### **Child Impact Assessment:** Best Practice Guideline

Ensuring UNCROC is a guiding framework for policy and legislation development

The best interests of the child should be a primary consideration.

UNCROC Article 3

All children
under 18 years of age
have rights without
discrimination of
any kind, irrespective
of their parent's or legal
guardian's race, colour,
sex, language, religion,
political or other
opinion, national,
ethnic or social origin,
property, disability,
birth or other status.
UNCROC Article 2

We have obligations to Māori as signalled by the Treaty of Waitangi, which includes express consideration of whānau, hapū and iwi.

Being child-centred means grounding decisions in what is best for children and young people as individuals. By considering the impact on children and young people in your work, and engaging with them when you can, you develop better policies.

Why should you think about me in your policy proposals?



By considering the impact on children and young people, we will improve policy advice to decision-makers

Considering the impact on children and young people of any policy or legislation proposal is important to ensure the rights that children and young people have under UNCROC are upheld.

All New Zealand government agencies are expected to apply child-centred practice All children have the inherent right to life and they should be able to survive and develop in a healthy way.

Article 6

Children who have the capacity to form their own views have the right to express those views freely, and to have those views given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

UNCROC Article 12

The opinions and experiences of children and young people are important to take into account in all matters affecting them.

Children and young people have great ideas about what works for them and what does not. They also know what has worked for them in the past, or could work better for them in their future

Policy advice will be improved by using the Child Impact Assessment tool across all government sectors. It enables specific analysis to be undertaken of the impacts on children and helps to ensure any trade-offs are clear and actively considered. It should lead to increased transparency of our accountability to children and work to ensure policies and legislation are child-centred.

The substantive rights in the Convention fall into three categories, Protection, Provision, and Participation - sometimes called the 3Ps. For more information go to:

UNCROC:

http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

Children's rights and advice: http://www.occ.org.nz/childrens-rights-and-advice/uncroc/

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