



Media Release

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No more child deaths says Save the Children

Save the Children NZ welcomes the commitment of \$320 million to reduce family and sexual violence recently announced as part of the inaugural Wellbeing Budget. This is a crucial announcement, particularly considering New Zealand's appalling record of child deaths.

Save the Children New Zealand Chief Executive, Heidi Coetzee said, "We are keen to see how the 320 million will be allocated, and what part of this will be specifically targeted to prevent violence against children in their homes. The funds are there, the will is there, so it's time to commit to urgent action."

"Between January 2004 and March 2019 135 children aged 14 and under were killed in New Zealand. That's an average of nine children a year. Two thirds of these were aged two or under. This is totally untenable."

Statistics show that most children in New Zealand are abused by those who should be caring for them: either a parent or someone known to the family.

"We all know that there are times when parenting is incredibly challenging. We need to equip parents with the skills to manage those times and provide services and resources that parents can turn to when it gets too hard.

"Early intervention is vitally important, especially for those parents who don't have a supportive family network to call on when help or advice is needed. We need to make it clear that it's okay to reach out if they think their child is in danger or if they are feeling like they're not coping," Ms Coetzee said.

"Solely relying on Oranga Tamariki to pick up the pieces is clearly not working. We would like to see a two-pronged preventative approach using our health services to spot and respond to early signs of a child being harmed, alongside an education campaign to assist parents with positive parenting information, including targeted support to keep their children safe.

"If we are to make New Zealand the best place to be a child then eliminating child violence needs to be a number one priority and something we all need to tackle."

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About Save the Children NZ

Save the Children works in 120 countries across the world. The organisation responds to emergencies and works with children and their communities to ensure they survive, learn and are protected.

Save the Children NZ currently supports international programmes in Fiji, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Laos, Nepal, Indonesia, Thailand, and Mozambique. Areas of work include education and literacy, disaster risk reduction, and alleviating child poverty.

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