



# An Affordable and Healthy Home for **Every Child**

Save the Children NZ calls for an affordable and healthy home for every child and their whānau.

To achieve this, we call for a continued commitment to:

- 1** Build new and refurbish existing public housing stock.
- 2** Retain, enforce, and build on the Healthy Home Standards to continue to lift the quality of housing in New Zealand.
- 3** Retain policies to support warmer homes such as the Winter Energy Payment and Warmer Kiwi Homes- insulation and heating grant programme for low income households.
- 4** Implement policies to facilitate renting as a positive, affordable, safe and viable long term housing option and
- 5** Continue to invest in housing solutions for Māori, Pasifika and disabled whānau who are too often excluded from accessing affordable and healthy housing.

An affordable and healthy home is the **right of every child** and central to child wellbeing.



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Article 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child accords every child the right to a decent standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.<sup>1</sup>

*And that, “States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.”*

Improving the standard of living for New Zealand children is a priority area recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in New Zealand’s 6th Periodic Review.<sup>2</sup>



**Our Tamariki need an affordable and healthy house to call home.**

A home should be a place of safety, a place to rest and re-energise, a place to connect with family and whānau, a place to learn and a place to grow. When housing is affordable and healthy, it allows children to put down roots in their community and provides a stable base for them to grow, develop and form their own identity.



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## Public Housing Waitlist

As of June 2023, Aotearoa has more than 24,000 households on waitlists for public housing, with 43% of these waitlisted households consisting of children. Only those with the most serious housing needs are eligible for Public Housing. The waitlist provides an indication of the high number of families struggling to access affordable housing and unable to afford market rental rates. Being in these types of conditions can be detrimental to a child's upbringing and ability to thrive in education and impacts their overall well-being.<sup>9</sup>

## We are living through a housing crisis, and it's seriously harming our children.

Access to affordable and healthy housing has reached crisis point in New Zealand.

All across the country, families are being pushed into poverty due to the high cost of housing, while tens-of-thousands of children each year are being admitted to hospital with preventable diseases caused by unhealthy living conditions, many which are rarely found in most of the world's wealthier nations.

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The housing crisis is not evenly felt. According to the Housing in Aotearoa report, rates of severe housing deprivation were highest among young Pacific peoples and young Māori, while overall, severe housing deprivation prevalence rates for Pacific peoples and Māori were close to four and six times the European rate.

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According to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), parents finding housing for their families is a major stressor. Research shows direct links between quality of housing and income levels on children's health and wellbeing outcomes.

Furthermore, the results of the research support current policy and legislation aimed at ensuring rental homes are warm, dry, and safe, and requires continued focus on reducing crowding through families accessing housing that meets their needs.

8

## Emergency Housing

There were more than 3,552 households in emergency housing including 3,978 adults and 3,576 children as at 31 July 2023.<sup>10</sup> Those living in emergency housing are families in the most desperate housing situations without any other housing options. Reports by the Human Rights Commission found that Emergency Housing provision is too often falling short in upholding human rights.

To solve the emergency housing situation, we need to solve the overall housing crisis to ensure there are enough healthy and affordable homes for all.

**An affordable and healthy home is the  
right of every child.**

### Sources

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