

# CHILDREN'S VIEWS

We did not consult directly with children (although they were able to participate in the survey if they wished to).

Instead, we have compiled a summary of children's voices using surveys and data collections from the last five years. This approach minimised consultation fatigue and highlights the work this Government has made to include children's views in decision-making processes.



## Sources:

<https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/What-makes-a-good-life-report-OCC-OT-2019-WEB2.pdf> <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/CMG-2021-Pages.pdf> <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/20-09-2017-Mai-World-Culture-Report.pdf> <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Tama-te-ra-Ariki.pdf> <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/2018-Feb-Classifications-OFLC-YNZVSV-case-study-1018g-FINAL.pdf> <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Emotional-Wellbeing2.pdf> <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/What-makes-a-good-life-report-OCC-OT-2019-WEB2.pdf> <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/What-is-Important-Mai-World-Issues-Report-Dec18.pdf> <https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-08/summary-report-national-engagement-wellbeing.pdf> <https://childyouthwellbeing.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-08/maori-engagement-summary-report-cyw.pdf> <https://www.myd.govt.nz/young-people/youth-plan/development-of-the-youth-plan.html> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/5f3394a2654885030c051243/1597215912482/Youth19+Youth+Voice+Brief.pdf> [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/60dd227e2226ae499706dd69/1625105031254/Youth19+Intersectionality+Report\\_FINAL\\_2021\\_print.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/60dd227e2226ae499706dd69/1625105031254/Youth19+Intersectionality+Report_FINAL_2021_print.pdf) [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/60dd134379170606fa5c3a87/1625101127012/Youth19+Brief\\_Rainbow+young+people+with+a+disability+or+chronic+condition.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/60dd134379170606fa5c3a87/1625101127012/Youth19+Brief_Rainbow+young+people+with+a+disability+or+chronic+condition.pdf) <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/60dd11a05fc4a74bf0de3e7a/1625100708894/Pacific+Rainbow+Youth19+Brief.pdf> [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/60ca75d00a6a3a028b086ce0/1623881172777/Youth19+Brief\\_Rainbow+rangatahi.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/60ca75d00a6a3a028b086ce0/1623881172777/Youth19+Brief_Rainbow+rangatahi.pdf) [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/607cb9d833521c74d11fd160/1618786781847/Youth19+Brief\\_Same+and+multiple+sex+attracted+students+April2021.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/607cb9d833521c74d11fd160/1618786781847/Youth19+Brief_Same+and+multiple+sex+attracted+students+April2021.pdf) [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/607cb8431453ca0b05c53bb8/1618786373138/Youth19+Brief\\_Transgender+and+diverse+gender+students+April2021.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bdbb75cce37259122e59aa/t/607cb8431453ca0b05c53bb8/1618786373138/Youth19+Brief_Transgender+and+diverse+gender+students+April2021.pdf) <https://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/what-kids-say-about-education-and-achievement/> <https://www.occ.org.nz/assets/Uploads/2018-Feb-Ministry-of-Health-case-study-formatted-FINAL.pdf> <https://arataiohi.org.nz/publications/nga-korero-hauora-o-nga-taiohi/> <https://www.occ.org.nz/publications/reports/getting-it-right-are-we-listening/>

## Examples of engagements with children and young people throughout the reporting period

This list of examples of engagements with children and young people throughout the reporting period is not exhaustive.

- Youth advisory panels of care-experienced young people who advised the Minister for Social Development on the redesign of the care and protection system.
- The National Care Standards include requirements to take into account the views of children and young people in developing their care plan and providing them with information about their rights, advocacy services and how to make a complaint in a manner that is appropriate to their age, development and ability.
- 'Children's Experiences Survey' which was completed in 2019-2020 to express views the quality of care children and young people are receiving.
- In 2018 Te Puni Kokiri established a four-year Rangatahi Development and Leadership Policy Project to create a strategic approach to reflect the needs and aspirations of rangatahi, with the voice of rangatahi at the centre.
- Development of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. This included over 200 formal submissions, and contribution by over 6000 children and young people through online survey-based engagements and face-to-face focus groups/interviews. Children and young people also participated in a 'postcard to the Prime-Minister' activity.
- In 2017 the NZ School Trustees Association and the Office of the Children's Commissioner engaged with over 1500 children to hear their views on education for the *Education Matters to Me* report.

### Identity / culture / relationships (Articles 1, 7 and 9)

- Children and young people want to be accepted as individuals, with different learning styles, family circumstances and experiences.
- They want to be accepted despite their culture, gender, mental health, sexuality, and economic status.
- Children and young people value safe and positive relationships with their peers and elders that help them feel safe and accepted.
- They need adults that care about them, that are strong and secure support figures.
- Culture and identity are very important to children and young people. It is important that they are connected and accepted in schools, by healthcare professionals, their families, and their peers.

### Poverty / material hardship (Articles 26 and 27)

- Children and young people want their and their whānau to have their basic needs met and to have more than a minimum standard of living.
- Children and young people express the view that the government is not doing enough to reduce inequality or to ensure that whānau are not struggling to make ends meet.
- Children and young people told us about their parents facing income insecurity, which can mean going from work to the benefit and having no money between. They stress about money and are embarrassed when they can't do things because of money. This is a greater issue for children with disabilities who may not be able to spend as much time with their parents, who have to work to be able to afford care.

### Wellbeing

- Children and young people have described being subject to under pressure as a result of high expectations from parents, teachers, peers and society in general. There appears to be a general sense of 'not-fitting-in'. Some young people see the future as bleak, and think they are inheriting a broken world, with a lack of intergenerational equity.
- They see issues of climate change, racism, homophobia, and inequality as issues that government could do more to address. Many students have also noted the need for accessible early intervention services for mental health problems.

## Access to services (education, housing, healthcare) Articles 24, 26, 27, 28 and 29

- Some of the main issues noted by children and young people in engagements throughout the reporting period relate to the accessibility, affordability, quality, cultural safety of education, housing, and healthcare in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Children and young people want education to be funded so that all schools have equal resources and facilities. There have also been repeated requests for more affordable and accessible mental healthcare for children and young people of all ages.
- Many children and young people have noted the need for access to quality sexuality education and health services. This includes a desire for education on safe sex, sexual wellbeing, relationships, and gender identity.
- Some comments related to the need for professionals to be accepting, empathetic, and non-judgmental. These comments related explicitly to social workers, police officers and income support case managers. There was a sense that government is not always accepting or accommodating of children, young people and whānau. Institutional racism and the need for cultural competency were often noted. This relates to Articles 1, 2 and 30.
- Children and young people have expressed the view that 'the system' can get in the way of a good life. This can mean Oranga Tamariki, the Police, their school, the health system or Work and Income. Those in state care struggle to understand the system they are stuck within, as do those outside of state care when attempting to obtain support or care from the state.

### COVID-19 response

- There were both positive and negative impacts of lockdown for all children and young people
- There were reports of strengthened family relationships, more time to explore their interests and more sleep.
- Children and young people enjoyed having control over their time, having more free time, and having opportunities for new activities
- The changing nature of education during lockdown was unsettling for some children and young people
- Improvements in wellbeing varied across the children and young people heard from.

### Participation (Article 12, 13 and 14)

- Children and young people repeatedly emphasize the desire to be listened to, heard, participate, and have a say in decisions that affect them.
- They want to be seen, heard, and understood as experts in their own experiences within the context of their own experiences. Many felt that government agencies do not listen or act on what they have heard from engagements.
- Some children and young people want the voting age lowered to 16, and to have compulsory civics education. They want government agencies to have a more consistent approach in engagement, and to treat them as the leaders of today rather than only leaders of tomorrow.

### Children with disabilities

- Children and young people with disabilities found that their current experiences of respite are for the most part positive, with some room for improvement. Most children and young people felt safe at respite care and enjoyed the activities they did.
- They thought that their experiences could be improved by being closer to home, being able to interact with their peers more, being able to choose what activities they do and having regular, caring, support workers that they know.

### Climate change

Children and young people regularly express the view that the government is not doing enough about climate change. They want the natural environment to be protected and think that it is one of the best things about New Zealand.

# KEY THEMES FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON NEW ZEALAND'S DRAFT SIXTH PERIODIC REPORT UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

- We received feedback from the public through three mechanisms:
1. In-person meetings with the Children's Convention Monitoring Group
  2. Open submissions via email
  3. Submissions via an online survey

**7**  
NGOs provided feedback

**9**  
Email submissions

**64**  
Survey responses

## Feedback from the Children's Convention Monitoring Group

The Children's Convention Monitoring Group (CMG) consists of representatives from the Human Rights Commission, Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, Save the Children New Zealand and UNICEF New Zealand. It is convened by the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

Key comments highlighted:

- The substantive work that has gone into collating and presenting the information in the Report.
- The reporting process as opportunity to clearly address New Zealand's work on the priority issues identified from the 2016 Concluding Observations.
- More has been done for children's rights across a broad range of issues in the last reporting cycle than in previous cycles.
- The positive developments for children noted in the Report. The increased reference to children's rights and the Convention in law and policy is welcome, as are the efforts to reduce child poverty and enhance child and youth wellbeing.
- That the Report could do more to build a narrative of a child's experience of rights in New Zealand
- That the Report needs to address challenges in implementation of children's rights, including recognising disparities between different groups of children.

## Feedback from open submissions

Open submissions could be made via email during the six week online consultation period.

Submissions were received from NGO groups and individuals with an interest in the Convention.

Specific concerns noted:

- Child-specific data needs to be more comprehensive and regularly updated.
- The ongoing COVID-19 response needs to consider the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 tamariki Māori.
- More needs to be done to reduce rates of child harm.
- Teaching staff need more support and resources.

Key themes raised	Indicative level of support for Govt. initiatives in the key themes
Children with disabilities	👍👍
Housing	👎
Poverty and food insecurity	👍
COVID-19	👍
Education	👎
Child wellbeing	👍👍
Family violence, sexual violence, abuse and neglect	👍
Child-specific data	👍
Upholding the Treaty of Waitangi	👎
The Children's Convention	👎

Key:  
 👎👎 = very dissatisfied  
 👎 = not satisfied  
 👍 = satisfied  
 👍👍 = very satisfied

## Feedback from survey responses

We engaged in online public consultation for a six week period between 20 July 2021 and 31 August 2021. MSD hosted a webpage with relevant information, the draft Report and an online survey for participants to complete.

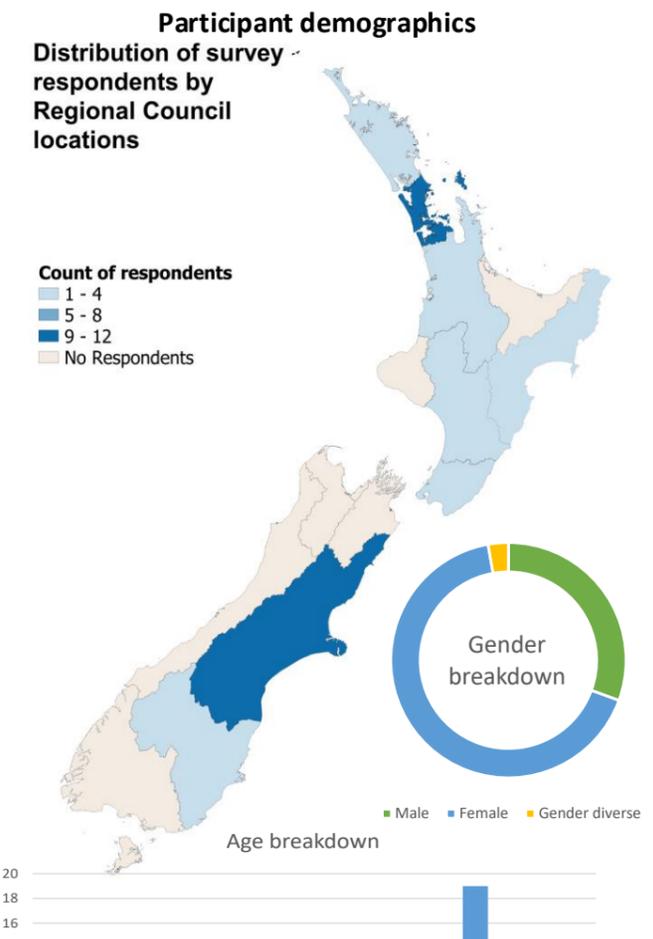
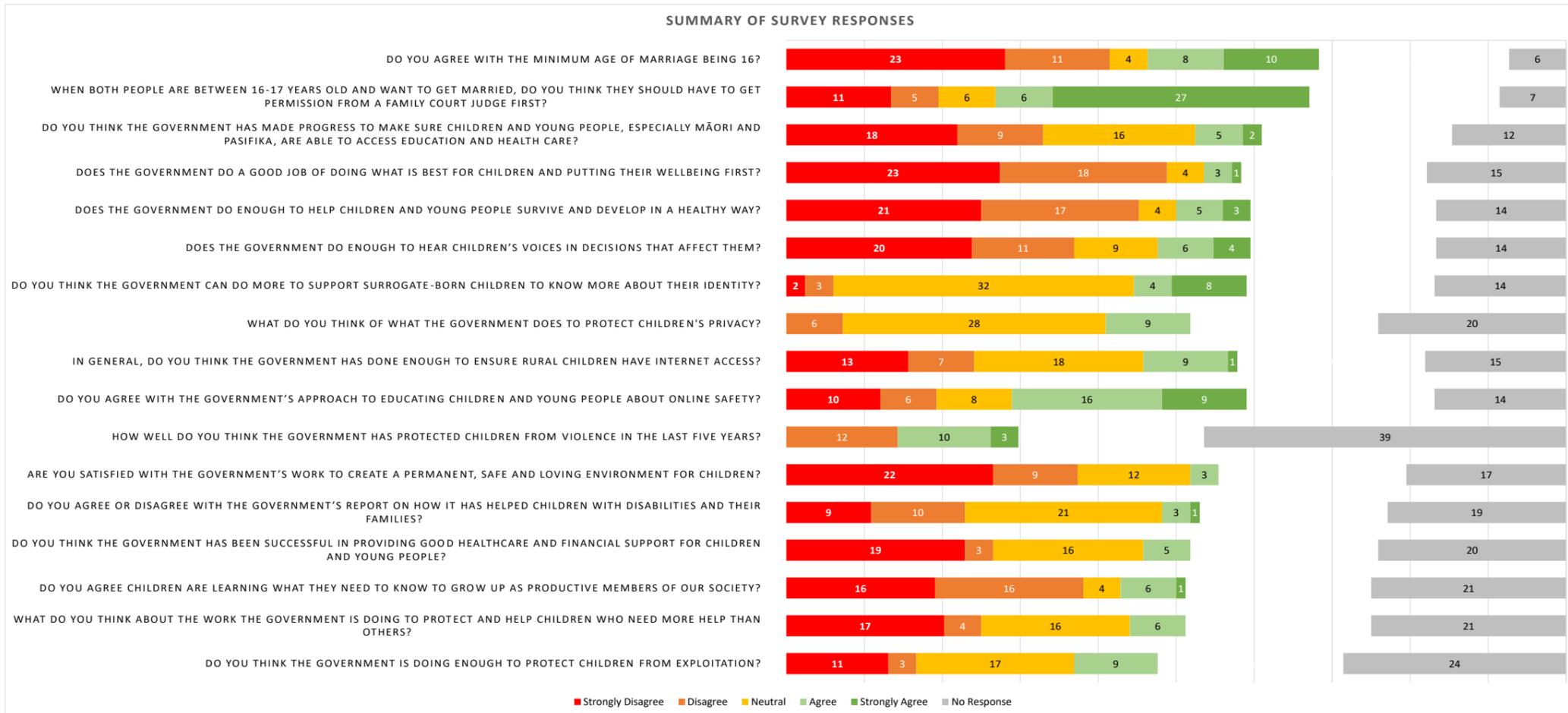
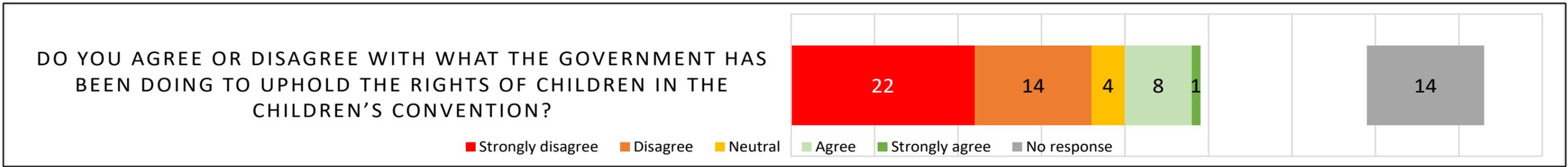
Feedback was primarily sought via SurveyMonkey, with EasyRead, Braille, audio and HTML available as alternative formats. Online consultation was preferred over in-person meetings that could be impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

An email with a link to the webpage was sent to various agencies and distribution lists identified as having stakeholders with interests in children's rights. The Office of the Children's Commissioner supported the Children's Convention Monitoring group to distribute the link to their constituents. MSD publicised the webpage through its social media and other web platforms.

Public consultation highlighted that New Zealand has work to do to increase visibility of the Convention, particularly clearly by linking policies and initiatives to the rights set out in the Convention.

More detailed findings from the survey are set out on page 2.

# SURVEY RESPONSE BREAKDOWN



There were mixed views about what the Government should prioritise for children, but a **majority of responses considered safety of children to be most important.**

The size of each box below represents the relative number of responses for each subject matter.

NOTE: participants were not required to answer any questions in the survey, meaning information can only be provided from those who chose to answer.

