



Public Health  
ASSOCIATION OF NZ INC  
KAHUI HAUORA TUMATANUI

# Child health

**Will the Welfare Working  
Group advice help?**



## Overview

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- The importance of early childhood
  - Child health here and now
  - The Welfare Working Group
  - What next?
-



# Why children matter

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- In their own right
  - Key for reducing health inequities
  - Our future
-



# The importance of early childhood

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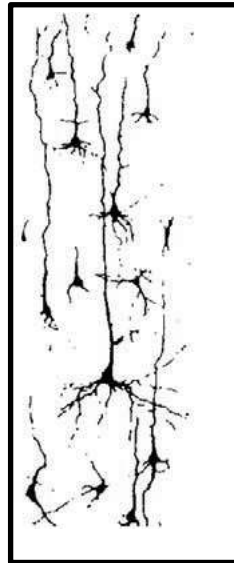
- Rapid brain development
  - Genetic-environment interactions
  - Effective, cost effective interventions
-



# Brain development

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Birth



3 years

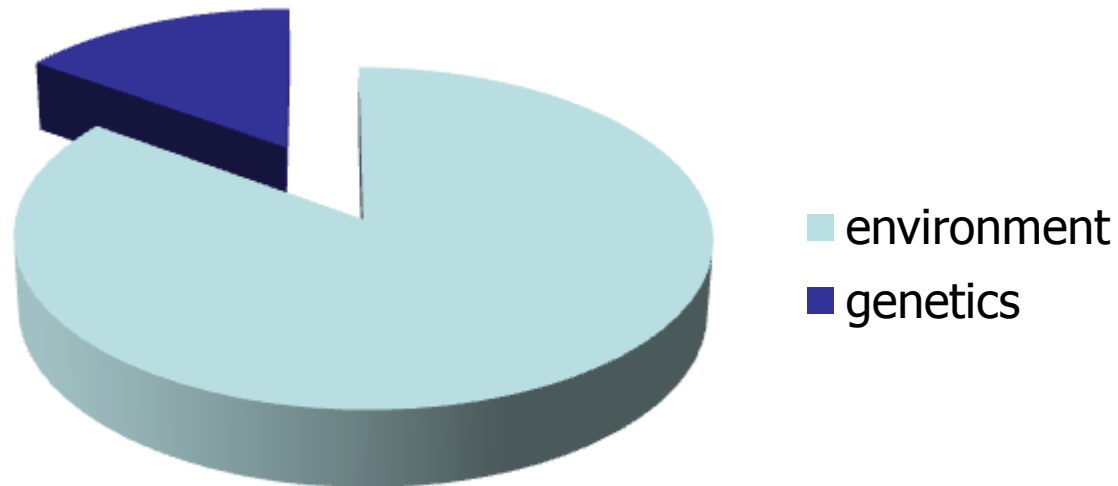




# Genetic environment interaction

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## Reaching potential





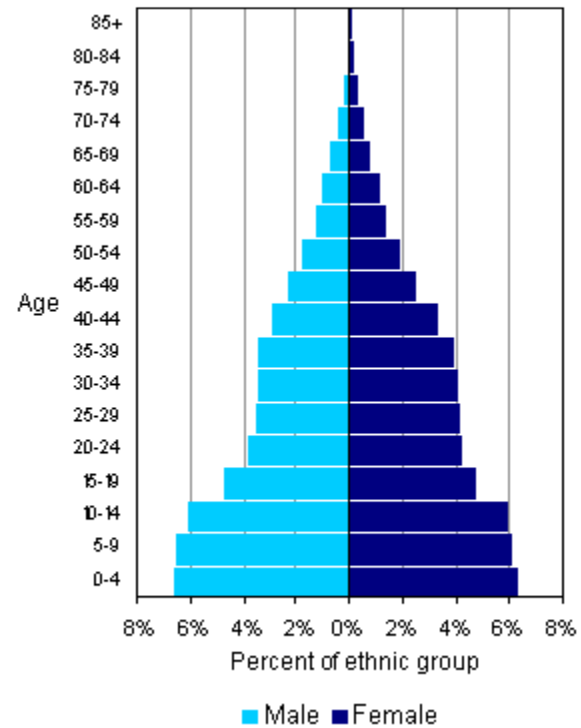
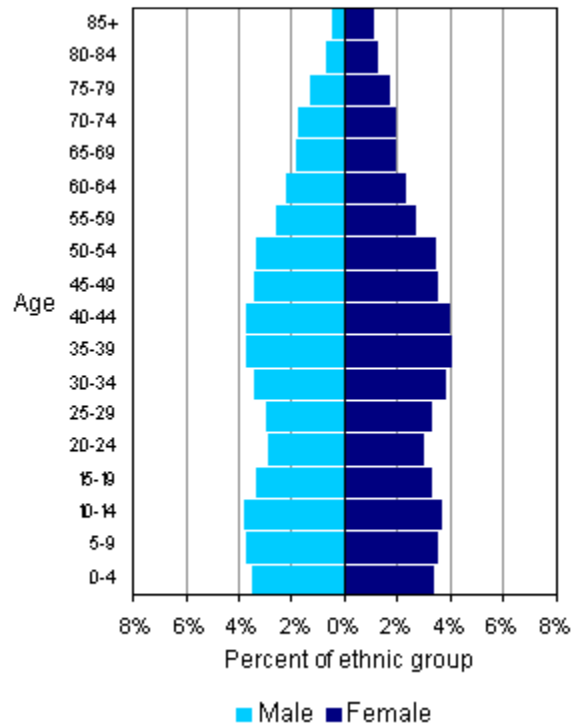
## NZ Medical Association - life course and health equity

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- Latent effects
  - Pathway effects
  - Cumulative effects
-



# Our future





# What matters for children

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## *Sources*

- International obligations – UN
  - *Closing the gap in a generation* – WHO
  - *The best start in life* – PHAC
-



## What matters for children

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- No discrimination – kids or family
  - Put children first
  - Whole of Government approach
  - Nurturing family and friends
  - Safe and secure environment
  - Adequate, secure, family income
  - Fair and decent work
  - Physical and mental health
  - Education
-



## Overview

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  - **Child health here and now**
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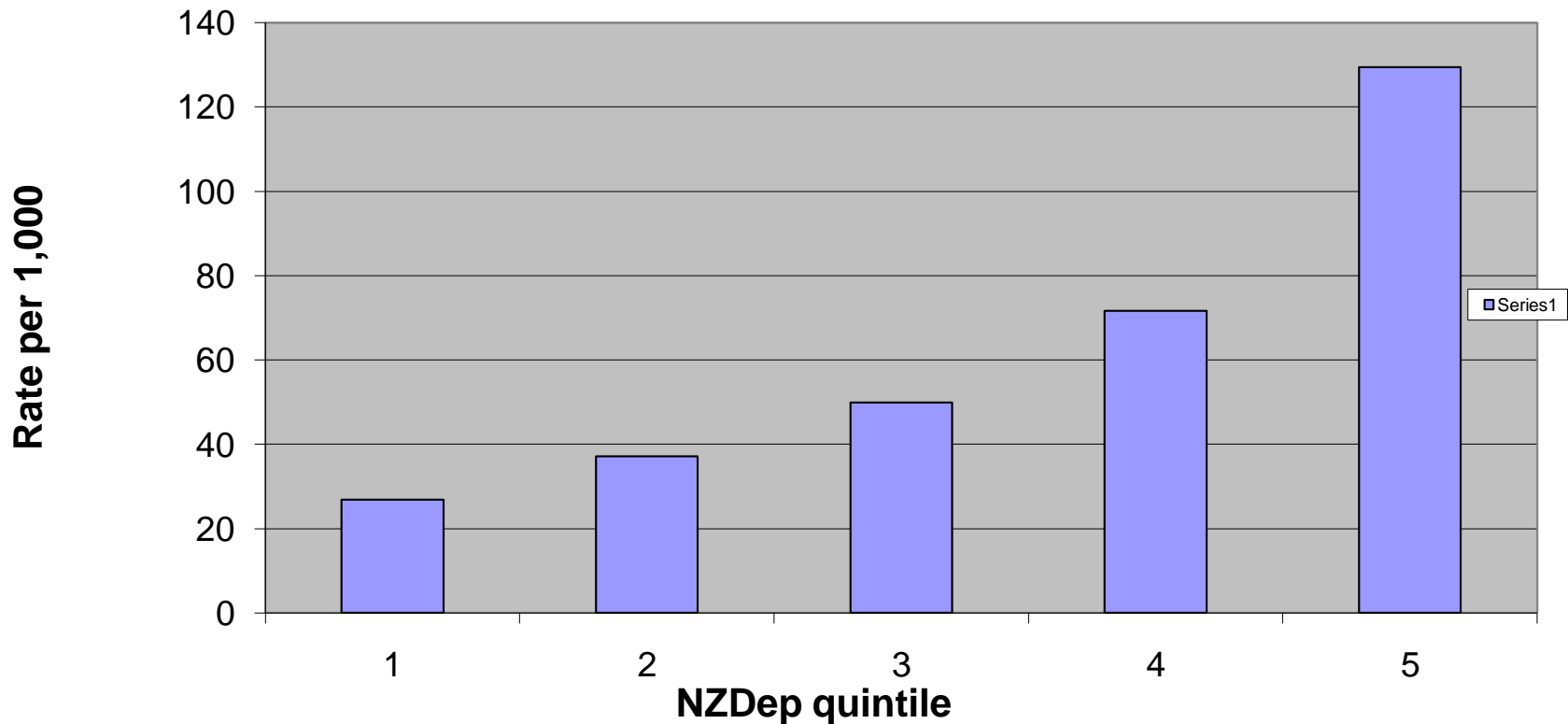
## Child health, here and now

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- Internationally comparatively poor
  - Internationally comparatively high inequities
  - NZ is *NOT* a good place to bring up kids anymore
-



# Hospitalisation for bronchiolitis infants <1 year, 2002-2006



Craig E et al. Monitoring the health of New Zealand children and young people: Indicator handbook 2007. Paediatric Society; NZ Child & Youth Epidemiology Service.



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  - **The Welfare Working Group**
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# The Welfare Working Group

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- What the WWG was set up to do
  - How did they go?
-



## What the WWG was set up to do

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### **Reduce long-term benefit dependency**

*particularly*

- sole parents, sick people, disabled people

*exclude*

- adequacy,
  - Superannuation, widows, ACC (mostly), tax,
-



## How did the WWG do for children?

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- The set up
  - The WWG
-



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What the WWG was set up to do

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**Reduce long-term benefit dependency**

*Not*

Reduce the need for long term social protection  
for income support

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## Was the WWG set up for children?

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No discrimination – kids or family **x**

Nurturing family and friends **?**

Safe and secure environment **?**

Adequate, secure, family income and work **x**

Physical and mental health **?**

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## WWG terms of reference

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**Fail**

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## How did the WWG do for children?

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- Overall approach
  - Recommendations
-



## Overall approach of WWG

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- Fewer people on benefits
  - For shorter times
-



## Overall approach of WWG

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*Why couldn't they have said*

- Fewer people *needing* income support
  - For shorter times
-



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## No discrimination – kids or family

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- + work expectation of sole parents similar for general community
  - Compulsory treatment
  - financial management powers
  - supervised living arrangements
  - Child monitoring
  - subsequent children penalties
-



No discrimination – kids or family

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**Fail**

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# Best interests of the child

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- + child impact assessment
  - + focus on improved outcomes for children
  - + child care and OSCAR needed before work obligations should apply
  - + more early intervention for families and young people
  - + exemption from work if caring for a disabled child
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## Best interests of the child

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- Database of "at-risk" 12 – 18 year olds
  - Disabled child must need hospital or residential care before work exemption applies
  - Focus on teen pregnancy as "bad"
  - Underlying principle of "affordability"
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Best interests of the child

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**Pass overall**

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# Honours the Treaty

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+ recommends a formal partnership with Māori leaders

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## Honours the Treaty

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**Pass**  
**– sort of**

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# Whole of Government approach

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- + must have child impact assessment first
  - + fostering strong social outcomes
  - + cross sector plan
  - + up-front investment
  - "to minimise the *costs of welfare*"
-



## Whole of government approach

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**Pass**

**– if you ignore the financial driver**

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# Nurturing family and friends

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- + parenting support
  - + whole-of whanau needs
  - + quality EC education
  
  - Complusory
  - Benefit reductions for non-compliance
-



## Nurturing family and friends

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**Pass**

**– if you ignore the violation of rights**

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# Safe and secure environment

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- + whole – of - whanau needs
  - + housing needs to be looked at
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## Safe and secure environment

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**Pass**

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# Adequate social protection for secure family income

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Not able to consider “adequate”

- + Paid employment gives most families income
  - + Secure for very severe disability, terminal illness
  - + Secure till child aged 3 (mostly)
  
  - Penalties and stand downs
-



Adequate social protection for  
secure family income

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**Fail**

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# Fair and decent work

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Not able to consider fair and decent work

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Fair and decent work

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**Failed by the terms of  
reference**

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# Physical and mental health

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- +        Need to fix significant health service shortcomings
    - Mental health
    - Rehabilitation
    - Early intervention
    - Young people mental and sexual health
    - Drug and alcohol treatment
  
  - Propose target some to people on welfare (not universal)
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# Physical and mental health

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**Pass**

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# Education

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- + all under 18s getting education/training
  - + more teen parenting education units
  - + increased early childhood education availability and use
  - complusion
-



## Education

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**Pass – if you ignore the violation of rights**

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  - Understand what matters to children
  - Facilitate others to understand
  - Build it into our work
  - Advocate, mediate, enable
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