

## Children's Policy

### Vision

The Green Party envisions a world in which all tamariki/children:

- Receive the best possible start to life, including being connected with their whānau, and surrounded by aroha/love and manaakitanga/respect, generosity and care.
- Have every opportunity to be healthy,
- Experience a childhood of exploration and discovery, and grow with joy
- Are recognised as an integral part of our society, and are valued and fully supported by our community.
- Have access to a quality education and are encouraged to express their views and to participate in decisions that affect their lives, future, communities and the environment.
- Are connected to their culture, and the cultural identities of our diverse tamariki are honoured and celebrated.
- Are able to develop to their full potential, and become responsible, compassionate, engaged citizens.

### Key Principles

1. Children are at the heart of our families, whānau, and communities. When whānau and communities thrive, children thrive. Government has a crucial role in supporting parents and other caregivers in providing for their children, and in creating policies that put children first.
2. Tamariki have the right to be respected as tangata whenua and to the implementation of their collective whānau, hapū and iwi rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
3. Children have the best possible opportunities in life when their whānau is able to provide their child with aroha, emotional and material support.

4. All children have the right to be treated with respect and dignity, and they must be protected from all forms of abuse.
5. The Government has a particular responsibility to protect the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged children.
6. Children must have access to good quality free healthcare, starting with antenatal care of their mother.
7. Every child must have the opportunity to participate fully in good quality, free, culturally appropriate education, including free early childhood education, within their local community.
8. Children have valuable perspectives, so they should be supported in their own initiatives and encouraged to participate in decisions affecting them to the extent that they are able.

## Specific Policy Points

### 1. Promoting a Cross-Government Approach to Child Wellbeing

The Green Party supports a cross-government approach to child wellbeing, ensuring alignment between plans and strategies prepared by all relevant agencies.

#### *Policy Positions*

- 1.1 Support the development of a senior cabinet position of Minister for Children with all necessary departmental resources.
- 1.2 Ensure that the Children's Commissioner is adequately funded and retains its independence and advocacy role, and takes on responsibility for promoting understanding of the rights of tamariki and rangatahi under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 1.3 Support the use of an evidence-based nationwide child wellbeing strategy that cements children's rights, including the rights of tamariki and rangatahi Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 1.4 Ensure that legislation, policy and practice meet Aotearoa New Zealand's human rights obligations under the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) and that the recommendations in UNCROC's 2016 concluding report are fully implemented.
- 1.5 Establish the use of child interest analysis in all government policy and planning.
- 1.6 Protect the right of every child to their name, nationality, and preservation of identity.

- 1.7 Establish effective systems for the development and co-ordination of services for tamariki and rangatahi Māori. This should be done in partnership with tamariki and rangatahi, whānau, hapū, and iwi.
- 1.8 Work with Pasifika peoples, including children, to secure the rights of Pasifika children in the context of family, church, culture and work.
- 1.9 Involve children from diverse ethnic groups and communities, including refugee communities, in the development of plans and strategies.
- 1.10 Oppose the incarceration of children regardless of citizenship status.

## 2. Children and the Natural Environment

### *Policy Positions*

- 2.1 Protect and conserve our environment to ensure its long-term health for children and future generations (see our [Environmental Protection](#), [Climate Change](#) and [Conservation](#) policies).
- 2.2 Ensure that all children have access to clean air and water, safe food and thriving ecosystems.
- 2.3 Ensure that all children are able to engage with the natural world, including through providing immersive environmental education activities in parks and reserves.

## 3. A child-centred approach to social services

### *Policy Positions*

- 3.1 Improve and ensure equitable access to social services for children with additional needs and their whānau, focused on both early intervention and continued support, including adequate resourcing of and access to respite services for parents.
- 3.2 Recognise the social value of early childcare services, including care provided through playcentres and kohanga reo. We will develop a funding model that works for the range of services available, promotes high standards of care, allows flexibility for parents, and ensures fair wages for early childcare teachers (see our [Education](#) policy).
- 3.3 Ensure all children have access to safe public spaces to play.
- 3.4 Support local communities to provide extracurricular activities to all children – including a wide range of affordable indoor and outdoor activities, sports, music, artistic and cultural activities.

- 3.5 Support universal availability of effective parenting and child development programmes, and ensure these are culturally appropriate and support connections between whānau.
- 3.6 Support the development of initiatives which promote children's full citizenship and participation in their communities

#### 4. Valuing Caring for Children

The Green Party is committed to ensuring that legislation, Government policy and practice support those who are caring for children (see our [Workforce](#), [Income Support](#) and [Women's](#) policies).

#### 5. Child Poverty Alleviation

The Green Party is committed to alleviating child poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand. Policy positions include introducing a universal child payment, increasing the minimum wage and base benefit level, extending paid parental leave, and increasing benefit levels (see our [Workforce](#) and [Income Support](#) policies).

##### *Policy Positions*

- 5.1 Review and reform family assistance policies, and remove discriminatory policies to ensure family assistance rates are related to family income rather than parental employment status.
- 5.2 Review and reform the Child Support system to ensure it operates in a way to best benefit children and young people.
- 5.3 Guarantee child support for children and young people in low income families through advanced payments.
- 5.4 Support community-led provision of safe and healthy food in schools (see our [Food](#) policy).
- 5.5 Support free budgeting services for parents and primary caregivers.

#### 6. Manaakitanga mō ngā whānau katoa - Care for all whānau

The Green Party is concerned about the increase in state removal of children from their whānau since the 2016 Oranga Tamariki reforms. We need a new approach to children at risk of harm, drawing on the principles above.

##### *Policy Positions*

- 6.1 Invest in effective programmes that aim to:
  - a) Minimise the number of children being born into unsafe situations

- b) Establish positive support services for parents who display risk factors for child abuse that work to resolve underlying causes of harm.
  - c) Improve the outcomes of children removed from the care of their families, recognising the additional needs of these children in recovering from trauma, and the paramount importance of ensuring they are safe and supported through to adulthood.
- 6.2 Support and enable iwi, hapū and Māori community organisations to provide effective social support services for at-risk children and families, recognising the need for these to be culturally appropriate and non-coercive.
- 6.3 Review the implementation of the 2016 Oranga Tamariki reforms to better understand their impact, and in particular on tamariki and rangatahi Māori

For more information, see our [Education](#), [Health](#), [Housing and Sustainable Development](#), [Justice](#), and [Youth Affairs](#) policies.