Ngā wāhi hei arotahi | Areas to focus on

Across this guide we have noted recommendations to improve the support available during middle childhood.

Below we highlight major, overarching recommendations, through our Te Whāriki lens. These will not capture all the gaps in the structures currently working to empower five to 12-year-olds in New Zealand. However we believe that it's crucial that these areas of focus are addressed to enable a holistic approach to development during middle childhood.

Principle	Mana Atua Wellbeing	Mana Whenua Belonging	Mana Tangata Contribution	Mana Reo Communication	Mana Aotūroa Exploration
Kotahitanga Holistic Development	Children's wellbeing is supported through understanding of holistic approaches to child development and investment in appropriate service delivery	Children's holistic development is supported through a strong sense of belonging	Children's contribution to society is reflected in the value we place on research and engagement with this age group	Middle childhood is prioritised in training and research	Children's development is supported through research and current, contextually-appropriate theories of child development
Whânau Tangata Family & Community	Children experience a standard of living that enables them to thrive and are protected from all harm	Children experience belonging through participating in and feeling respected within their communities	Children have opportunities to develop leadership within education and extra-curricular settings	Children have opportunities to speak up about the issues that matter to them	Play is prioritised for children during the middle years - in education, in guidance for parents, and in our neighbourhoods and communities
Ngā Hononga Relationships	Children experience safe, positive relationships with whānau, peers and others in their communities	Children's sense of belonging is strengthened through connection to people and place	Children participate in and experience healthy peer relationships and are supported to navigate experiences of bullying safely	Childrens' development is supported by a skilled and valued workforce, who are equipped to support the current experience of childhood	Intergenerational relationships are accessible and encouraged for all tamariki to support their development
Whakamana Empowerment	Frameworks support children's wellbeing through protection from harm, adequate standard of living and the removal of barriers that prevent their thriving	Legislation and policy reflect children's belonging and inherent dignity	Children have opportunity to express themselves and contribute in society	Children are shown respect in the way we as a society talk about them and invite their perspective	Children's exploration and thriving is fostered through Ministries that demonstrate best practice and innovation

He aha muri? | What Next?

This report serves as one of the key pieces of work for 2023/24 for our portfolio focused on Children & Families.

Our aim was for this report to provide the fullest possible picture, in one place, of what is currently available to support middle childhood in New Zealand, as well as what is missing. By framing it as an easy-to-read guide with links to further information, we hope it will be of benefit to our members, the people they work alongside, and the wider community.

This work is also intended as a call to action, to generate interest, and spark collaboration. We feel strongly that middle childhood requires greater prioritisation and that by collaborating we can draw attention to this important developmental stage.

We are working towards an Aotearoa where middle childhood is understood and invested in. A country with a specialised workforce who deeply understand children's needs during this period. Where children can access appropriate services in a timely manner to enable their thriving. An Aotearoa where middle childhood is prioritised within government policy, funding, and the wider social sector.

Strategic planning and action are needed now, to realise the potential of middle childhood in terms of children's long-term outcomes.

If you'd like to be part of this important mahi, please get in touch.

Ko wai tātou | Who we are

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) represents more than 230 member organisations providing a range of community, health, and social support services across Aotearoa.

These organisations include some of the most recognised and highly regarded names in social service provision, and all are world famous in their in own rohe. Their mahi informs our deep understanding of the everyday lives of New Zealand communities as we work towards achieving a just and compassionate society for all. We see this work as an extension of the mission of Jesus Christ, which we seek to fulfil through our commitment to giving priority to the systematically disempowered, and to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

NZCCSS comprises six members: the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches. Nationally, the range and scope of our member networks is extensive. Around 230 separate providers in 55 towns and cities throughout New Zealand deliver 37 types of services through 1,024 programmes. Members employ over 5,000 full-time staff, 7,000 part-time staff, and co-ordinate almost 16,000 volunteers.

Our work is focused in three policy areas – Equity and Inclusion, Children and Families, and Older People. For each area, we have a specialist working group made up of leaders of service organisations from across the country who provide up-to-date knowledge of experiences and need in their communities. We call these groups 'Policy Groups'.

This knowledge, along with input from the representatives of Council's six members, informs our mahi of providing research, representation, connection, good practice dissemination, policy advice/information and advocacy services for our members.

nzccss.org.nz



Nga kupu whakatepe mai ō tātou rangatira | Closing words from our leaders

Poipoia te kākano kia puawai Nurture the seed and it will blossom

Most people would agree with the above whakataukī when it comes to supporting and raising children – but society often underestimates the significance of middle childhood (five to 12-years of age), focusing more on early childhood or adolescence. However, we believe that middle childhood is also a crucial time when tamariki further develop their personalities, interests, and values, which will shape them into the adults they will become.

NZCCSS recognises the immense value that children in middle childhood hold. Not only are they our future leaders and members of society, but they are also active participants in the present, deserving of attention, care, and support. This accessible guide provides insights into the various aspects of middle childhood in Aotearoa. We hope it will deepen understanding of this crucial stage of development, empowering all those who love children and who work with children to provide the best possible support throughout middle childhood.

NZCCSS exists to work towards a more just and compassionate society for all across Aotearoa. We do so as an expression of our faith, as an extension of the mission of Jesus Christ, and our commitment to honour the articles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

On behalf of NZCCSS, it is our pleasure to share this guide with you. We hope that you find it useful.

Dr. Bonnie Robinson MNZM

Co-President Doctor of Professional Practice, BA, BD, BApMan

Renee Rewi

Justice of the Peace (JP)

Co-President Ngāti Whare, Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Whakaue, Ngāti Rangiwewehi, Tūwharetoa, Tainui, Ngāpuhi LLM, LLB Waikato Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of NZ Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

(Proverbs 22:6)

At NZCCSS we view all children as precious taonga, each with unique talents, dreams, and potential. This doesn't pause between the ages of five and 12, disappearing from view. Even so, Aotearoa New Zealand has a well-established early childhood sector and a strong youth sector focussing on teenagers, but very little in between. Where is our middle childhood sector?

We created this guide because we frequently heard from our members that while there may be information available about middle childhood, it is often scattered and not easily accessible to those working with children, let alone parents. Our research showed us that this information is generalised and lacks the local Aotearoa context that is vital for effective support for our tamariki. This gap is particularly evident in the training of professionals who work with children this age. They are not given many opportunities to learn the specific knowledge and skills needed to understand and address the unique challenges and opportunities of middle childhood.

We wanted to bridge these gaps by bringing together comprehensive information about middle childhood in one accessible resource. Our aim was to create a valuable tool for parents, educators, and caregivers. Our hope is that this guide will not only enhance our understanding of middle childhood, but also empower us to make a meaningful difference to the sector and to the lives of tamariki during this crucial stage of development.

Nikki Hurst

Kaiwhakahaere Matua | Executive Officer



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Inoi Whakamutunga

Kia tau ki a tâtou katoa
Te atawhai o tô tâtou Ariki, a Ihu Karaiti
Me te aroha o te Atua
Me te whiwhingatahitanga
Ki te wairua tapu
Ake ake ake,
Âmine

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
And the love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with you all
Forever and ever
Amen

Working for a fair and compassionate future for all.

Te Kōrero mō ngā Tamariki

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