

WAITAKERE CITY COUNCIL

FIRST CALL FOR CHILDREN POLICY

"If children have rights and are treated with respect and dignity, they will learn by experience the most valuable lesson of all, to treat others with equal dignity, respect and concern."

First Call for Children is one of the fundamental principles underpinning an international plan of action to improve the future of the world's children and implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). Over a decade ago, world leaders made a commitment to giving high priority to the rights of children - to their survival, protection and development.

Waitakere City adopted the principle of First Call for Children in 1993, firmly establishing itself as a national leader in putting children first. The adoption of First Call for Children has seen an increased focus on advocating for children, raising awareness and understanding of children's issues locally and nationally, ensuring Council's own services are planned with children in mind and proactively involving children and youth in Council projects and decision-making processes. This policy renews the mandate for First Call for Children and guides the implementation of UNCROC within Council.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a context for Council's work with children and youth and ensure that Council understands the rights, needs and best interests of children and youth and takes these into account in the provision of services, projects and activities in order to make **Waitakere City a great place for kids.**

Waitakere City - a great place for kids

A city where children and youth:

- Participate in the development of their city
- Play and hang out safely
- Have good health care, education & housing
- Are free from violence
- Develop their own cultural identity and enjoy the city's diversity
- Are free from discrimination
- Access integrated transport systems
- Enjoy clean air and water and green spaces
- Are free from poverty

WAITAKERE CITY COUNCIL OBJECTIVES	WHAT WE WILL DO
<p style="text-align: center;">TREATY BASED</p> <p>Recognise the Treaty of Waitangi as the ridgepole of its relationship with tamariki and rangatahi and acknowledge that their interests and well-being must be seen in the context of whanau, hapu and iwi well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop effective relationships with iwi and Maori communities to increase the capacity and capability of Maori providers to deliver services for Maori in accordance with their own goals and priorities. • Recognise the Maori view of healthy development and well-being that is holistic and embraces equally the significance of taha whanau, taha tinana, taha wairua and taha hinengaro (family, physical, spiritual and mental elements). • Ensure and support the effective involvement of Maori children, youth and their whanau in decision-making, planning, development and delivery of services. • Obtain information about Maori children and youth from Maori sources where possible as their needs and interests are best defined by Maori. • Provide opportunities for Maori children and youth to develop strong leadership skills. • Evaluate the appropriateness of Council services for Maori and report on the outcomes to Maori.
<p style="text-align: center;">CELEBRATE DIVERSITY</p> <p>Identify, acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of all children and youth living in the City and ensure their rights and best interests without discrimination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a range of services, activities and facilities that are barrier free and meet the needs and interests of all children and youth in the City. • Promote respect for cultural diversity as children and youth are most likely to reach their potential when they can develop within their own cultural context. • Pay particular attention to the needs of children and youth who may be marginalised or disadvantaged in their opportunity to have input and access to services.

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

Value the views of children and youth and provide them with opportunities to participate in Council decision-making.

- Consult with children and youth about how they want to be involved with Council.
- Consult in a variety of different ways to ensure that the diversity of children and youth in the City have the opportunity to have input.
- Provide information, support and resourcing to ensure effective participation.
- Value the views of children and youth and translate them into action.
- Monitor and review consultation and participation practice to ensure that it is representative and effective.

INFORMED

Be aware and informed of the needs and best interests of children and youth in Waitakere City and use this information to plan and prioritise its work programmes.

- Collect a range of information on the well-being of children and youth and report regularly on the state of the city's children and youth.
- Consult directly with children and youth and obtain their views of their issues and needs.
- Ensure that Council has information about children and youth representing all ages, ethnicities, occupations, abilities and interests.
- Collate, promote and disseminate information within Council and externally in order to improve services provided to children and youth.
- Use the information to plan services, prioritise the allocation of resources and respond with flexibility to the changing interests and needs of children and youth.

ADVOCATE AND WORK COLLABORATIVELY

Work with and support others to advance the well-being of children and youth and promote their rights, needs and best interests.

- Work with Maori providers, community and central government to strengthen family well-being and whanau development.
- Seek ways to enhance and strengthen community structures, services and facilities that support children, youth and families.
- Develop key areas for joint advocacy based on information and research about child and youth needs for healthy development which include
 - Commitment to early childhood initiatives
 - Supporting the transitions from childhood to youth to adulthood
 - Attainment of an adequate standard of living
 - Prevention of family violence, crime and bullying
 - Supporting initiatives that increase local employment opportunities for youth
 - Ensuring access locally to a wide range of quality learning environments, education and training opportunities.
- Complement local, national and international initiatives that are consistent with the FCFC Policy.
- Ensure that child and youth aspirations are taken into account and the opportunity is given for them to express their views.
- Raise awareness of and advocate for children's rights needs and best interests in the wider community.

PROMOTE HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

Provide Council services and activities that acknowledge child and youth rights and promote healthy development.

- Increase the number and range of safe, accessible and affordable places events and activities for children and youth in the City and involve them in the process.
- Ensure that child and youth needs for adequate housing, safe places to play and hang out, mobility and community inclusion are prioritised in urban development and planning processes.
- Involve children and youth in the development of a safe, barrier free, sustainable and healthy city.
- Ensure that the planning of facilities and services takes into account the need for access to integrated, affordable and safe transport.
- Utilise and support the talents of children and youth by providing opportunities for them to initiate projects of their own choosing in partnership with Council and assist them to implement them where required.
- Ensure that children and youth have access to child friendly and culturally appropriate information and resources informing them of their rights and the range of support services available to them.

WORK EFFECTIVELY

Develop comprehensive monitoring systems to ensure that services and activities for children and youth are effective and work well.

- Collate baseline knowledge on child and youth well-being and monitor on an ongoing basis.
- Develop a detailed system of child impact assessments and build into all levels and aspects of Council work programmes, budgets and decision making processes.
- Develop short, medium and long term plans with targets and review points for the implementation and monitoring of the FCFC Policy.
- Ensure other policies and strategies within Council are aligned with the FCFC Policy.