

At a glance:

Experiences of Education for Children in Care



Background

In 2015, the Expert Panel on Modernising Child Youth and Family reported that children and young people who came into contact with Child Youth and Family often struggled with their education:

“Outcomes for children and young people who come into contact with CYF are poor. There are high rates of educational disengagement and underachievement.”

We chose to compare children and young people with care experience to those without, looking at 3 primary factors...



The focus

- 1 How engaged are care experienced children in school?
- 2 What do these children and young people achieve in school?
- 3 What impact(s) do educational experiences have on their later outcomes?



Measurement

We analysed data from the Stats NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) on the educational experiences, achievements, and longer term outcomes of children and young people in New Zealand.



Using the Stats NZ info from people and organisations, we compared the data of those with and without care experience, and looked at the effects of ethnicity, gender and age.

To measure school disengagement, we looked at stand-downs, suspensions, truancy, and alternative education. To measure school achievement we looked at NCEA Levels.



Results

Children who have reached a point in their lives where they need to be taken into care have higher rates of educational disengagement and lower levels of achievement than other children.

Differences in educational engagement are small for younger children with or without care experience, but with older children we start to see bigger discrepancies.

Ethnic disparities in educational achievement are less evident in those with care experience than among those with no care experience.

Young people who achieve NCEA Level 2 are more likely to be in education, employment or training in the future and have lower levels of long-term benefit dependency.

45%
of children who have been in care have no NCEA Levels

Achievement of NCEA 2+ is almost identical across ethnicities

14-17 year olds are 6X more likely to be suspended if in care



Significance

Children who have reached a point in their lives where they require care have comparatively low levels of educational achievement and high levels of leaving school early across ethnicities.

Whilst these children have higher rates of educational disengagement and lower rates of achievement, the differences between these children and their peers are less evident in younger age groups.

These findings suggest that early intervention with children and young people in care could be beneficial to their educational engagement, achievement and future wellbeing outcomes.