Aspirations & expectations

Children and young people in care can benefit from relationships with adults who have high aspirations for their learning and who are involved in their education.

"If you can instill in a child that whole love of learning at the beginning, they can go wherever they want to go. If you can get that right at the beginning, there's no stopping them, no matter who they are." [Social worker]



Children and young people in care can experience frequent changes of schools which can negatively effects their learning, social skills and relationships.

> "He turned around and said to his friend, 'bye I might not see you later. I might not come back'. I would say, 'where are you going?' He said 'I never stay at one school for long'." [Social worker]



# Learning & achievement

Children and young people in care often experience learning difficulties which require access to learning support

"Sometimes I wouldn't do any school work. I was worried about where I was going to go and what placement I was going to be with and really just thinking about are they going to be nice to me?" [Māori male, age 14]



Experiences of education for children in care

**Friendships** 

Children and young people in care can find making and keeping friends difficult.

"Before I met her I was really lonely, not talking to other people... so when I did meet her she just changed my vibes towards other people like in a happy, exciting way." [Māori female, age 15]

Extra curricular activities

Children and young people in care can benefit from the opportunity to engage in extra curricular activities.

"I am in the sports institute at school. It teaches you about rugby and sport and yeah we learn rugby skills as well as social and mental skills. It motivates me too 'cos if I don't do well in school I can't do that subject." [Māori male, age 13]



Children and young people in care are more likely to face disciplinary action and exclusion from school.

When I am angry at school, I usually tell my teacher aide and she helps me through it." [Māori female, age 14]



Stigma

Children and young people in care can experience stigmatisation from peers and adults.

They [the teachers] just think, 'it's only that kid, that child in care again, always causing trouble'." [Caregiver]











# 

Young people described caregivers, social workers and teachers as having low aspirations and low educational expectations for children and young people in care.

"Even if we were eligible to get them [awards], some teachers would pick and choose who they'd give them to anyway. If you weren't that popular or they just didn't really wanna choose you, they wouldn't choose you, even if you were eligible to get an award." [NZ European female, age 14]



# Support from school staff

Three quarters of young people report having a positive trusted relationship with at least one member of school staff.

"If you can instill in a child that whole love of learning at the beginning, they can go wherever they want to go. If you can get that right at the beginning, there's no stopping them, no matter who they are."

Social worker

# What helps (1)





Adults can help young people in care understand the different qualifications they can take, how to apply for jobs and show them opportunities they hadn't thought of.

Proving labels and stigma wrong is often a motivation for children and young people in care to have high aspirations.

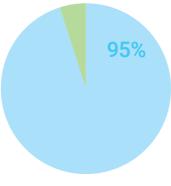
Aspirations and expectations

"I have another girl who is 18. She left guite early on, but has gone off and done courses in hospitality. She wouldn't have done that without her sister supporting her. Again it's the significant other person, having that belief and pushing her along to not give up." [Social worker]

# Continuing education

95% of young people in care aged 15 - 19 hoped to stay in education after secondary school.

70% had aspirations to go to university.



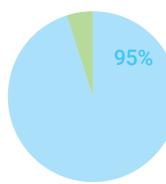
Children and young people in care benefit from relationships with adults who have high aspirations for their learning and are involved in their education

# High aspirations



Care experienced young people at university reported that their friends and teachers having high aspirations for them at school helped them continue their education to university level.

"I sat down with a 17 year old who was like, 'I want to go and work in a factory'. I was like, 'well, that's great. That's cool if that's what you want to do. If you could, what's your biggest dream?' They couldn't even identify that, so I think, longer term, kids need to be encouraged to have big dreams, even if they've been in care." [Social worker]





# Knowing others in care 🕥

When children and young people in care know others in care, they are less anxious about stigma.

Interviewer: "You don't feel embarrassed when your social worker turns up at school?"

"No. Lots of people have them arriving. I know I am not the only one that gets it. "
[Māori/Tongan male age 14]

"Getting pulled out of class to see an OT social worker – excuse me – they hate that, especially the older ones."

Caregiver

"They [the teachers] just think, 'it's only that kid, that child in care again, always causing trouble'."

Caregiver



"I think a child's at risk of a lot of peer pressure if it's made known that they're a child in care or their parents haven't been able to manage them. When that information gets around, other children can be quite cruel and use that." [Social worker]



# Stigma

"I don't even tell people at school that I live at [care home] cos I hate it when they ask questions. They go on 'where do you live, did your parents not feed you, did your parents hit you?""

[African female, age 11]

# Telling other people about being in care

50% of children and young people were not comfortable sharing information about their care status with their peers.



# Children and young people in care can experience stigmatisation from peers and adults

## Care-related meetings in school ()

Children and young people prefer to be asked where they want care-related meetings to take place.

"Cause like my school, some girls are like really dramatic and they're like really nosy, so I wish she [social worker] could come out to [name of home], but I just don't want her coming out at that time." [Māori female, age 15]

"I'll have a discussion with them and say, 'Do you want me to meet you at school?' Obviously, they'll be aware that I communicate with the teachers but I don't want all their friends turning up knowing that there's the social worker." [Social worker]

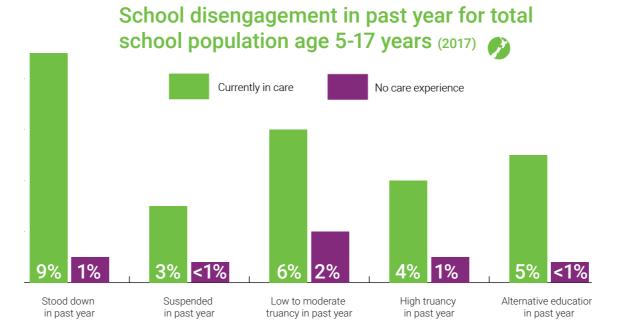




# Impact of trauma

Children and young people in care have often experienced trauma. This can lead to them exhibiting behaviors that can result in disciplinary action or exclusion.

"I was involved with a child that was in care briefly who was excluded from primary school and they never re-entered mainstream education because of the accumulative harm caused from the environment he had been living in and the impact on his learning and it all just became too hard." [Social worker]



"The teacher didn't care what he said but as soon as I like threatened him I got into trouble more. So I got sent home, then had a meeting and then got kicked out for three months." [Māori female, age 14]

Disciplinary action

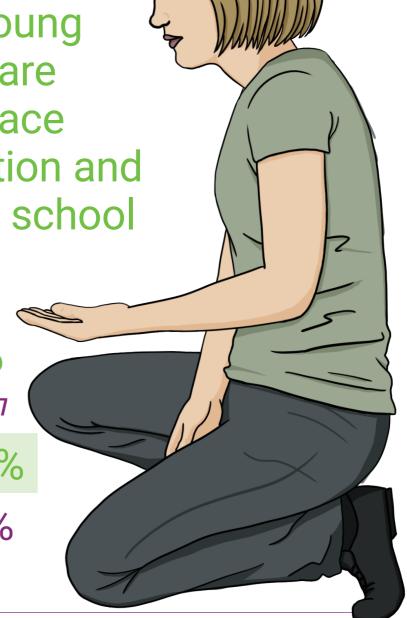
Children and young people in care are more likely to face disciplinary action and exclusion from school

"When I am angry at school, I usually tell my teacher aide and she helps me through it."

> Māori female, age 14

Children and young people who have been stood down in the past year broken down by age (2017)

AGE	5-9	10-13	14-17
Children & young people in care	4%	11%	12%
Children & young people not in care	<1%	1%	3%







Percentage of children and young people who have had three or more school changes over a lifetime (2017)

AGE	5-9	10-13	14-17
Children & young people in care	10%	32%	40%
Children & young people not in care	1%	4%	6%

"He turned around and said to his friend, 'bye, I might not see you later. I might not come back'. I would say, 'where are you going?' He said 'I never stay at one school for long'."

Social worker

# What helps 🕠 🔘

- Staying in the same school can provide stability when children and young people are changing care placements.
- Adults preparing children and young people to change schools by taking them to visit the school first can help with transitions.
- Having an adult in school that supports children and young people in care can help when children start at a new school.
- Buddy systems help children and young people make friends when they start a new school.

Children and young people in care are more likely to change schools, which negatively affects their learning, social skills and relationships



# Changing Changing Schools



# SCHOOL 1

# 

Multiple changes of school can feel difficult and confusing for children and young people in care.

"First I was with my mum and dad then we moved to a different house – so I went to a different school. After that I got taken and went to school 2. Then I got taken again and I went to school 3 and stayed with caregivers, went to school 4, moved everywhere, stayed with these other caregivers ... went from there, came to [care home] ... had a little visit, made friends, left, came back" [Māori male, age 11]



"It was hard moving around. You had to try and fit in with learning or they were learning things you hadn't done before. It was annoying." [Māori female, age 15]

# Learning affected O

### SCHOOL 2

Schools teach the curriculum in a different order over the year, so when children move school they often miss or repeat learning.

# Stability disrupted •

School can provide stability for children and young people in care when other areas of their lives are changing. Changing schools disrupts this stability.



## SCHOOL 3

"It felt weird because the people didn't know me and I didn't know them." [Māori male, age 9]



SCHOOL 4

all over again." [Māori female, age 12]

"You don't know anyone so you have to make friends

# Difficulties sustaining friendships •

Establishing trusted friendships can be hard when children and young people are only in a school for a short time. When asked, young people said they would prefer to stay at the school they are at.







# 

Having a stable placement and an adult, who encourages and supports learning helps academic achievement.

"We didn't read before we came here. We didn't have books but now we read all the time. Auntie has taught us that it's good to read and now we really like it." [Māori female, age 12]

"Sometimes I wouldn't do any school work.

I was worried about where I was going to go and what placement I was going to be with and really just thinking about are they going to be nice to me?"

Māori male, age 14

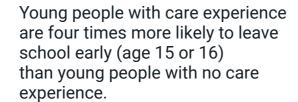
# Learning and achievement

Learning and academic achievement can be difficult for children and young people in care



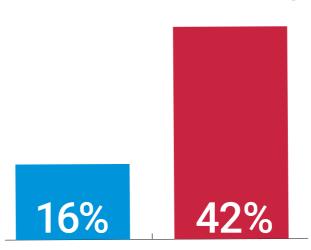
- · Minimal school transitions.
- Having a designated role in schools to support children and young people in care.
- Being supported to stay in mainstream school, for example, informed staff in schools who understand the behaviour and needs of children and young people with trauma.
- · Caregivers supporting learning at home.
- Assessing and intervening for children and young people with learning difficulties.

# Leaving school early 🤌



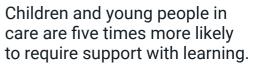
"They've just found a skill, an interest, a passion of his that they can build on. If his Nana and everybody in his life can give him those opportunities, then he will go far, so will they all." [Social worker]

# No NCEA qualifications (2017)



Children and young people in care

# **Learning support needs**



"I had a teacher aide helping me, so she was on my side helping me... She sits next to me and she helps me with my work." [Māori female, age 14]

Children and young people not in care

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Part 4: Summary of key findings

# Opportunity for friendships 30

Extra curricular activities help young people in care to develop friendships and relationships. They can create a sense of belonging and provide a support system to rely on when this may be lacking elsewhere.

"Maybe the government can fund something for people who are socially struggling a bit too because school's not just about learning." [NZ European female, age 14]

Children and young people in care can benefit from the opportunity to engage in extra curricular

# What helps ?

activities

Social workers and caregivers can support children and young people to access extra curricular activities by providing transport, equipment and encouragement.

> "Our caregivers help us with everything, if we need anything, they provide it. He provides me with rugby gear, like if you need boots, they will get them for me." [Māori male, age 14]

"I am in the sports institute at school. It teaches you about rugby and sport and yeah we learn rugby skills as well as social and mental skills. It motivates me too 'cos if I don't do well in school, I can't do that subject."

Māori male, age 13

# 

Extra curricular activities can often be an area of achievement and success for children and young people in care.

of care experienced young people reported extra curricular activities helped them deal with the stress of being in care.



# Extra curricular activities

# A place of respite

Extra curricular activities can be more than a hobby for children and young people in care. They can use it as an escape and respite from the challenges they face everyday.

"I have plans for each week. I have things going on. Then on Sunday I go to church and that gives me a good thing just to do. It's kinda fun church 'cos the little kids have their own room then high school kids are in the big room learning about the bible and stuff. My auntie got me into doing it and my little cousins they do it too, so we go there every Sunday to learn and have fun and, well, just to get out of the house." [Māori female, age 14]





# Friendships can be difficult •

Children and young people in care can find it challenging to make friends and sustain friendships.

> "That was my big thing when I first started as a carer - helping our kids to make friends. I was like 'what, these kids really don't have any friends?" [Caregiver]

"Before I met her I was really lonely, not talking to other people... So when I did meet her she just changed my vibes towards other people like in a happy, exciting way."

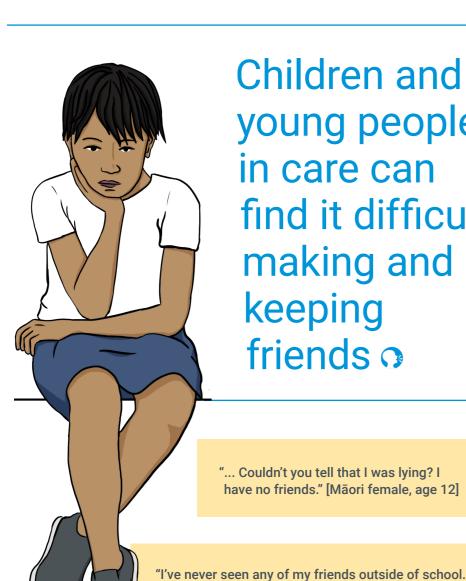
Māori female, age 15

# Friendships

## Friends enhance all areas of school

The experience of school is more positive with friends. Children are more involved, motivated and invested in school and learning when they share it with friends.

"I have one girl where every discussion I have with the caregiver she is worried about her having no friends." [Social worker]



Children and young people in care can find it difficult making and keeping friends o

# What gets in the way 🚇 🕥

- · Frequent changes of school.
- · Difficulties seeing friends outside of school.
- · Difficulties accessing extra curricular activities.
- Social skill difficulties relating to earlier trauma.
- Wanting to hide care status.

# What helps

- · Being able to see friends outside of school.
- · Staying at the same school.
- · Having buddy systems in new schools.



# **Fewer friends**

25% of children and young people in care described themselves as having just one or no friends at school.

"She didn't know how to make friends. Now, she's starting to learn what friends are. She's 14, learning about friends. They've really nurtured her and developed her as a person." [Social worker]





I wouldn't really call them my best friends, they're

just friends. I've never really had best friends

before." [NZ European female, age 14]