

Confessions of a Childhood Stutterer:

*All roads lead back to talk in the
early years*

COMET Talking Matters – 6 September 2017
Ellerslie Events Centre, Auckland

Judge Andrew Becroft
Children's Commissioner for New Zealand
Te Kaikōmihana mō ngā Tamariki o Aotearoa



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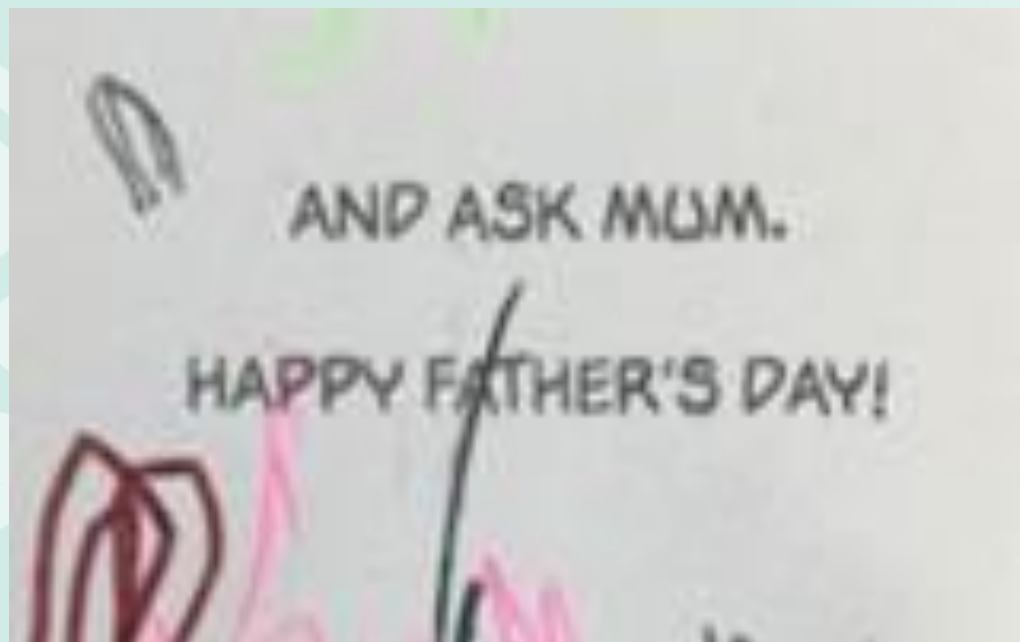
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WHENEVER I HAVE A PROBLEM
I ALWAYS
FOLLOW YOUR ADVICE...



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IT'S
FATHER'S DAY.
DAD!

WE'VE GOT THE
PERFECT
FATHER/DAUGHTER
RELATIONSHIP.



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TO DAD!

Happy Fathers Day!

YOU'RE
MY **FATHER**
AND
I'M **PERFECT!**

Hope you like my funny
Present!

**LOVE YOU
DAD!**



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DAD

ABOUT

ALL THAT

trouble


WHEN I WAS

growing up



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*I just want you to know...
I forgive you
Happy Father's Day*

DAD

- DID YOU KNOW?

WHEN A DAD IS IN HIS 20'S...

HE PLAYS FOOTBALL... IN HIS 30'S

HE PLAYS CRICKET...

IN HIS 40'S HE

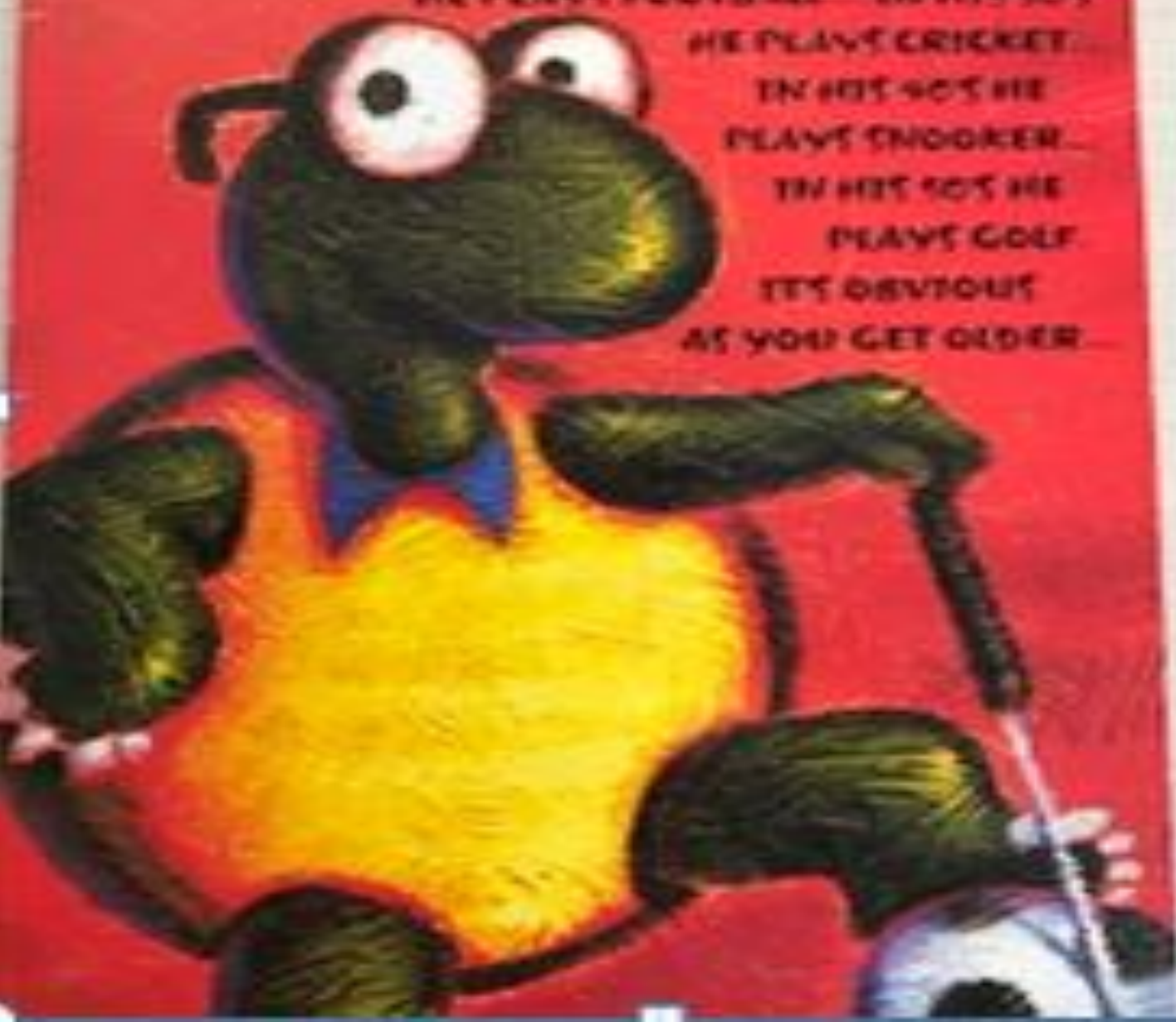
PLAYS SNOKER...

IN HIS 50'S HE

PLAYS GOLF.

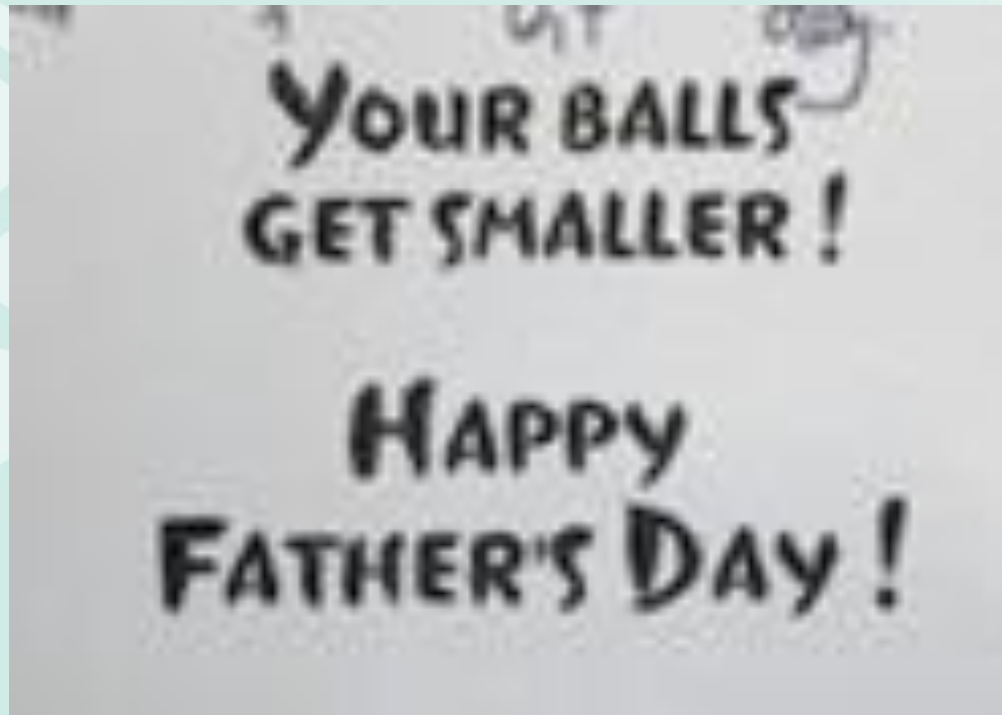
IT'S OBVIOUS

AS YOU GET OLDER...



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Once upon a time...

Overview: New Zealand's children (under 18 years old)



*New Zealand
has 1,122,000 children
- that's **24%** of the
population*



70 20 10

Who's being left behind???

WE ARE BETTER THAN THIS

I KEEP THINKING WE'VE
LEFT SOMETHING
BEHIND...

DON'T WORRY,
I PACKED THE
CHILLY BIN



**LET THE LORD
JUDGE THE
CRIMINAL**



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Tupac Shakur..

“I wonder if Heaven got a Ghetto”

...It ain't a secret don't conceal the fact
The penitentiary's packed and it's filled with blacks
I wake up in the morning and I ask myself
Is life worth living, should I blast myself
I'm tired of being poor and even worse I'm black
My stomach hurts so I'm lookin' for a purse to snatch
Cops give a damn about a negro
Pull a trigger, kill a n*gga, he's a hero
Mo' n*gga, mo' n*gga, mo' n*ggas
I'd rather be dead than a po' n*gga
Let the Lord judge the criminals
If I die, I wonder if Heaven got a ghetto...



The small
picture and
the big
picture

“micro”
and
“macro”

***“If I cannot do great things,
I can do small things, in a great way.”***

- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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"Power at its best is Love
implementing the demands
of Justice. Justice at its
best is Power correcting
everything that stands against
Love."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
August 16, 1967



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Outline

1. What I saw in the Youth Court
2. All roads lead back to talk in the early years - earlier identification and intervention
3. Being child-centred and hearing children's voices. First we must help them find that voice
4. First Challenge: socio economic disadvantage/child poverty – is there a link with poor language development?
5. Second challenge: we must do better for tamariki Māori
6. Third Challenge: identifying and working with neuro-developmental issues earlier
7. Conclusion

1. What I Saw in the Youth Court ...

Otago Youth Wellness Trust –

Analysis of Dunedin Youth Offenders:
Period 1 Jan 2007 – 31 Dec 2010

Alternative Education (n=33)

- 81% male
- 49% Māori
- 76% CYF care and protection involvement
- 100% specialist mental health service involvement
- 93% poor school attendance
- 86% school suspension / expulsion
- 79% attended greater than four secondary schools / training providers
- 43% offending started aged less than twelve years
- 79% specialist drug and alcohol service involvement
- 75% early sexual activity
- 34% suicide / attempt / self harm by young person
- 46% suicide / attempt / self harm by peer or family member

Capital & Coast Youth Forensic Services

Statistics: 2000 – 2004 n = 276

- 83% Male
- Māori over-represented (48%)
- 70% faced cannabis and alcohol issues
 - 16% drug dependent; 14% alcohol dependent
- 18% attending school: 28% attending course/training; and 45% unemployed
- 45% excluded/expelled from school
- 55% attended more than one school/transient
- 60% in CYFS care at some stage
- 12% living with both parents; 28% with one parent

Characteristics of Young Offenders:

England & Wales - An analysis of 4,000 young offenders

- 83% Male
- 70% from single parent families
- 41% regularly truanting
- 60% have special educational needs
- Over 50% use cannabis
- 75% smoke and drink
- 75% considered impulsive
- 25% at risk of harm as a result of their own behaviour
(9% at risk of suicide)

2. All roads lead back to talk in the early years – earlier years and intervention

- Interaction with children is key
- Language development 0-5 is crucial for children to thrive and critical for early brain development
- Effect of “home environment” on education success larger than later educational inputs – eg class size
- The consequences of poor language (eg in the Youth Court)
- Is there a link between poverty and poor language?
- What can we do better?

3. Being child-centred and hearing children's voices....



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 3 – best interests of the child: primary consideration

Article 12 – the right to have a say

Article 23 – special care for disabled children to live full life

Article 28 – right to an education...

Article 29 – ...that develops them to their full potential

Article 30 – indigenous people can express their culture

Article 31 – right to play, rest, recreation, cultural activities

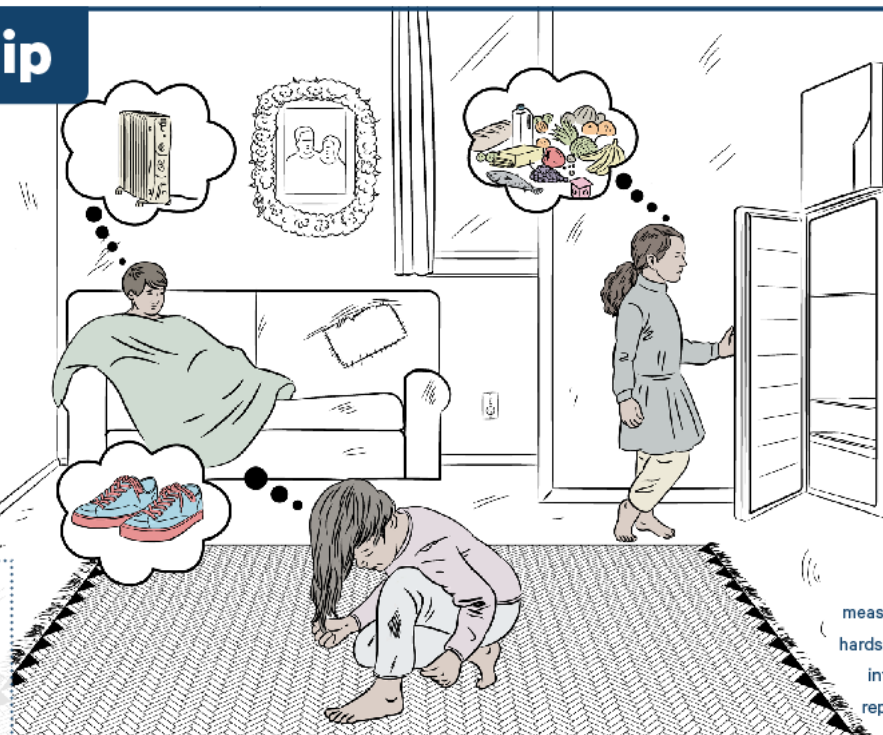
4. First Challenge: socio economic disadvantage/child poverty – is there a link with poor language development?

Material Hardship

155,000
NZ KIDS
LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS
THAT GO WITHOUT **7**
OR MORE THINGS
THEY NEED

14%
OF KIWI KIDS

LESSER
HARDSHIP



85,000
NZ KIDS
LIVE IN HOUSEHOLDS
THAT GO WITHOUT **9**
OR MORE THINGS
THEY NEED

8%
OF KIWI KIDS

This is a new
measure of material
hardship introduced
into government
reporting in 2015.

LIST OF 17 THINGS THAT HOUSEHOLDS ARE GOING WITHOUT:

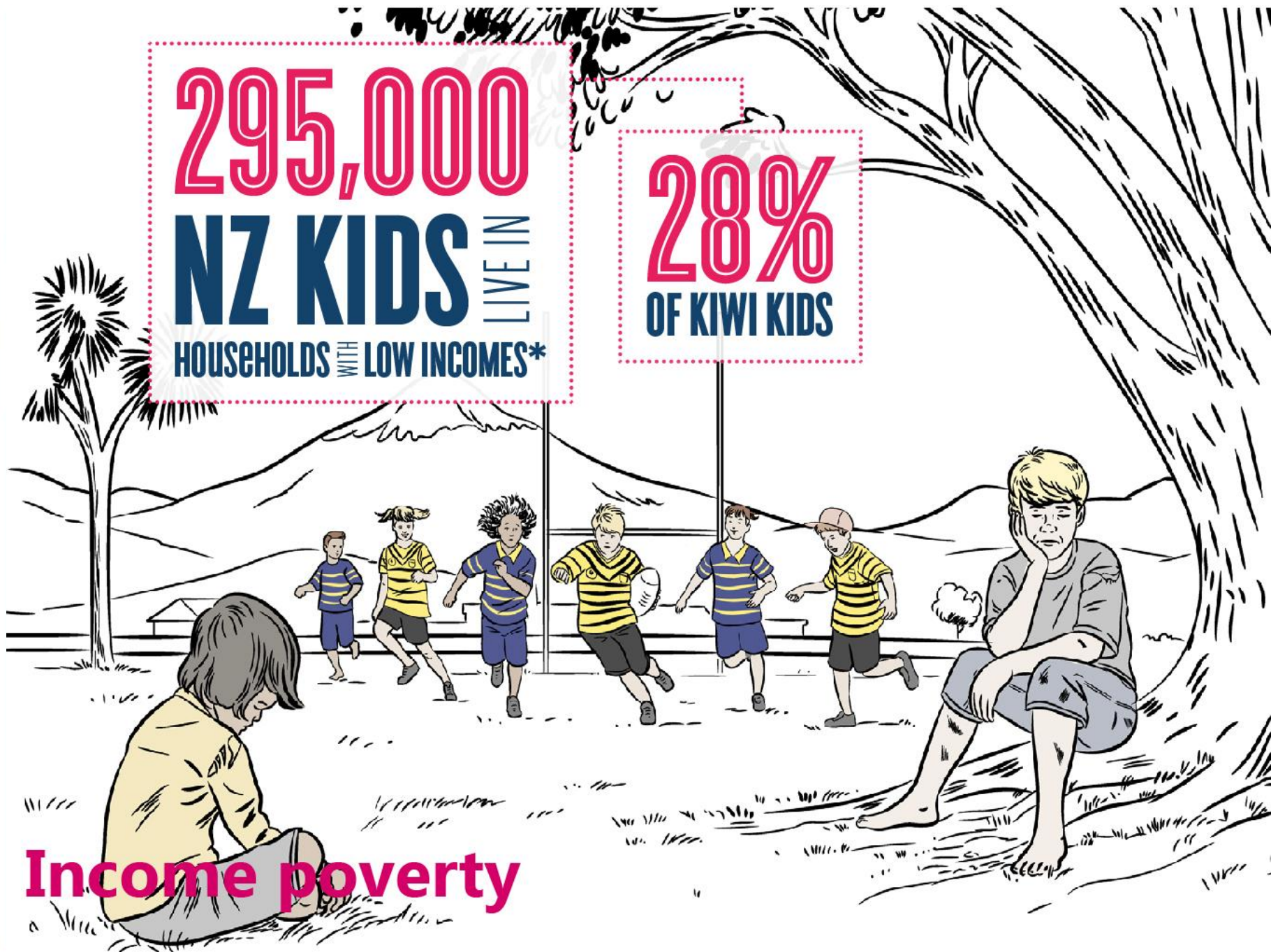
GREATER
HARDSHIP

0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | **9** | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17

295,000
NZ KIDS LIVE IN
HOUSEHOLDS WITH LOW INCOMES*

28%
OF KIWI KIDS

Income poverty

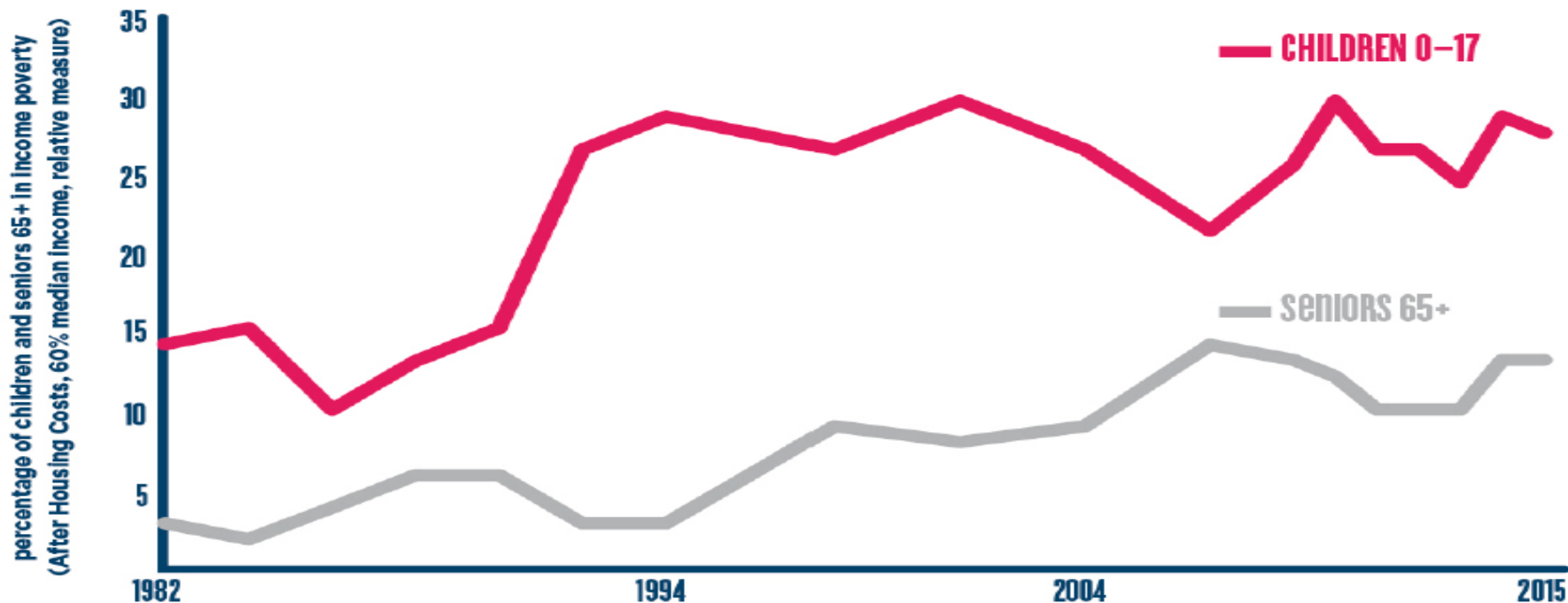


2016

Child Poverty Trends Over Time

INCOME-RELATED CHILD POVERTY RATES ARE MUCH HIGHER NOW THAN IN THE 1980S

KIWI CHILDREN LIVING IN HOUSEHOLDS experiencing **INCOME POVERTY** OVER THE LAST THREE DECADES compared to seniors



CHILDREN'S LEVEL OF INCOME POVERTY **IN 1982 = 14%** → **CHILDREN'S** LEVEL OF INCOME POVERTY **TODAY = 28%**

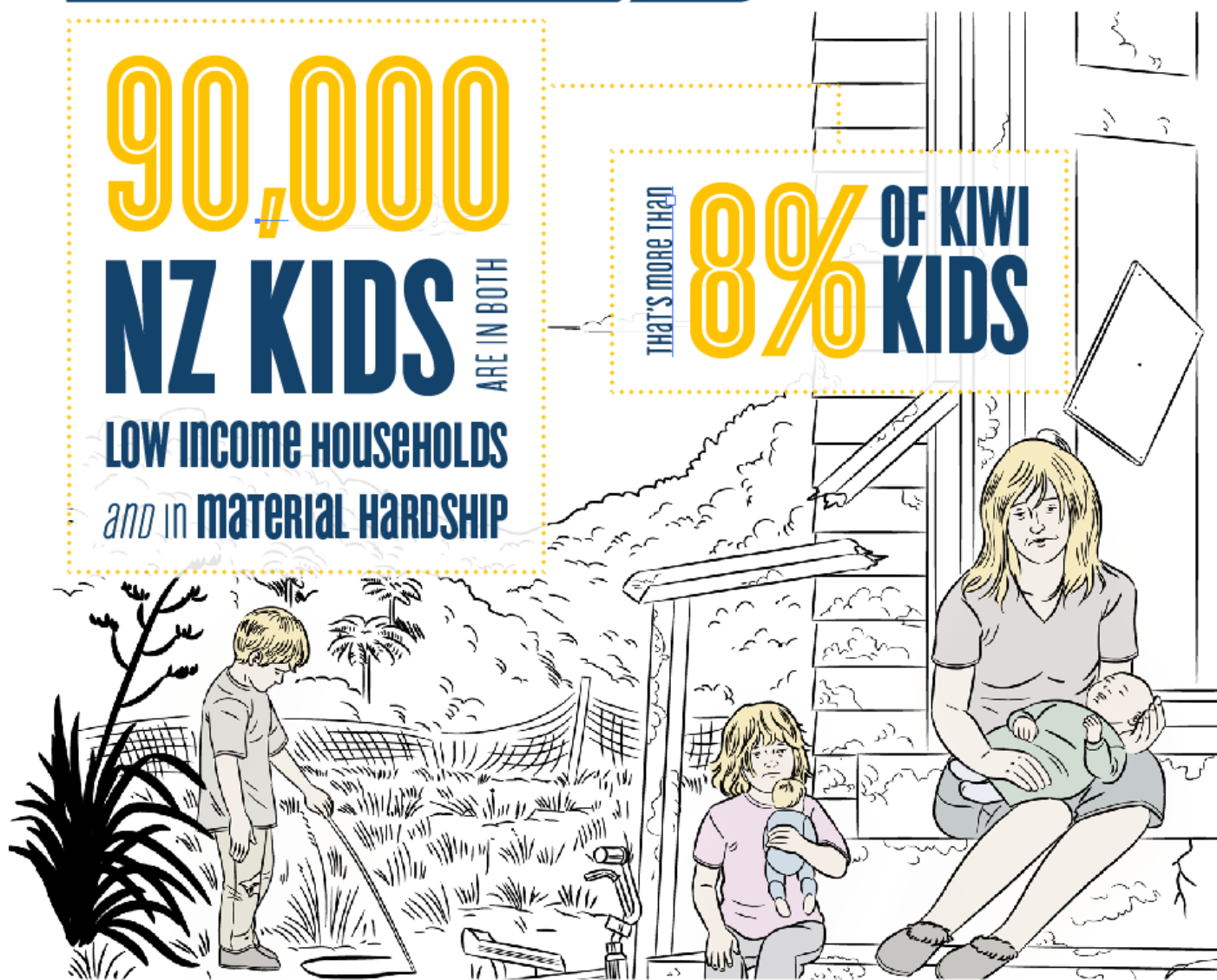
Severe Poverty

90,000

NZ KIDS ARE IN BOTH

LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS
and in MATERIAL HARDSHIP

THAT'S MORE THAN
8% OF KIWI
KIDS



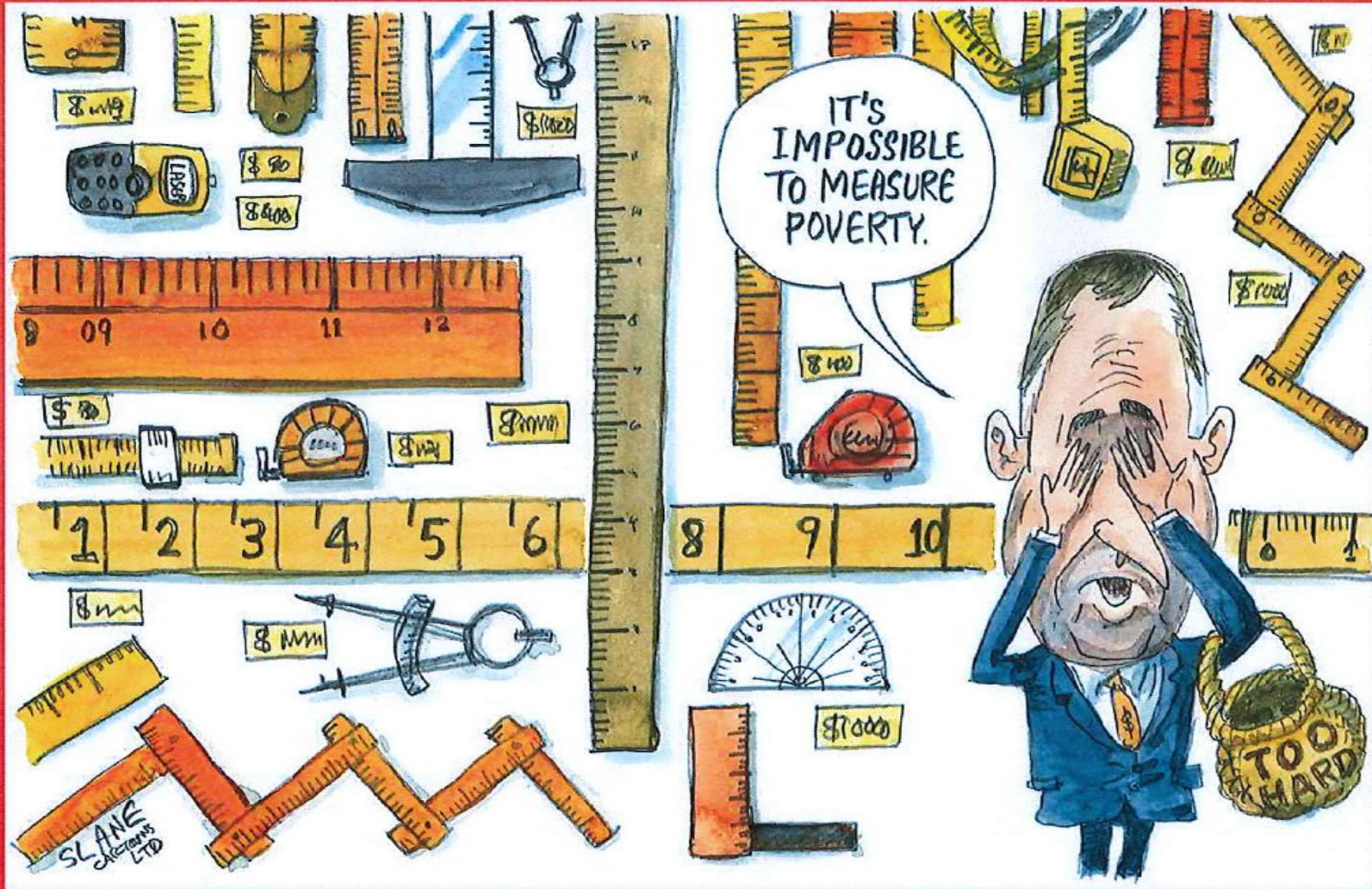
**These families
and children
are doing it
hard**

8% of children
are both in low
income
households and
in material
hardship – that's
90,000 children



MANAKITIA & TĀTŌU TAMARIKI
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NEW ZEALAND **LISTENER**



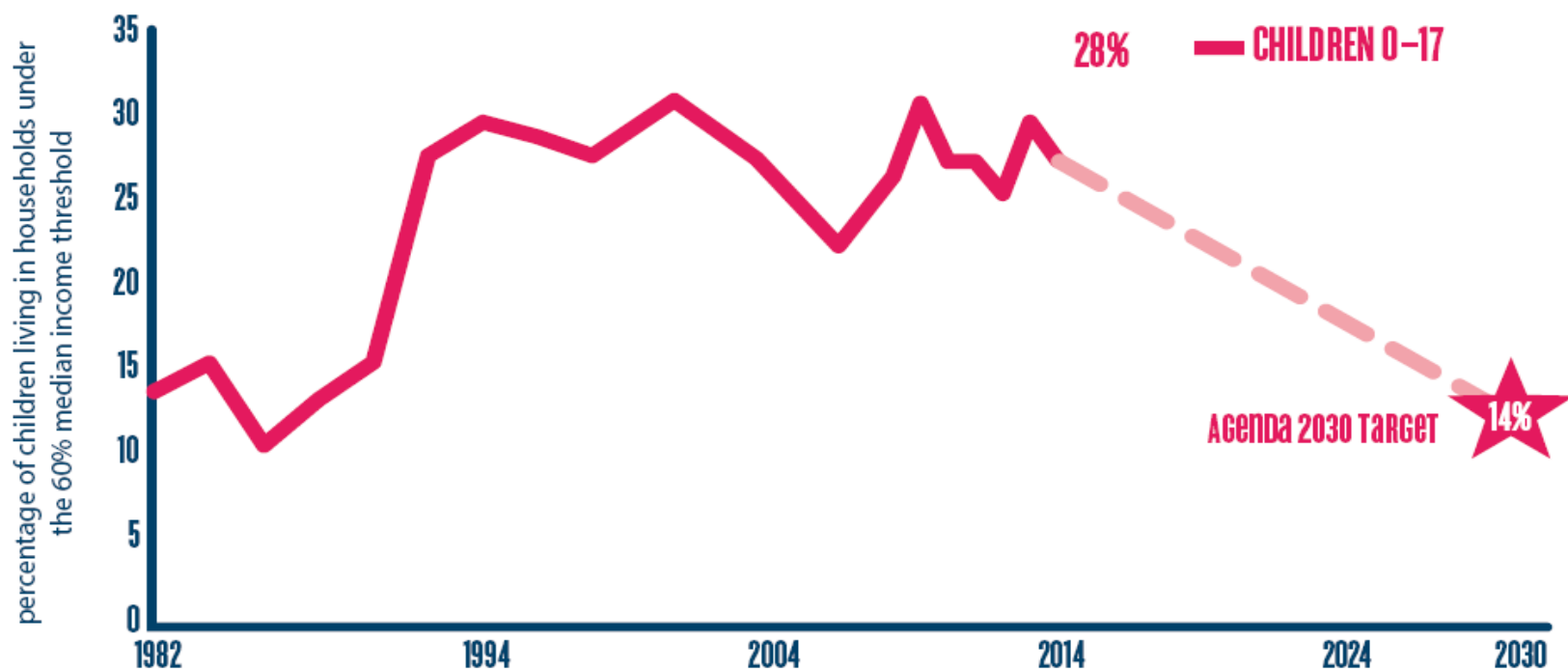
Reaching our Sustainable Development Goals

NEW ZEALAND SIGNED UP TO THE UN'S 'AGENDA 2030' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. ONE OF THE GOALS IS:

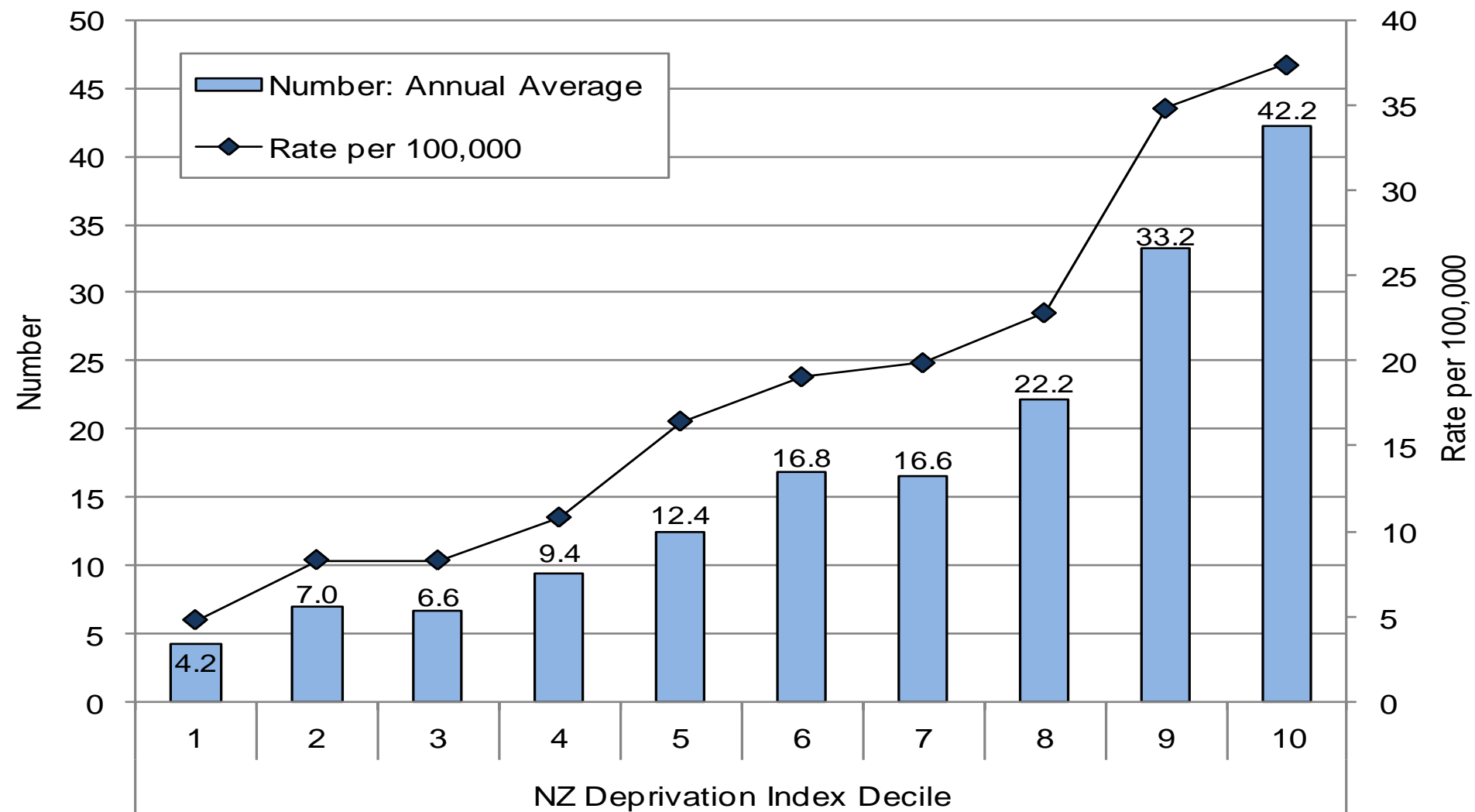
"By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions."

HALVING CHILD POVERTY WOULD SEE RATES RETURN TO LEVELS SEEN IN THE **1980S**

HALVING POVERTY BY 2030 – CHILDREN IN LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

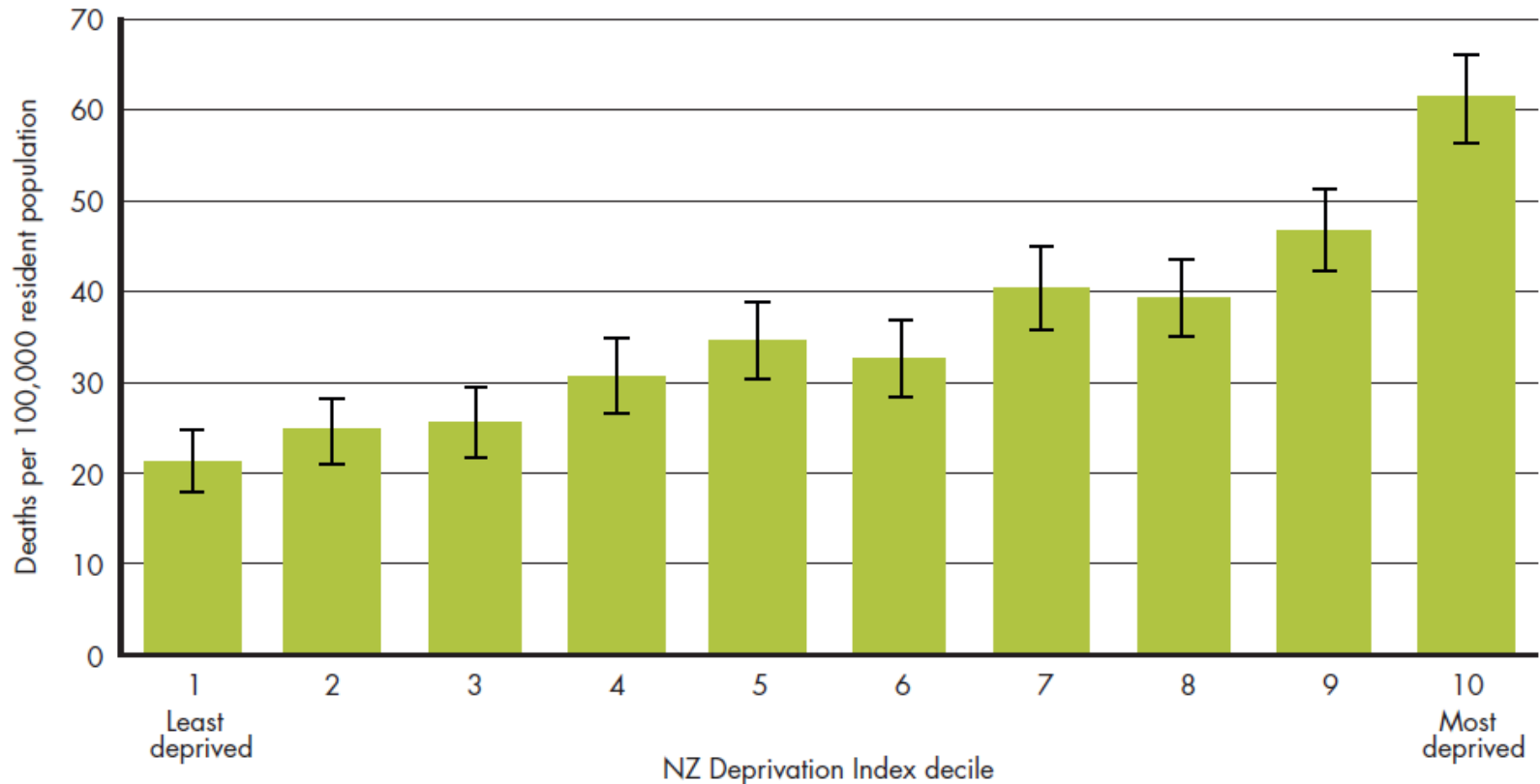


Hospital Admissions for Injuries Arising from the Assault, Neglect or Maltreatment of Children 0–14 Years by NZ Deprivation Index Decile, New Zealand 2006–2010



Poverty causes more than just hardship

Mortality rates in children and young people aged 28 days to 24 years by NZ Deprivation Index decile



Graph kindly provided by Health Quality & Safety Commissioner (HQSC)

An accepted relationship between childhood poverty and greater likelihood of mental health problems

Child poverty - poor nutrition, inadequate housing, increased likelihood of adverse events and living in poor neighbourhoods all put children at higher risk of having mental health problems.

- The evidence strongly suggests that the incidence of mental health conditions among children and adolescents can be reduced by addressing severe and persistent poverty, particularly during the early years of a child's life.
- Intervention to address poverty and the effects of poverty on children is likely to prevent the perpetuation of inter-generational cycles of poverty and poor mental health.

Who is most affected by poverty in NZ?

Age	% of individuals in low-income households* 2016
Children 0-17 years	26%
18-24 years	24%
25-44 years	19%
45-64 years	17%
65+ years	14%
Overall	20%

* Using the 60% of median “relative” (not anchored) threshold after housing costs

Source: *Household incomes in New Zealand: Trends in indicators of inequality and hardship 1982 to 2016*, MSD, 2017, p130

We do much better for seniors than children!

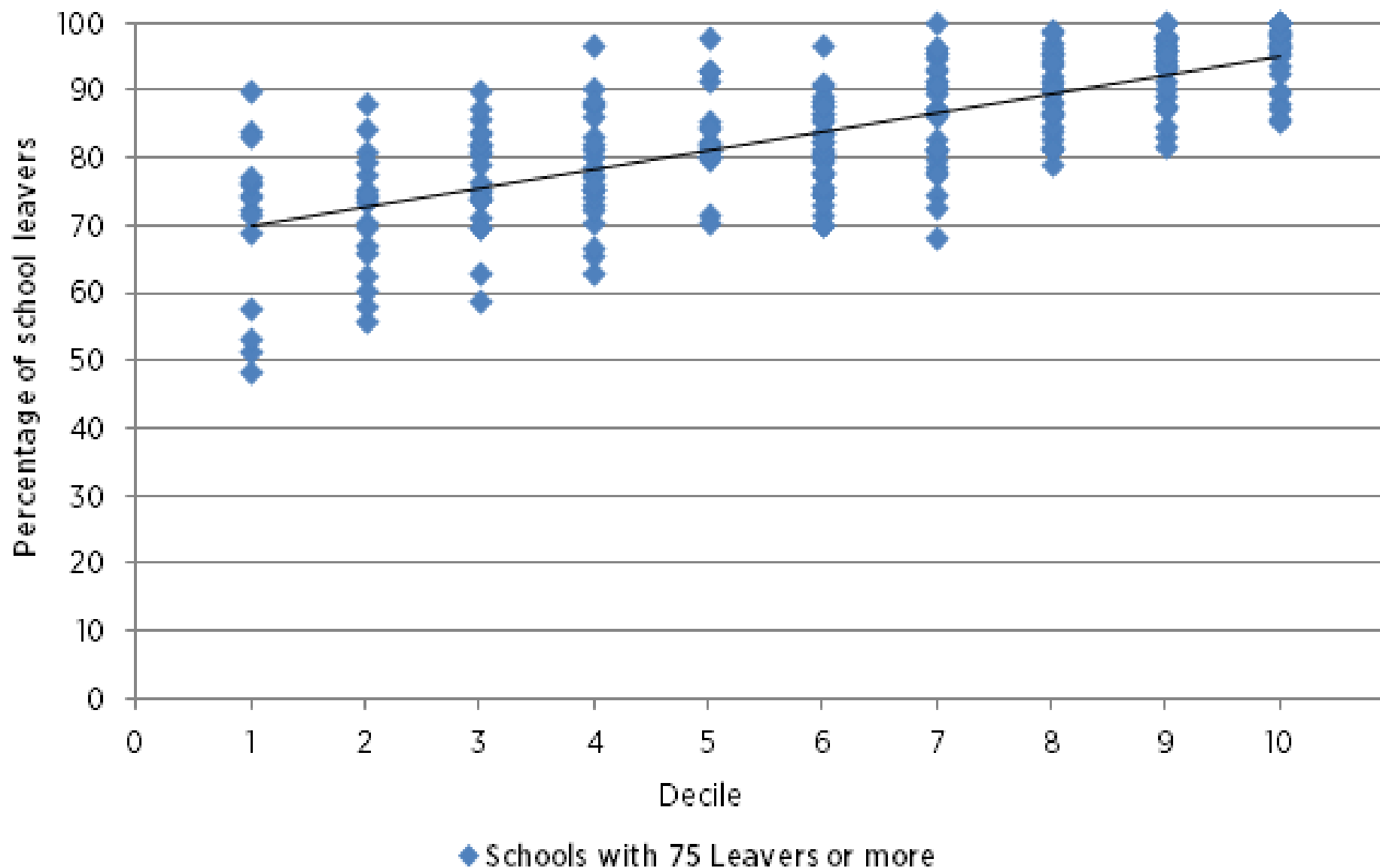
Deprivation
rates



Country	Overall	65+	<18	ratio
Belgium	11	8	15	1.9
Denmark	5	3	5	1.7
France	14	11	17	1.5
Germany	16	10	21	2.1
Ireland	12	5	17	3.4
Netherlands	5	4	6	1.5
New Zealand	11	3	18	6.0
Spain	11	9	13	1.4
Sweden	3	2	3	1.5
United Kingdom	11	6	16	2.7

EU & NZ reported 2017 from approx 2008 data

Percentage of school leavers with at least an NCEA Level 2 qualification or equivalent, by school decile (2016)



5. The second challenge: disproportionate wellbeing for tamariki Māori



An inescapable and fundamental challenge

Disparity between Māori and NZ European child wellbeing rates



Child/youth policy and practice affects Māori and non-Māori equally – yeah right!

Comparison of selected measures of wellbeing between Māori and New Zealand European children

Targeting the root causes of inequity and improving outcomes for Māori children across the board will transform the New Zealand landscape for children and come closer to achieving the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
(Submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Geneva, 2016)

Education:

Measure	Māori	NZ European (unless specified as non-Māori or total NZ population)
18 year olds with NCEA L2 or above (2014)	67.1%	85.1%
Children in State care with NCEA Level2 or above	15%	25%
Early Childhood Education participation	92.3%	98.2%

Health:

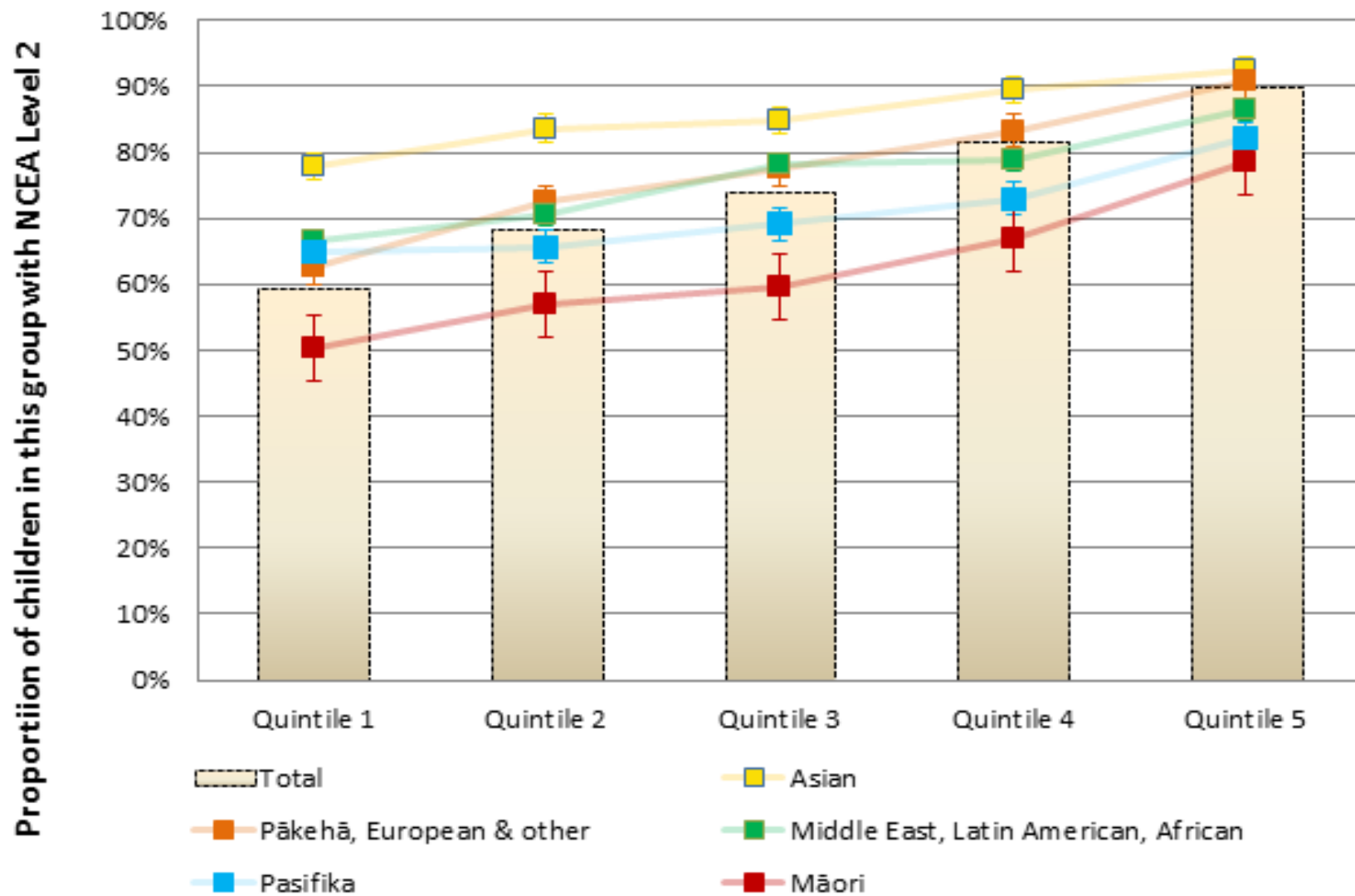
Measure	Māori	NZ European (unless specified as non-Māori or total NZ population)
Current smokers (aged 15 above, 2013-2014)	40.6%	15.2%
Life expectancy at birth	Women: 77.1 years Men: 73 years	Women: 83.9 years Men: 80.3 years
Youth suicide (15-24 years)	48.0 per 100,000	17.3 per 100,000 (non-Māori)
Meningococcal infection (per 100,000. 2013)	All ages: 3.4 <1 year: 32.3 1-4 years: 15.7	All ages: 1.5 (total NZ pop.) <1 year: 18.4 1-4 years: 5.2
Rheumatic fever (all ages, per 100,000. 2012-2014)	13.3	4.2 (non-Māori)
Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI) (per 1,000 deaths. 2010-2012)	1.8	0.4 (non-Māori)

Living standards:

Measure	Māori	NZ European <small>(unless specified as non-Māori or total NZ population)</small>
Child poverty <small>(0-17years, below 60% median household income, after housing costs, 2014)</small>	33%	16%
Child material hardship <small>(0-17years , 2014)</small>	24%	8%
Children in crowded housing <small>(2014)</small>	25%	5%
Unemployment <small>(all ages, 2014)</small>	12.1%	4.4%
Not in Education, Employment or training <small>(NEET) rate (15-24 years, 2015)</small>	20.9%	9.4%
Youth justice: <small>(number and percentage of children aged 10-16 charged in court, 2014/15)</small>	1,152 (59%)	489 (24%)

The “tramline gap” faced by tamariki Māori

NCEA Level 2 achievement of school leavers, 2016



6. Third challenge: identifying and working with neuro-developmental issues earlier

Table 1. The prevalence of neurodevelopmental disorders

Neurodevelopmental disorder	Reported prevalence rates amongst young people in the general population	Reported prevalence rates amongst young people in custody
Learning disabilities ³	2 - 4% ⁴	23 - 32% ⁵
Dyslexia	10% ⁶	43 - 57% ⁷
Communication disorders	5 - 7% ⁸	60 - 90% ⁹
Attention deficit hyperactive disorder	1.7 - 9% ¹⁰	12% ¹¹
Autistic spectrum disorder	0.6 - 1.2% ¹²	15% ¹³
Traumatic brain injury	24 - 31.6% ¹⁴	65.1 - 72.1% ¹⁵
Epilepsy	0.45 - 1% ¹⁶	0.7 - 0.8% ¹⁷
Foetal alcohol syndrome	0.1 - 5% ¹⁸	10.9 - 11.7% ¹⁹



7. Conclusion

Never give up!





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