

# Measuring child wellbeing

The possibilities

Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021

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# Obligatory Government Disclaimer...

- Some of the work presented here is part of an on-going project. It has not yet been signed out by The Social Wellbeing Agency or other contributing agencies or external experts.
- We expect to be able to make these slides publicly available later this year



# Overview

- A developmental and evidence-based approach to measuring child wellbeing in Aotearoa
- The possibilities – what is possible with the (largely) admin (and linked) data we have
- The need for a coordinated and strategic approach to filling the data gaps on child wellbeing



A woman with dark hair, wearing a floral cardigan over a grey top, is leaning over a wooden table. She is smiling and looking down at two young children, a girl and a boy, who are sitting at the table. They are playing with colorful wooden blocks. The woman is pointing at a block on the table. The girl is holding a green block. The boy is looking at the blocks. The background is a warm, orange-toned room with a potted plant and a window with blinds. The overall atmosphere is warm and nurturing.

**A developmental  
and evidence-based  
approach to  
child wellbeing  
in Aotearoa**

# The Social Wellbeing Agency's approach to measuring child wellbeing

## A life stage view of child and youth wellbeing

Including a focus on key transition points and developmental milestones. We have used relatively high-level view of developmental stages in line with the approach taken by the OECD.

## A focus on what evidence tells us is important at each life stage for child wellbeing.

## A focus on what children and young people have said matters for their wellbeing

(based on the engagement carried out by Office of the Children's Commissioner, Oranga Tamariki and The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to support the development of the CYWS).

## A balanced view of wellbeing

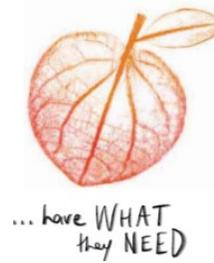
One that can tell us about when things are going well for children and young people, as well as when they are not.

## Not limited by current availability, quality or completeness of data.

# The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Outcomes

Provide a **wholistic approach to conceptualising child wellbeing, one that is:**

- Informed by what children and young people said matters to their wellbeing
- Appropriate for our cultural context in Aotearoa
- Evidence informed
- Not limited by current availability, quality or completeness of data.
- Has a balanced view of wellbeing



# A life course view of child wellbeing that focuses on what the evidence says matters at each stage

Initial work carried out by the Social Wellbeing Agency resulted in a relatively high-level approach to a life course view of childhood.

## It focused on the following life stages:

- Prenatal
- Early childhood (0-5 years)
- Childhood (6-11 years)
- Late childhood (12-16 years)
- Emerging Adults (17-24 years)



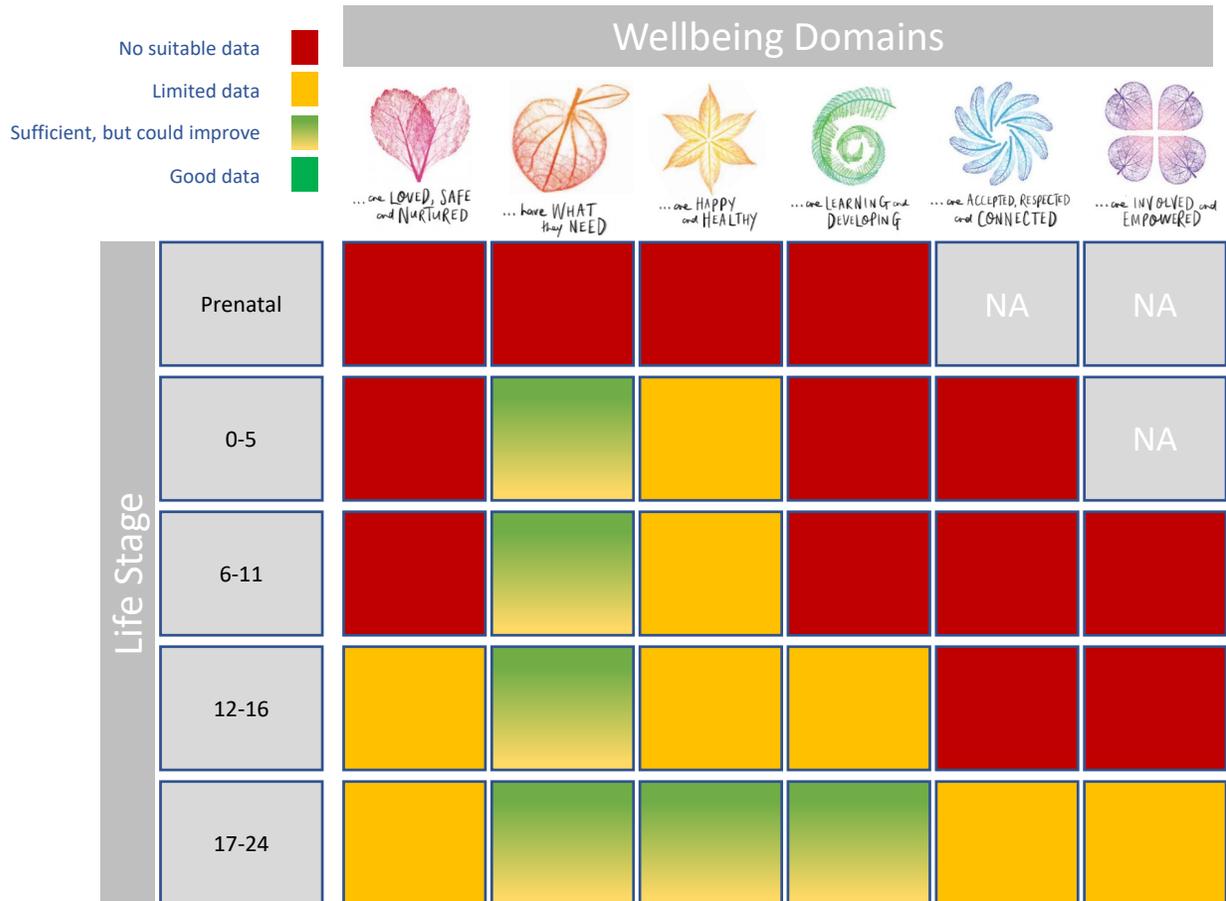
# Applying a life course approach across the wellbeing outcome domains of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

## This allowed us to:

- Map out what matters for child and youth wellbeing in Aotearoa across the wellbeing domains for different life stages
- Map existing data to this life course approach and start to build a picture of what could be measured with existing data, and what can not
- Provide a bit of a blueprint of what we can do (better) with existing data and where new data will need to be collected



# The Social Wellbeing Agency's assessment of the current data landscape for child wellbeing in Aotearoa



Our analysis of the existing data landscape against the Child & Youth Strategy outcomes shows that while we do have a lot of data about children in Aotearoa it is:

- largely administrative data
- much of it is trapped in silos
- there are no areas of child wellbeing which have comprehensive data coverage
- there are gaps for early ages groups and particular outcome areas
- there are considerable data quality issues
- most of it does not include the voices of children, young people or their whānau

A young boy and girl are sitting together, smiling. The boy is on the left, wearing a teal t-shirt with a small pattern, and is holding a small blue object to his mouth. The girl is on the right, wearing a dark top, and has her arm around the boy. The background is a blurred indoor setting. The entire image has a teal overlay.

**What is possible  
with the (largely)  
administrative  
(and linked) data  
we have?**

# Making better use of what we've got

## The IDI is useful for:

- Building a life course picture of children in Aotearoa (though somewhat limited by the deficit nature of the data in the IDI)
- Exploring the link between life events and later outcomes
- Starting to understand child and youth wellbeing within the context of household, whanau, and community



# However...

**This needs to be done in a way that takes into consideration:**

- The largely deficit nature of the data in the IDI
- The unavoidable bias inherent in administrative data
- With respect for the people the data is about, and mindful of the reason the data was originally collected



**The need for a  
coordinated and  
strategic approach  
to filling the data  
gaps on child  
wellbeing**



# Filling the gaps in child and youth wellbeing data in Aotearoa

## **Te Ao Māori view / culturally appropriate for Aotearoa**

collecting data grounded in a Te Ao Māori view or framed in a way that is tailored to NZ & our unique cultural context

## **Voice of the child**

capturing the views of children & young people, rather than asking others about them or using data gathered for other purposes

## **International comparisons**

collecting data that enables NZ to be included in international comparisons

## **Data on 0-5 year olds**

improving the data we have for 0-5 year olds

## **Resilience**

collecting data on the factors that support children & young people's wellbeing & can protect their wellbeing in times of adversity

## **Disaggregation for key populations of interest**

collecting data that enables it to be disaggregated to different populations of interest & allows comparisons across groups

## **Whānau context and dynamics**

collecting data on the wider whānau context & dynamics that children & young people are a part of

## **Comprehensive coverage**

capturing data for the whole population of interest (0-24 years old), with a particular focus on the 'hard to reach'

# In conclusion

A developmental and evidence-based approach to measuring child wellbeing in Aotearoa

What is possible with the (largely) admin (and linked) data we have?

There is a need for a coordinated and strategic approach to filling the data gaps on child wellbeing

■ ■ ■ **Is critical, but is not possible with the current data landscape in Aotearoa**

■ ■ ■ **We can do a lot more with the data we have, but that is on its own not sufficient**

■ ■ ■ **We will need to work together to do this**

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