

When the Invisible Hand Rocks the Cradle

The Facts

Youth

- The increase in unemployment in the 1980s and 1990s had a bigger effect on youth than other age groups. The rate of unemployment among 15 to 24 year olds has been approximately double that of older age groups since 1986 (Social Policy Agency, 1999). At the peak of unemployment in 1992, 48 percent of Maori young people aged 15-19 were unemployed (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2000).
- In 1996, 30 percent of young women aged 15 to 19 years and 25 percent of young men aged 15-19 years who were in employment were in part time jobs (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Youth Affairs, 1998).

Children

- Children are much more likely than adults to live in low-income households. In 1996, 26 percent of all children and young people under the age of 18 years (or under the age of 22 years if in full-time education) were in the bottom income quintile and 23 percent were in the next-to-bottom quintile (Statistics New Zealand, 1996)
- A 1994 national survey found 22,000 school children were regularly hungry (Food and Nutrition Consultancy Service, 1995). People most likely to use food grants and food banks were Maori women aged 15-24 years –the age group of women with young families (Ministry of Health, 1999).

Income

- The gap between rich and poor in New Zealand has grown at least as fast as any industrialised country. Between 1982 and 1996, the top income in the top tenth of households leapt up. The bottom 80 percent of household had a decline in their incomes (Statistics New Zealand, 1999).
- Children are much more likely to live in low -income households. In 1996, half of all children lived in households in the bottom two-fifths of income distribution. The growing gap between rich and poor is also reflected in the growing gap between children from rich and poor households. Between 1982 and 1996, children became less likely to live in middle-income households. (Statistics New Zealand, 1999).
- The number of poor people increased from 430,000 in 1989/90 to 593,000 in 1991/92 following the benefit cuts of April 1991 (Easton 1995, definition of poverty based on the recommendations of the 1972 Royal Commission of Inquiry on Social Security).
- Children are much more likely to live in deprived areas than older people. This trend is even more marked for babies (see graph on Page 3 of this release).

Housing

- In 1988 one in eight households spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. This increased to one in four households by 1998 (Ministry of Social Policy 2001).
- Children have become more likely to live in rented homes. In 1986, 78 per cent of children in two parent families lived in homes owned by their parents - this fell to 75 percent by 1996. In 1986, 52 per cent of children in two parent families lived in homes owned by their parents - this fell to 44 percent by 1996 (Statistics New Zealand, 1999).
- In 1996, 54 percent of Pacific children under 15 years, 45 percent of Maori children, 28 percent of Asian children and 19 percent of European children lived in rented homes. In addition there were about 1,800 children under 15 years living in temporary accommodation such as tents, garages, caravans and motor camp cabins (Statistics New Zealand, 1999).

Health

- In 1960, New Zealand's infant mortality was fifth lowest in the world. In 1987 it was 22nd in the world and in 2000 it was 19th (UNICEF, 1989, 2002).
- Injuries and poisonings account for nearly half the deaths of children from one to 14 years of age (Ministry of Health, 1998).
- New Zealand has a very high rate of childhood injury compared with other industrialised countries (see graph on Page 4 of this release).
- The rate of suicide among young New Zealand men aged 15-24 years doubled between 1985 and 1989 (showing signs of declining in the late 1990s). The rate is highest among young Maori men. (New Zealand Health Information Service).
- New Zealand has a high rate of births to teenage mothers compared to other industrialised countries (UNICEF, 2002).
- Rates of communicable disease are high for an industrialised country (TB, measles, whooping cough and meningococcal disease). A case control study of the meningococcal epidemic shows a clear link between meningococcal disease and overcrowding (Baker et al., 2000)
- Rates of hospitalisation among children increased annually by an average of five percent from 1988 to 1995 (Ministry of Health 1998).

Education

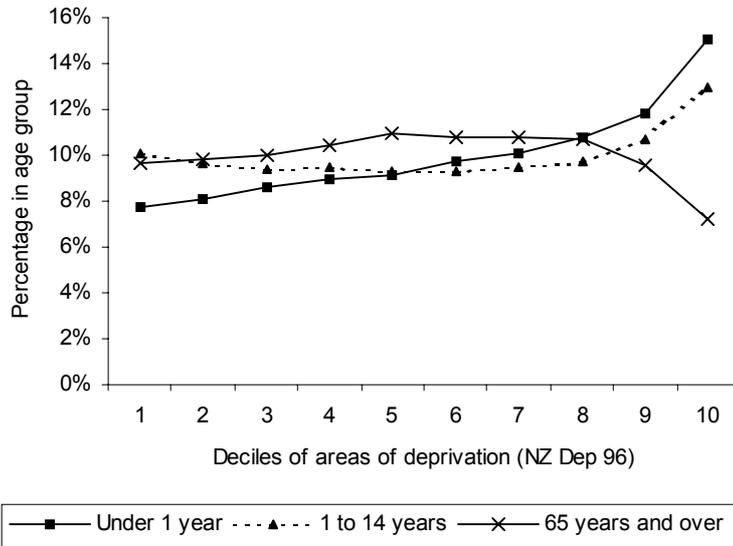
- New Zealand has high rates of participation in pre-school education. Two fifths of Maori children attending early childhood education are in Kohanga Reo (Ministry of Education 1999).
- Inequity in educational achievement has continued through the 1980s and 1990s (Te Puni Kōkiri 2000). Students from poor areas have become less likely to attend university (Taskforce for Improving Participation in Tertiary Education, 1999).
- New Zealand has a lower proportion of teenagers in education than many other industrialised countries. In 1998, 29 percent of NZ 15-19 year-olds were not in education.

Two Graphs from "When the Invisible Hand Rocks the Cradle"

Age and deprivation

Children are much more likely to live in deprived areas than older people. This trend is even more marked for babies.

Figure 10: Infants, children and older people: deprivation of areas of residence



Decile 10 is the most deprived suburbs and Decile 1 the least deprived suburbs. Approximately one tenth of the population live in each decile.

Here are the raw figures for this graph

NZ Dep 96	Under 1 year	1 to 14 years	65 years and over
1	7.8%	10.1%	9.6%
2	8.1%	9.6%	9.8%
3	8.6%	9.4%	10.0%
4	8.9%	9.5%	10.5%
5	9.1%	9.3%	11.0%
6	9.8%	9.3%	10.8%
7	10.1%	9.4%	10.8%
8	10.8%	9.7%	10.7%
9	11.8%	10.7%	9.5%
10	15.0%	13.0%	7.2%

Injury rates

New Zealand has a very high rate of childhood injury compared with other industrialised countries.

Figure 13: The child injury death league. Annual number of deaths from injuries among 1 to 14 year old children during 1991 – 1995, expressed per 100,000 children in the age group. Source: UNICEF, 2001

