2018

Changing the lives of disadvantaged children in New Zealand

An independent analysis of outcomes for children and families supported by Kiwi Kid Sponsorship.
3000+ children are currently supported by Kiwi Kid Sponsorship
Kiwi Kid Sponsorship, launched in 2013, provides a bespoke and tailored solution to address the impact of poverty on Kiwi kids. The programme connects a caring New Zealander with an individual child to provide them with the basic essentials and opportunities they would otherwise go without.

Variety works alongside schools, community agencies, social workers and healthcare professionals to identify children in need. For as little as $45 a month, a sponsor supports a child by funding the basics. These include clothing, shoes, warm bedding, school uniforms, stationery and extra-curricular activities, such as school camp, a sport, and swimming lessons.

Variety manages sponsorship funds to directly benefit the sponsored child.

3,000+ children are currently supported by Kiwi Kid Sponsorship

More than 1 in 4 New Zealand children are growing up in deprivation. The rate has doubled over the last three decades. For reasons outside of their control, too many Kiwi children are going without basic essentials like bedding, a school uniform and appropriate footwear. They are missing out on important opportunities such as school camp and swimming lessons.

Living in deprivation can lead to children feeling stigmatised and left out. This has a profound impact on their health, education and self-esteem. In the long term, it can mean lower academic achievement, reduced employment prospects, lower earnings and poorer health.

The scale of the problem: Deprivation among Kiwi kids

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“I feel more special.”
An independent analysis of Kiwi Kid Sponsorship

Approaching the fifth anniversary of the Kiwi Kid Sponsorship programme, Variety commissioned an independent review to: measure the impact of the programme on children and families; ensure its relevancy; and guide its future direction.

529 children and their caregivers spoke frankly and anonymously about how sponsorship has created positive change in their lives. The results were overwhelming.

Survey responses confirmed that the Kiwi Kid Sponsorship programme continues to bring about life-changing outcomes for families and kids.

The impact on the programme participants has been significant across the areas of:

- education
- family dynamics
- health
- social inclusion

Parents see support from the Kiwi Kid Sponsorship programme as critical to providing their children with the opportunities they need to thrive.

How Kiwi Kid Sponsorship makes children feel

Children under 10 said they felt special and loved as a result of Kiwi Kid Sponsorship

Children over 10 said they felt secure and thankful
“I’m happy going to school.”
Positive family outcomes extend beyond the sponsored children to the whole family. Kiwi Kid Sponsorship provides relief from financial hardship, allowing both parents and children to focus more on being with family.

Perhaps in part because sponsorship helps them feel more included, but also due to being correctly set up for learning (with the right stationery and uniform) and having the opportunity to fully participate, children on the Kiwi Kid Sponsorship programme reported an improved school experience and better performance.

Overwhelmingly, parents also believe that sponsorship improves their child's experience at school. Their observations align with their children's, with 93% saying their child enjoys school more now they're on the programme.

"Because of my sponsorship my family is more united."

"We are able to do more as a family."

"Our family is happier and get along better."

95% of children enjoy school more

95% of children feel like they're doing better at school thanks to their sponsorship

97% of children do more fun things with their family because they are sponsored

99% of parents said their family was happier because of Kiwi Kid Sponsorship

"They are doing well at school now."

"I'm happy. I can say I like school."

"I'm able to try my hardest at school due to the stationery I have."

"I'm very grateful for what I get, and it helps me to excel in school."

95% of children feel like they're doing better at school thanks to their sponsorship

Giving disadvantaged Kiwi kids the childhood they deserve
“I feel happy because I am warm, healthy and dry.”
Health outcomes

While Kiwi Kid Sponsorship was not set up to specifically target health issues, and although less than half of children receive health or medical support, significant numbers say they have experienced better health as a result of being sponsored. This is likely due to having warm bedding, clothing and adequate footwear in the winter months, and the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular sporting activities.

“Her asthma has improved due to being warm, healthy and happy.”

“I’m in better health.”

“I feel happier and healthier and not so stressed.”

“I feel fitter because I’m now able to play sports.”

An important finding was that even the youngest children we support were acutely aware of the financial strain and stress their caregivers were experiencing before they were sponsored. Therefore, improved health is also likely a result of reduced stress and anxiety over finances at home.

“I feel like I’m not putting money stress on mum.”

“I feel good knowing that my parents are not stressed.”

“I’m less worried that my mum doesn’t have to worry about my school stuff.”

94% of children feel like their health is better because they are sponsored

87% of parents agreed that their child’s health is better because of Kiwi Kid Sponsorship

Social inclusion outcomes

We know that children living in deprivation often suffer from negative self-esteem. Almost all children surveyed said that they felt more included and more confident as a direct result of their sponsorship. Anecdotally, we know that this is due to a feeling of fitting in with peers. Kiwi Kid Sponsorship enables children to access clothing that fits, stationery and the chance to go on school trips, to remove the feeling of isolation among friends and classmates.

“Because of my sponsorship, I feel more special and included.”

“I feel better about myself and very confident to do things at school.”

“She feels equal to her peers.”

“They are feeling more confident because they have the right school uniform.”

98% of children feel more included because they are sponsored

98% of children feel more confident because they are sponsored
“Taylor hasn’t had any hospital admissions since your support enabled us to buy warm clothing.”
Kiwi Kid Sponsorship in action: Meet Taylor

In the Canterbury house where Taylor, 7, and her two siblings live, winter is a particularly dangerous time. The wind whistles through the doors, which don’t close properly because the floor is on an angle – the result of damage from the 2010 Christchurch earthquake – and last year Taylor’s mother, Nichola, took her to the hospital twice.

Before receiving Kiwi Kid Sponsorship support from Variety, the family struggled to afford adequate clothing, buying sale items only and going without expensive school uniform items. Taylor and her sister didn’t have winter uniforms and instead wore thick tights under their lightweight summer skirts.

Their rented house is due for major renovations, but until then, it’s all the family can afford. Nichola, who works as a support worker for war veterans, is already paying more than half of her income in rent.

“Before receiving Kiwi Kid Sponsorship support from Variety, Nichola regularly went without food so that her children could eat, spending only $100 a week to feed four people. She also struggled to pay the bills, particularly in the colder months."

“It helps that I don’t have to take... from our food to cover the things he needs for school.”

“The support has changed my outlook. Now I know I can provide the basics for my children.”

Nichola also tells us that she has been able to keep up with the children’s growth spurts, including her son’s shoe size, which has increased three times in six months!

Funding alternatives

Kiwi Kid Sponsorship is unique in meeting children’s individual needs. There are few funding alternatives available. We asked parents/caregivers to select one or more of the options below to tell us what they would do to afford necessities if Kiwi Kid Sponsorship was not available. Here’s what they said:

63% Go without things we need

41% Cut back on food

33% Borrow money from friends or family

22% Ask for support from another organisation

15% Don’t know

21% Take out a loan

33% Don’t know

10.

Giving disadvantaged Kiwi kids the childhood they deserve
For more information about all Variety programmes or to sponsor a Kiwi kid, please visit our website:

www.variety.org.nz

Independent impact evaluation conducted by Social Ventures Australia. Full evaluation results were made available in September 2017.

Social Ventures Australia

If you’d like further information on this summary report, please get in touch:

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