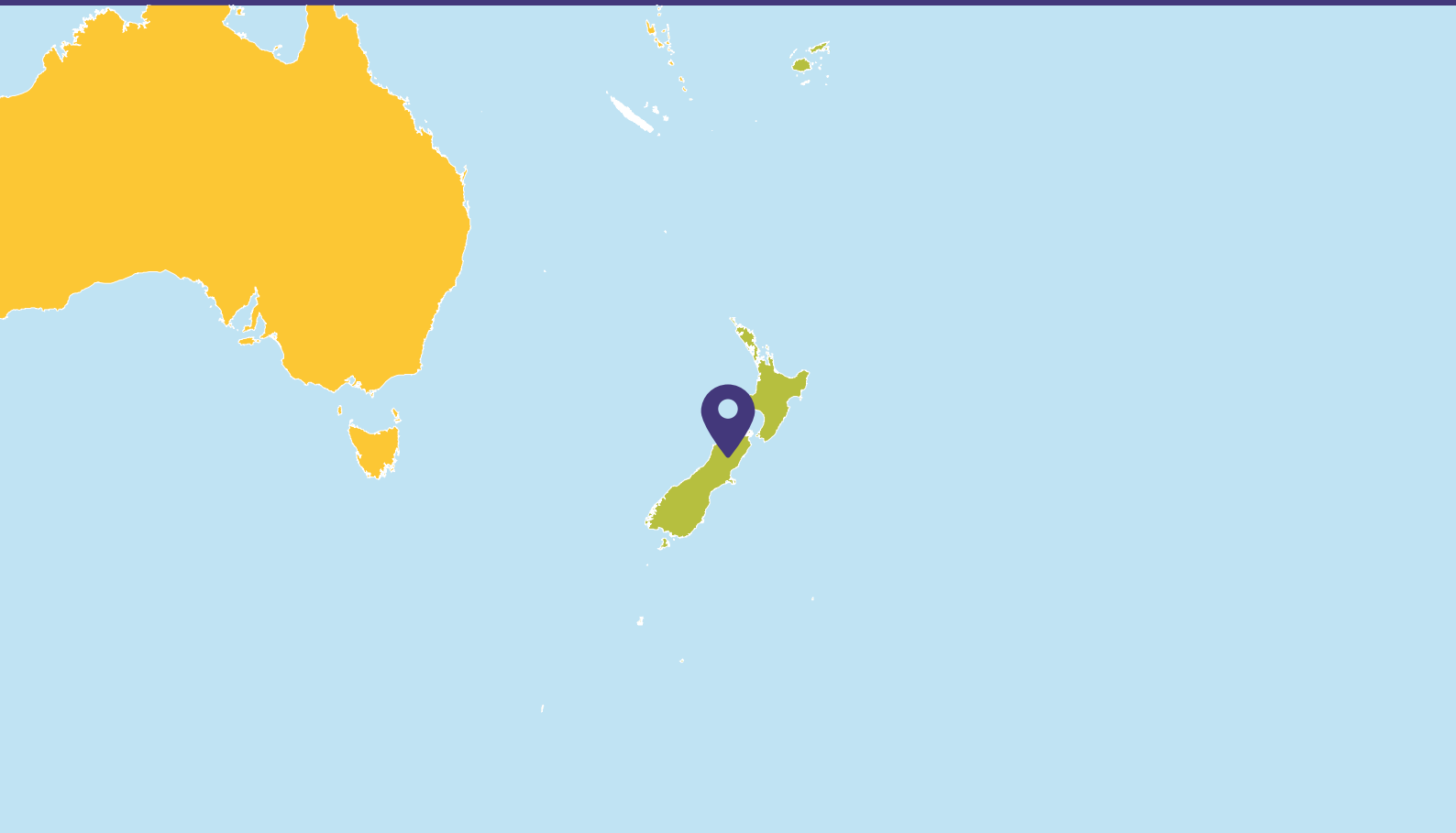




The KidsRights Index 2024

New Zealand scores 62nd
on global ranking for Children's Rights.



NEW ZEALAND

OVERALL SCORE

RANK: 62

SCORE: 0,742

LIFE

RANK: 19

SCORE: 0,955

HEALTH

RANK: 44

SCORE: 0,970

EDUCATION

RANK: 10

SCORE: 1,000

PROTECTION

RANK: 37

SCORE: 0,974

CHILD RIGHTS ENVIRONMENT

RANK: 159

SCORE: 0,250

THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX AND INFORMATION ABOUT ITS DOMAINS, INDICATORS AND METHODOLOGY
ARE ACCESSIBLE ON WWW.KIDSRIGHTSINDEX.ORG

THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX

The KidsRights Index is the only annual global ranking on how countries worldwide are adhering to children’s rights. Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Index synthesizes the performance records of states on the most crucial aspects of children’s lives for which comparable data is available. In addition, the Index charts how states are faring in mobilizing the enabling environment for children’s rights that the CRC requires them to have. The five domains that jointly make up the Index are:

1. **Right to Life**
2. **Right to Health**
3. **Right to Education**
4. **Right to Protection**
5. **Enabling Environment for Child Rights**

The KidsRights Index ranks countries on each of these five domains which in turn generate a comprehensive overall ranking. The content of the Index is a sound basis for making concrete recommendations on how the children’s rights record of specific countries could be improved.

SOURCES OF THE KIDSRIGHTS INDEX

The KidsRights Index pools data from three reputable sources: quantitative data published and regularly updated by **UNICEF** (<https://data.unicef.org>) and **UNDP** (www.hdr.undp.org/data)¹, and qualitative data published by the **UN Committee on the Rights of the Child** (www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crc/pages/crcindex.aspx) in the detailed individual country reports (the so-called Concluding Observations) that it adopts for all states that are parties to the CRC. The KidsRights Index aims to make the data more accessible to a broader audience, in an effort to stimulate dialogue about children’s rights. Since the United States of America is the only state in the world that is not yet a party to the CRC, there is no material for scoring the country on domain 5 and thus it cannot be included in the KidsRights Index.

DOMAIN 5: ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILD RIGHTS

Domain 5, the ‘Enabling Environment for Child Rights’, is an important and unique domain of the KidsRights Index. It reveals the extent to which countries have operationalized the general principles of the CRC (*non-discrimination; best interests of the child; respect for the views of the child/participation*) and the extent to which there is a basic ‘infrastructure’ for making and implementing child rights policy (in the form of *enabling national legislation; mobilization of the ‘best available’ budget; collection and analysis of disaggregated data; and state-civil society cooperation for child rights*). The scores on domain 5 are derived from the Concluding Observations adopted by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. These Concluding Observations (COs) finish off the state reporting procedure under the CRC and represent the Committee’s views on the level of realization of children’s rights in a particular country.

¹ The data for the KidsRights Index 2023 was downloaded from the listed UNICEF and UNDP sources in January 2023. In addition, the latest available Concluding Observations for each country were used.

Domain 5 - 'Child Rights Environment' - is based on the Concluding Observations adopted by the CRC Committee. The Committee's assessment of the country performance on the earlier mentioned 7 indicators that make up domain 5 is used to generate scores on a scale between 1 and 3. The actual score assigned to each sub-indicator is exclusively based on the language used by the Committee in the document. The resulting final scores are standardized.

KidsRights Index Scoring System:

Score 1 'bad'	= only negative remarks
Score 2 'average'	= negative and positive remarks
Score 3 'good'	= only positive remarks
NA	= not addressed

Color	Meaning
Red	Negative change
Orange	Stayed the same
Green	Positive change

DOMAIN 5: NEW ZEALAND

	Non-discrimination	Best interests of the child	Respect for the views of the child	Enabling legislation	Best available budget / Resources	Collection and analysis of disaggregated data	State-civil society cooperation for child rights
New Zealand 2016	1	1	1	1	1	1	NA
New Zealand 2023	1	1	1	2	2	2	NA

New Zealand has made significant strides in the latest KidsRights Index (KRI12), soaring 116 ranks to achieve a position of 62nd with a score of 0.742, a substantial improvement from its previous rank of 178th and a score of 0.390 in KRI11. The Enabling Environment category has also seen notable progress, improving by 31 ranks to 159th with a score of 0.250. Among the seven evaluated indicators, improvements were particularly evident in enabling legislation, the collection and analysis of disaggregated data, and the allocation of the best budget/resources for children. However, the other four indicators have remained stagnant, highlighting areas where further attention is needed.

COUNTRY RECOMMENDATIONS 2023 - NEW ZEALAND

ON NON-DISCRIMINATION (SCORE 1):

KidsRights is concerned regarding non-discrimination and the treatment of vulnerable children.

Recommendations

- Ensure legal protection against discrimination for children younger than 16 years.
- Undertake appropriate measures to extend protection and improve conditions, ensuring all children, especially the most vulnerable – including Māori and Pasifika children, children in out-of-family care, and children with disabilities, are adequately protected and supported.

ON BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD (SCORE 1):

Recommendations

- Develop clear guidelines and procedures for relevant stakeholders, including social workers, legal professionals, and caregivers, to ensure consistent application of child-related principles when making decisions under the Children’s Act 2014.
- Provide practical guidance to ensure that child-related principles are systematically integrated into every decision affecting children under the legislation.

ON RESPECT FOR THE VIEWS OF THE CHILD (SCORE 1):

Recommendations

- Ensure that children’s right to have their views heard is upheld in all official decision-making processes, including in custody cases, child welfare decisions, and cases concerning criminal justice, immigration, and environmental matters.
- Assess the implementation of legislative amendments that mandate consultation with children in all matters affecting them to ensure these provisions are being effectively applied.
- Facilitate children’s access to effective complaints mechanisms where their right to be heard is violated in judicial and administrative proceedings.
- Provide access to an appeals procedure to challenge decisions and ensure their views are considered.

ON ENABLING LEGISLATION (SCORE 2):

To further strengthen children’s rights in domestic law, KidsRights recommends the following recommendations

Recommendations

- Fully incorporate the UNCRC into domestic legal framework, to not only reinforce the legal basis for protecting children’s rights but to also ensure that these rights are upheld across all areas of governance and judicial processes.
- Develop a dedicated children’s rights and well-being hub with a clear focus on improving training related to the UNCRC for professionals involved in children’s services.

ON BEST AVAILABLE BUDGET (SCORE 2):

KidsRights appreciates the positive steps taken in the 2023 budget policy statement towards prioritizing child well-being indicators. To build on this progress and further strengthen the implementation of children’s rights through fiscal measures KidsRights makes the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

- Conduct a thorough assessment of budget needs of children, beyond just measures aimed at reducing child poverty, identifying areas where additional resources are necessary to fully support the realization of children's rights.
- Enhance the child rights-based approach in the development of the state budget through-
 - *Participatory Budgeting*: Implement budgeting processes that actively involve children and all interested stakeholders, making the process accessible and inclusive.
 - *Transparency in Resource Allocation*: Ensure that the results of the Treasury's tracking system, which monitors the allocation and usage of resources for children, are published through the annual budget process. This transparency will help in holding the government accountable and ensuring that allocated funds are used appropriately to advance children's rights.

ON COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DISAGGREGATED DATA (SCORE 2):

KidsRights acknowledges the legislative steps taken to mandate the collection and reporting of data concerning outcomes for children. KidsRights provides further recommendations for improving the data handling practices.

Recommendations:

- Broaden the data collection system as part of data investment plan, encompassing all areas covered by the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols.
- Enhance data collection and disaggregation with the aim of facilitating thorough analysis and understanding of the situation of all children in the state. This in-depth understanding is vital for creating targeted, effective interventions that address the specific needs of children, especially those who are most at risk.

ON STATE-CIVIL SOCIETY COOPERATION (NA)



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