



CHILDREN'S VOICES POLL, APRIL 2024

Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches Programme

Children have the right to be heard when decisions are being made that impact them. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which New Zealand has ratified, protects children's right to meaningful consultation when decisions are being made that impact them.

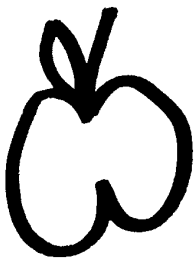
Our children's voices project gathers the voices of children across Aotearoa to bring the views of children to our decision makers. Because kid's voices matter!

Our first Children's Voices Poll of 2024 gathered the views of over 3500 children on the Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches Programme.



Save the Children

CHILDREN'S VOICES POLL TERM 1 2024



In 2024 the Government indicated that the Ka Ora, Ka Ako I Healthy School Lunches Programme was under review in the lead up to Budget 2024. We wanted to ensure that children had the opportunity to have their say on the programme and to bring their views to the public and our decision makers.

What We Did

- Created a survey for children to have their say on the Ka Ora, Ka Ako Programme (appendix 1).
- Carried out face-to-face polling stations at events in Auckland and New Plymouth.
- Created a digital version of the survey which could be completed by individual children or as a class poll throughout March and April 2024.

Through the survey we gathered the views and insights of over **3500** children aged 5-17 on the Ka Ora, Ka Ako, Healthy School Lunches Programme!



“It’s a really good programme that helps. Some of my friends don’t have enough food at home and this helps them not be hungry”

RESULTS



Of the 3501 children who participated in the survey, 95% voted that the programme remain the same or to be expanded into more schools, 3% voted for removal of the programme, and 2% didn't know what their view was on the programme.

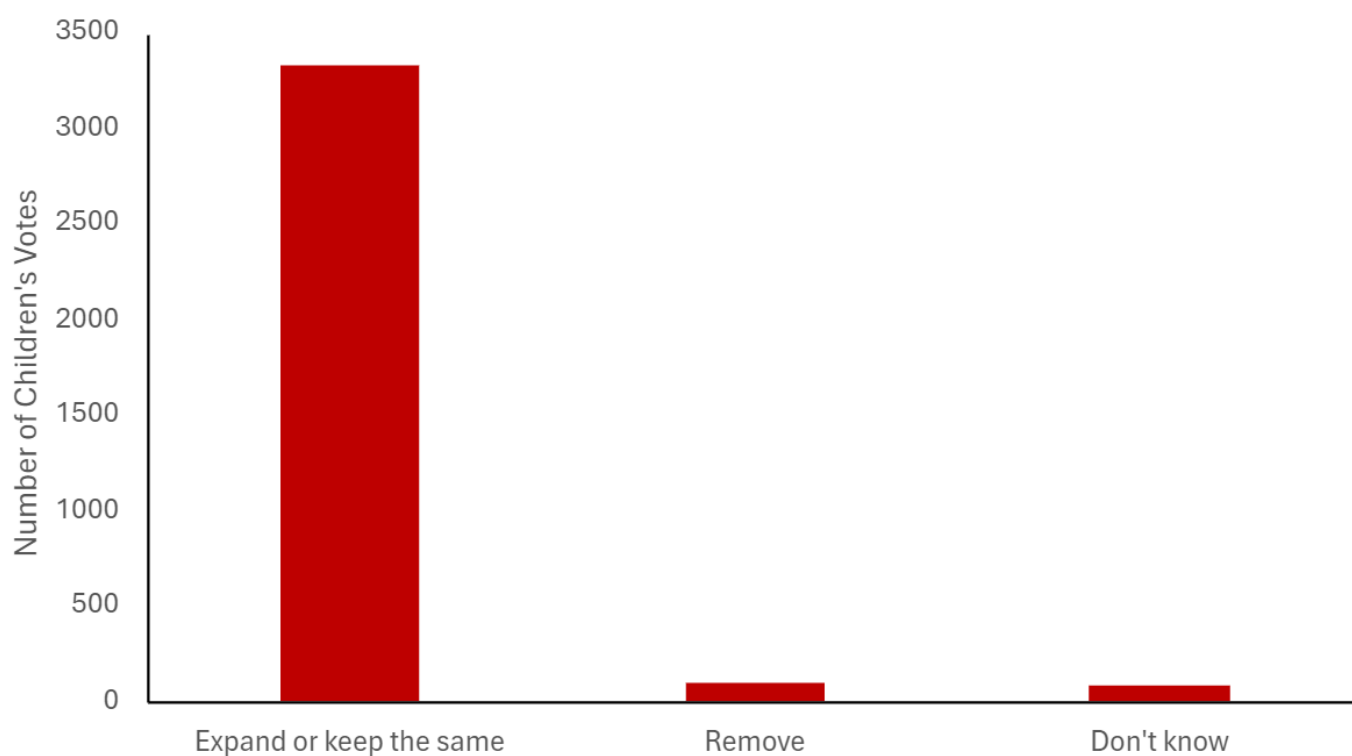


Figure 1. Results of the Children's Voices Poll, asking children between 5 -17 years old what they believe should happen to the Ka Ora, Ka Ako, Healthy School Lunches Programme.

"Please do not take our lunches away."

"It is great that we get kai every day. Sometimes the lunches aren't that great. I like having kai all the time. My lunch is yummy most of the time. Why do we have to have salad? At home we don't have much food, so it's good when I come to school and know that there will be a kai for me to have."

"My mum doesn't have to stress anymore about how she is going to buy school lunches on top of weekly groceries for the whole family."

CHILDREN'S SUGGESTIONS



Children polled gave suggestions on how to improve the programme to make it more appealing and reduce waste, including adding more variety of food, a choice of menus, placing an order the week before, more fruit, and extra hot food options. Children showed they are aware of the importance of the programme and that cuts or reductions will be detrimental.

“We think that having your own kitchen and cooks has created less waste. We, as tamariki are asked about how we like the food and what we might like to see on the menu. Keep the funding!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Put more money into this important project!!!! “

“We love our provided lunches.”

“Maybe make some of the options wider and more things like maybe 2 lunch so people feel more free to be able to have a choice between two.”

“Wider range of food and having choices of menus.”

“The food is yum.....yea that's all I have to say!”

"Try new recipes". "Warm lunches are nicer". "More hot food options". "Add chillies". "More mac and cheese!" "More meatballs in the pasta, please".
"More spicy". "Coconut curry is a favourite." "Butter chicken every week!"
"We all eat the pizza wraps." "We don't like the carrots in the sandwiches!!!"
"Variety of veggies". "More big vegetables, not little pieces". "More chicken tenders". "No cabbage in chicken teriyaki". "The curry is TOO spicy!" "More meat in the meals." "Bigger garlic bread". "New food options, please."

“Consider the negative impact the removing of this programme will have on this generation and generations to come... what will we miss out on achieving or providing for communities and families in the future due to you cutting this cost and opportunities for them today. Then consider the cost the govt may have to pay in the future as a result of this possible cost saving today. Suggest the costs and impact in the future will out weigh the cost and benefit impact of today.”

POSITION STATEMENT



Save the Children

It is our very strong view that Ka Ora, Ka Ako, Healthy School Lunches Programme, is an important **investment** in the well-being and education of our children, and directly contributes to healthy food systems and can help reduce poverty in our communities.

Our consultation with children demonstrates that children, those most directly impacted by possible changes to the scheme, are supporters of the programme.

While Save the Children agrees that food waste minimisation is important, we do not support changes to the programme that could end up stigmatising children such as targeting to individuals. Instead, looking to alternatives to reduce waste such as providing greater choice, child consultation on menus and further training for kitchen staff and kai providers could improve an extremely effective programme.

Save the Children NZ calls for further commitment to the Ka Ora, Ka Ako, Healthy School Lunches Programme.

To achieve this, we call for a continued commitment to:

- 1** Continued and sustained funding to embed this programme as part of education delivery in New Zealand, and,
- 2** For this programme to be extended to more schools and to early childhood education centres.

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If I am hungry at school I can't learn and I get... grrrr! Free school lunches are good because parents can spend money on paying for their home or water.

99

Sophie, 6



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Appendix 1: Children's Voices Survey completed at face-to-face events. The digital survey asked the same questions via Jotform and could be completed as an individual or as a class.

Front



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Have your say in our children's voices polls!



Your Voice Matters!

Our first children's voices poll of 2024 is ... School Lunches!

In 2019, the Government started a programme called Ka Ora, Ka Ako Healthy School Lunches. This gives **free lunches** to children at school. Around a million lunches are provided each week, to over 230,000 children in 998 schools and kura.

Supporters of the programme say it improves children's **happiness, health** and **learning** and supports children living in poverty.

The Government is looking at **changing** the programme, saying that it costs a lot of money and creates a lot of waste. This could mean fewer free lunches for children who need them.

Have your say on the School Lunch Programme! Cast your vote.

Back



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Your Voice Matters!

We are gathering your views so that we can tell adults and politicians what you think when they are making decisions about children.

First Name: _____

Age: _____

Does your school get free school lunches?

Yes

No

What do you think should happen to the free school lunch programme, Ka Ora Ka Ako?

It should be stopped

It should be kept the same

It should be expanded to more schools

I don't know

Why do you think this?

How could free school lunches be made better?





Save the Children

This project was delivered and the resulting report was prepared by Save the Children New Zealand.

For detailed methodology please get in touch.

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