

# INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL CHILD YOUTH AND FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICY

Effective from April 2012

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## Introduction

Families are the centre of all communities, the building blocks of our city. They need an environment where they can learn and develop the skills to become strong, motivated members of the city. The Invercargill City Council has listened to what the community has said about the needs of children, youth and their families and is proud to be taking a leadership role in the Southland Region by developing the Child, Youth and Family Friendly Policy. The Council wishes to see a “family lens” placed over all policies, strategies and initiatives undertaken and supported by the Council.

## Purpose

The Invercargill City Council acknowledges that many activities, services and facilities for children, youth and families are based in our city. Some are provided by the Council whilst others are collaborative initiatives between community funders, businesses, communities and the Council.

We acknowledge that a more coordinated and collaborative approach with a clear focus on children, youth and families is required. This policy strives to ensure that children, youth and families have more of a say on issues that affect them.

The purpose of the Child, Youth and Family Friendly Policy is to provide direction to Invercargill City Council policy and project managers so they consider the views of children, youth and families on all projects. It also encourages dialogue between children, youth, families and the Invercargill City Council, and acknowledges the important role of external service agencies working closely with children, youth and families.

The City has identified four Community Outcomes:

- A diverse and growing economy
- Healthy lifestyles in a healthy environment
- A city that is a great place to live and visit
- Strong, innovative leadership

The Council acknowledges that children, youth and their families experience the city in a unique way, and it is committed to empowering children, youth and families to help shape our city and foster a sense of belonging.

In 2009 the Southland Leaders' Forum was held. At this forum three key regional issues were identified:

- Parenting
- Leadership
- Youth

These work streams and the community outcomes form the base for this policy.

## Definitions

**Children and Youth** This policy defines children as aged from birth to 11 years and youth as young people aged 12 – 24 years. The policy includes both children and youth and focuses on them in the context of the family and community.

Many things shape children and youth, including their cultural background, the economic status of their family and their health. The policy takes a holistic approach, which includes the idea that it takes “a whole village to raise a child”. This village may be a young person’s immediate or extended family, their school, church and sports club, their local community or the city as a whole. The village provides a child with the support and experiences they need to achieve all that they want to do now and in the future.

**Family** For the purposes of this Policy, “Family” is defined as “any group identifying themselves as ‘a family’, and including at least one child or young person”.

This policy recognises that families are constantly evolving and changing. It takes a broad and inclusive view of the family that encompasses a wide range of family living arrangements.

## Invercargill City Values

Invercargill City wants to ensure children and youth:

- Get the best start to life.
- Grow and develop to their best potential.
- Learn the skills needed for the future.
- Have the opportunity to enjoy childhood in our city.
- Have interesting and exciting things to do in the city.
- Have their voices heard and listened to.
- Are nurtured and valued.
- Feel safe and secure.

Invercargill City also wants to ensure the city is a place where families can:

- Rear their children and young people
- Provide mutual support and respect
- Flourish
- Make a positive contribution to the life of the city
- Enjoy the city and feel safe
- Access a range of services
- Feel a sense of belonging and proudly call the city home

## Making Things Happen

The Council has identified a number of detailed goals and objectives together with the community that will contribute to achieving the policy's aim of making Invercargill a nurturing, exciting and safe city for all children, youth and their families.

The policy's first goal, giving you a voice, is Invercargill's response to the request by families, youth and children to provide them with ways to become involved with the Council on things that are important to them.

Goals two to five provide direction for children, youth, families and the Invercargill City Council to work together to create a city that is fun, healthy, accessible and safe from a child, youth and family perspective.

## Annual Action Plan

Each year the Invercargill City Council will work with other closely aligned organisations to ensure the Child, Youth and Family Friendly Policy comes to life through the development of an annual action plan. Members of the public and organisations will suggest actions for the coming year and Councillors will consider these ideas during the Council's Annual Plan process. An annual report on progress will be completed as part of Council's annual reporting process.

## The Goals

Goal 1 Giving You a Voice

Goal 2 Being Active and Healthy

Goal 3 Providing a Welcoming and Safe Environment

Goal 4 Working for You

Goal 5 Strengthening Families in the Community

## The Objectives

It is anticipated that the Goals will include objectives which cover the following topics.

Goal 1 Giving You a Voice

- Learning about how the Council works and can help
- Getting involved with the Council on things that are important

## Goal 2 Being Active and Healthy

- Having lots of child and youth friendly activities to do
- Getting family members active
- An appreciation of diversity

## Goal 3 Providing a Welcoming and Safe Environment

- Caring for the environment
- Making safe places to play and visit
- Promoting the child and youth friendly focus of the city

## Goal 4 Working for You

- Talking with people and being a part of networks that make things happen
- Letting you know what is going on
- Ensuring all Council decision making considers children, youth and families

## Goal 5 Strengthening Families in the Community

- Working collaboratively across the community

The development of actions within each objective will be a collaborative effort across council departments and the community. It is anticipated that this will include suggestions made in the Point of Difference Report, and the former Invercargill City Council Youth Policy.

## National and International Content

### **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) is an internationally accepted document that recognises that all children have human rights. New Zealand officially adopted UNCROC in 1993.

### **New Zealand Agenda for Children**

The 2002 Agenda for Children is Central Government's strategy for improving the lives of children. It sets out a programme for action to give higher priority to children's interests, rights and needs. It has seven key action areas including increasing children's participation and improving local government and community planning for children.

### **Treaty of Waitangi**

This 1840 document forms the historical foundation of New Zealand's bicultural society. The Invercargill City Council is committed to building on this unique identity and having initiatives that respect and reflect the spirit of the Treaty.

## Other Relevant Council Policies, Plans and Strategies

The Child, Youth and Family Friendly Policy is also linked with other Council documents, policies and plans. These include:

- Smokefree Parks
- Recreation Plans
- Arts and Cultural Plans