

## Summary demographics of children in New Zealand

At the time of the 2006 Census, there were 1.05 million children under 18 years living in New Zealand. These young New Zealanders made up over a quarter (26 percent) of the total New Zealand population.

The population of under-18 year olds increased by 6 percent in the 10 years between 1996 and 2006 and is expected to continue increasing until 2021, when it will reach just over 1.1 million, then reducing to just under 1.1 million in 2026.

While their number may be growing, children and young people represent a steadily shrinking proportion of the New Zealand population: in 1996, 27 percent of New Zealanders were aged under 18 years; by 2026, this share will have fallen to around 22 percent as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Historical and projected number of children and young people, by age group, 1991–2026**

Age group (years)	Historical (Census)			Projected (2006-base)			
	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026
0-4	279,603	270,801	275,076	308,000	299,240	296,720	296,750
5-9	288,291	286,200	286,488	290,210	312,450	303,700	301,200
10-14	264,186	290,739	306,006	296,390	294,960	317,180	308,480
15-17	158,535	160,641	186,102	187,490	181,470	183,510	192,970
Total under 18	990,615	1,008,381	1,053,672	1,082,090	1,088,120	1,101,110	1,099,400
Total NZ population	3,618,300	3,737,280	4,027,947	4,393,200	4,588,700	4,770,800	4,939,400
% of total under 25	27.4	27.0	26.2	24.6	23.7	23.1	22.3

Source: Statistics New Zealand, New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, usually resident population; Resident population projections (2006-base), Series 5, assuming medium fertility, medium mortality and long-term migration gain of 10,000 (total population). Base is June 2006 population estimates.

A slight predominance of males persists among children under 18 (51 percent), a pattern that has been stable since 1991. Just over half of all newborn babies are male (52 percent in 2007).

Children and young people are becoming a more ethnically-diverse population with declining proportions identifying as European and growing proportions identifying as Asian, Pacific and other ethnic groups. In the under 18 age group the proportion of Māori changed little between 1996 and 2006, remaining at around 24 percent. The proportion identifying with Pacific ethnic groups increased from 10 percent to 12 percent over this period while those belonging to Asian ethnic groups increased from just over 6 percent to almost 10 percent. Those in other ethnic groups – Other Ethnic Groups – have a small but growing presence (Table 2).

**Table 2 Ethnic distribution of children and young people, 1996- 2006**

0-17 years	1996	2001	2006
European	77.0	74.3	72.4
Māori	24.1	24.0	23.7
Pacific	10.0	11.0	12.1
Asian	6.3	7.4	9.7
Other	0.7	0.9	1.2

*Source: Statistics New Zealand, five-year ethnic population estimates.*

*Notes: (1) People identified with more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported.*

*(2) To maintain consistency over time, those identified as 'New Zealander' in 2006 have been included in the European ethnic group.*

The trend of increasing ethnic diversity among children and young people is expected to continue. Medium population projections based on 2006 data suggest that by 2026 the proportion of the population identifying as European will have fallen to 65 percent in the under 18 age group. Also it is projected that 28 percent will be Māori, 18 percent will be of Asian ethnicity and the same proportion (18 percent) will identify with Pacific ethnic groups.

An increasing proportion of children living in New Zealand were born overseas. At the time of the 2006 Census, 172,668 or 16% of children aged under 18 years were recorded as overseas born.

The share of children in the population varies by region. In 2006, the Gisborne region had the highest concentration of children under 18 (31 percent) and Otago the lowest (22 percent).

The majority of children and young people live in major urban centres with populations of 30,000 or more – 71 percent of those aged under 18 years in 2006. Another 14 percent lived in secondary urban areas (population of 10,000–29,999) or minor urban areas (1,000–9,999). Only 15 percent of children aged under 18 years lived in rural areas of New Zealand in 2006. Overall, children under 18 years (85 percent) are about as urbanised as the population as a whole (86 percent).

Ethnic diversity also varies by region. In 2006, Māori children made up a relatively high proportion of children and young people under the age of 18 in Gisborne (61 percent), Northland (48 percent), Bay of Plenty (42 percent) and Hawkes Bay (36 percent), but less than 20 percent of this age group in South Island regions. In the Auckland region under-18 year olds were more likely to be of Pacific or Asian ethnicity (23 percent and 19 percent respectively) than Māori (17 percent).