

the Y7-10 Project



a mapping & awareness-raising exercise
regarding children aged 10-13

Project Coordinator:

Kimberley Boyce Campbell
C/o Ruffell Films
Ph: 03 3666178
Fax: 03 3778491
E-mail:
boycecampbell@xtra.co.nz

General Enquiries:

Children's Advocate
Christchurch City Council
Ph: 03 3711890
Fax: 03 3711786
E-mail:
Lyn.Campbell@ccc.govt.nz

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Cover Artwork: Branston Intermediate. Artist: Riki Manuel. 5m x 1.8m Acrylic Painted Canvas Hanging.
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What is a Y7-10 anyway?

'Year Seven to Ten', or 'Y7-10' refers to the years of schooling that used to be called 'Form 1-4'. Most students enter Year 7 (Form 1) at age 10 or 11, and exit Year 10 (Form 4) at age 14 or sometimes 15. 'Middle School' is the term often applied to this age group. Increasing numbers of schools have chosen to restructure and create a middle school because they recognise Y7-10s have distinct needs and characteristics.

Y7-10 children are in the transition between childhood and adulthood with rapidly changing growth and development phases. Their attitudes are also changing fast as they grow and develop socially, mentally, and spiritually. For their parents, teachers and caregivers Y7-10s can be very challenging. Therefore it is important that the Christchurch City Council understands the special needs of this group in order to plan from an informed knowledge base.

While in-depth research has been done on issues to do with children and youth in Christchurch, there appears to be gaps in our understanding and knowledge as to what is happening and what needs to be done for children in the Y7-10 group. This project is an awareness-raising exercise - a starting point from which (it is hoped) further action can be taken. We have attempted to answer three key questions:

- **What research exists already and what does it tell us?**
- **Who is catering for this specific group? (What, when and where?)**
- **Are there gaps in service provision - and how can we fill them?**

Over 100 service providers in Christchurch have been surveyed to help us answer these questions. The exercise has proved to be both enlightening and constructive. We found wide consensus on many issues regarding Y7-10s, and were pleasantly surprised at the level of response. This document summarises the main themes that came out of the survey, and highlights the relevant literature available on Y7-10s.

"Middle school children are a unique breed of cat. Neither child nor adult, they are bombarded with pressure to be accepted. How one is accepted by the peer group becomes FAR more important than how one is perceived by adults. In fact, most adults lose pretty much all their credibility for a while! It's too bad that the middle schooler's need to 'break away' happens precisely when they also need the most guidance and adult support. These two issues grind, as any parent or teacher can affirm! This is precisely why we need to do further research on how to establish good programmes..."

- from 'Characteristics of the Early Adolescent'

The Y7-10 Project

aims to focus the spotlight on children in the 10-14 year old age group.

- **Who is providing for them?**
- **What needs to be done that is not being done at the moment?**

It needs to be understood at the outset that this is not a research project. It is a mapping and awareness-raising exercise; a starting point from which further action or research may be undertaken.

The project has comprised of three main parts. Firstly, a search was undertaken to find relevant literature on Y7-10s. Highlights of this search are contained in this document.

The second and major part was the Y7-10 Survey. A simple questionnaire was sent to over 120 providers in the greater Christchurch area. Respondents were asked to describe their service, including where and when it was provided, and to indicate the themes of the service provided by ticking boxes.

Three open ended questions followed:

- **What are the main struggles you have encountered in providing for Y7-10s?**
- **What would help your organisation provide a better service for Y7-10s?**
- **Are you aware of any gaps in service provision for Y7-10s?**

The majority of questionnaires were sent out in the first week of November, 1998. Subsequent questionnaires were sent out as more providers for Y7-10s were brought to attention of the working party. Follow-up calls were made from mid-November to mid-December. During this time, a few providers were taken through the questionnaire via phone interview, and their responses added to the survey data.

Despite the survey being carried out in the busy pre-Christmas period, there was a high level of participation by providers. A total of 100 responses were collected. These were post-coded, and the results are summarised in Appendix B. Highlights of providers' comments are contained in Appendix C.

The Y7-10 Survey should be taken as an indication of where service provision for Y7-10s in Christchurch City is 'at'. It is not exhaustive. There are organisations not included – some because of non-response and some because the Y7-10 Working Party were not aware of them at the time the survey was carried out. However, the majority are included, and the themes which came through were in the main very strong. Therefore, the results of the Y7-10 Survey should be taken seriously by those making decisions affecting the young people of our city.

The final part of the project was the Y7-10 video – '*Tweenagers*'. While the survey contains the views of providers, the video is based on a series of interviews and focus groups with Y7-10 children themselves. It is intended to be used in conjunction with the survey findings to give a rounded picture of 'where things are at' for Y7-10s.

Y7-10s: the 'tweenagers'

“...a unique breed of cat...”

“It’s like their ears fall off”

“Students are very vulnerable at this stage - they experience more intense physical, emotional and intellectual changes than at any other period in life. All this often in a context of very significant social change (and pressure).”

Think ‘early teen’ and certain images spring to mind. Boys with spots, croaky voices and oversized feet. Girls with too much make up trying hard to look older. Packs of eleven and twelve year-olds hanging around in sullen-looking clumps at the mall - the girls better than the boys at looking bored and disinterested in the opposite sex. Leonardo DeCaprio posters. The squeaky voices of the Backstreet Boys leaking from under the headphones of the discman...

It can be easy to be negative about children in the 10-14 age group - and many are. Respondents to the Y7-10 Survey made reference to the fickle nature of their tastes, their lack of respect for authority, their irresponsibility, short attention spans, and the power of peer pressure amongst the age group. Many respondents voiced a frustration in trying to relate to this age, at least one had given up trying to cater to them¹. **“It’s like their ears fall off”** said one provider.

Some of the difficulty in providing for this age group has been attributed to the variety in stages of development occurring:

“[Y7-10s] may be almost the same age, but are likely to be at different developmental stages, which makes it challenging to provide programmes that cater for all their needs at all times.”
- The Campbell Centre

It is an age for experimenting, for pushing the boundaries, for trying to find one’s own identity. It is a time of huge change. An intermediate school principal stated;

“This age is alive. The level of skill produced by some intermediates and early secondary schools in drama,

¹ The Woolston Development Project, in response to a perceived need for out of school care for Y7-10s, recently trialled a programme for this age group. There were 17 children to start with -by the end only six were attending. The reason given was: “They get bored really quickly”.

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themselves.”**

- Youth Alive

“Students are very vulnerable at this stage - they experience more intense physical, emotional and intellectual changes than at any other period in life. All this often in a context of very significant social change (and pressure).”
– Shirley Intermediate

Struggles with such pressures can result in a whole range of problems for some children. Glenelg Children's Health Camp staff indicated that referred children in this age group tend to exhibit low self esteem and poor motivation; poor social skills and associative disruptive behavioural patterns; and educational problems, including histories of non-achievement and failure.²

These children can also be seen as a problem in that they don't fit neatly into many programmes and activities. They certainly will not participate in activities aimed at younger children. In the words of one respondent,

“Twelve year olds think nine year-olds ‘suck’.” - YMCA³

More than one respondent noted the way to attract Y7-10s was to aim at the older ‘youth’ market, so keen are Y7-10s to appear older than they are. This may also cause a problem in the way adults perceive Y7-10s:

“I think as adults we have sometimes allowed the bravado of these kids to make us believe that they are ‘young adults’ when in reality they are often extremely vulnerable and without the skills to handle what the world dishes up.”
- Youth Alive

But not all is doom and gloom...

“Aside from all the issues, they are a delight!”

- declared the START respondent. Several respondents had found that when they create a safe, fun environment with lots of ‘razzmatazz’, and set clear boundaries, these kids will enter in wholeheartedly:

“They are anti-authority... we win them over through fun”
- Community Development Network

“This age is alive. The level of skill produced by some intermediates and early secondary schools in drama, music, dance etc is amazing. They love action, crave excitement and will respond to people who provide them with opportunities with good boundaries.... It doesn't

² Directors of the camp also note that parenting styles are a big problem. For more provider feedback on parenting, see section on parent education and role models.

³ Y.M.C.A. Adventure Camps have separated the 9-11 age group and the 12-14 age group. The activities are just the same, but work better when ‘older primary’ and ‘younger secondary’ are not together.

really take a lot of organising... just providing opportunities to enjoy themselves.” - Youth Alive

Y7-10s are crackling with untapped potential. This is the age at which they begin to make decisions about what they will do in life, who they will do it with, and who they will be. Many of the patterns are being set which will govern the kind of adults they will be. Most respondents did not find Y7-10s an easy group, but they did find it an exciting and a crucial one.



Kirkwood Intermediate: 'Twelve Heavens and Kotuku'
Hand-died Tuile attached to Printed & Quilted Fabric Kete

the issues, the gaps, & how we can fill them

The Y7-10 Project Survey has found many gaps in what is 'out there' for Y7-10 children. Responding organisations raised many issues. However they also were not short of suggestions about what could be done, what works well, and how groups can work together for the good of our young teens. This is a summary of respondents' issues, insights and ideas.

“Our perception is that most young people having problems in this area have common demographic, cultural and geographic indicators.”
- Te Hou Ora

“Neglect, violence... alcohol and drug issues within the family are a common feature.”
- 198 Youth Health Centre

issues for y7-10s 'at-risk'

When it comes to young teens, all of the eight organisations dealing specifically with at-risk young people identified the family as a crucial area of concern. For Te Hou Ora, an organisation running programmes for young Maori, patterns have been perceived running through iwi and hapu that are hard to break out of:

“It would be really helpful if research was done on kids involved in crime and truancy, especially with regard to iwi and hapu. Our perception is that most young people having problems in this area have common demographic, cultural and geographic indicators. Research like that would give us so much more clout and a far greater understanding of how to meet the needs of our young people.”
- Te Hou Ora

Leaders have been regularly frustrated by the scenario in which a child makes good progress, particularly on camps and time away from the city, only to see that work undone when the child returns to the family environment. Fijian Social Services Trust⁴ has found that one-on-one counselling is most effective when children are taken out of the city. Likewise, Te Hou Ora camps are seen by leaders as the best place for good decision-making and real life changes to happen.

Research establishes that programmes work best when they are long term and relational; and when the family is involved. Te Hou Ora staff state that there is a lack of early intervention programmes involving the whole whanau, yet this is the key to preventing children becoming fully-fledged criminals as older teens or adults.

family instability

The family is becoming the battle zone and increasingly children are the casualties. One intermediate principal noted that many children, particularly boys, with behavioural problems are experiencing instability at home. He perceived a pattern with single parent families, where there is a lack of good male role modelling in the home. Boys in such families often struggle with issues of identity and working out their 'male-ness'. These struggles are then exhibited at school through behavioural problems.

“Mum goes and gets a new boyfriend and so there are all sorts of tensions at home, meanwhile there is all this anger

⁴ The Fijian Social Services Trust run after school and holiday programmes, work skills courses, and programmes for at-risk youth.

***building up in the child.
Anger is becoming
much more
prevalent..."***

Intermediate

***"Anger is
becoming
much
more
prevalent"***

*- Breens
Intermediate*

***"We don't
have the
skills as an
organisation
to deal with
a lot of the
problems."***

- YMCA

The problem is compounded by a lack of male teachers for children in the primary and intermediate age group.

Field Workers in Schools agree. The biggest problems in children they are referred are 'rage' and behavioural management. They also see the lack of good male role models for young boys as 'a crisis'.

Children experiencing problems are usually referred to specialist services. The Child and Family Specialty Service find that:

"Children requiring our service are often in families that have multiple current stressors, including major socio-economic stresses."

The 198 Youth Health Centre agrees:

"A key issue for young people in this specific age group is family unemployment and poverty, which has a direct impact on the young person's ability to participate socially and in the education system. Neglect, violence... alcohol and drug issues within the family are a common feature."

It is not just the schools who see the outcomes of family instability.

- 14% of the respondent organisations said that anti-social behaviour (bullying, poor behaviour, irresponsibility) were a main struggle with the Y7-10 age group.
- 20% commented on authority issues and a lack of respect for others, themselves, and their environment.
- 17% were able to identify family instability (including violence, parental separation, neglect, drugs and alcohol problems) as a key cause. These responses came from all different types of organisations.

The YMCA has encountered many behavioural programmes on its holiday camps, which is a cause of frustration:

"We don't have the skills as an organisation to deal with a lot of the problems."

the need for parent education and positive role modelling

Parent education is seen by the YMCA as 'a real need', and they have responded by beginning their own parent education programmes this year. Other organisations currently offering parent education are the Campbell Centre, Open Home Foundation, and the Methodist Mission. Each of these runs courses throughout the city. The only residential parenting facility discovered by the Y7-10 Project was the Methodist Mission's Eastling Family Support Centre in Bishopdale. At Eastling, parents on the course live in with another family who model good parenting practises.

“You are battling against a ‘cultural slide’ which is so widespread. These kids need heroes, but so many authority figures are sloppy. Selfishness is a major trend - parents don’t pass on treats to kids. Often we are working with the parents as much as the kids.”

- Community Development Network

Agencies currently running parenting programmes:

- YMCA - camps
- Methodist Mission - Eastling Family Support Centre
- Campbell Centre (Presbyterian Support Services)
- Open Home Foundation

Good modelling by parents in the home is seen by many working with Y7-10s as being central to children learning the skills and attitudes they will need as they grow up. The Youth Alive respondent believed that a ‘lack of modelling’ is a big cause of unhealthy relationships between young teens and other problems:

“One thing I’ve noticed is a lack of problem solving - also due to a lack of modelling. But what this breeds is an inability to work at issues... and often a denial or avoidance of the issues. I personally believe this one is the major reason for truancy and school suspensions.”

- Youth Alive

It seems, however, there are limited opportunities for parents to learn how to be good role models. School Field Workers are enthusiastic, specifically about programmes such as those run at the Eastling Centre, where parents seem to find real benefits in seeing effective parenting modelled in daily life. It appears that bookings are taken months in advance, and the waiting list grows.

The Community Development Network, who work primarily with at-risk young people and their families, expressed a sense of frustration at the lack of good parenting practices:

“You are battling against a ‘cultural slide’ which is so widespread. These kids need heroes, but so many authority figures are sloppy. Selfishness is a major trend - parents don’t pass on treats to kids. Often we are working with the parents as much as the kids.”

It appears that the need for good parenting goes beyond the communities usually associated with at-risk young people. Organisations such as Baptist Youth Ministries and Scouting Canterbury draw from all areas of the city, yet report widespread parenting problems:

“We are finding that the youth group is replacing families - we are teaching young people what the parents should have taught. I would go so far as to call it a crisis situation.”

- Baptist Youth Ministries

“A lot of parents couldn’t care less. They throw the kids money and say ‘Get out for the day’... Kids don’t want

“A need exists for more young people-friendly accommodation when home is an unsafe place.”
- START

“The bednight funding provided does not target or cover prevention and support work with families.”
- Open Home Foundation

parents hanging around all the time, but they do want support and to know the parents are ‘there’...”
- Scouting Canterbury

Shopping Mall managers have noticed a tendency for parents to either ‘dump’ kids or turn a blind eye when children behave badly; or, as one mall marketing manager put it,

“There is an appearance of a non-caring attitude by some parents toward their child’s action”

What providers see as ‘poor parenting’ extends to everything from a general apathy to overt abuse. 14% of respondents pointed specifically to the need for effective parenting education. This is clearly a ‘gap’.

the need for emergency accommodation

The issues for at-risk Y7-10s could be summarised as the following needs:

- **Early-intervention programmes**
- **Effective parenting skills**
- **Positive role models**
- **Emergency accommodation**

Child and Family Specialty Service and 198 Youth Health Centre have noted a lack of safe emergency accommodation or in-patient type resources for young people. Open Home Foundation, who provide this service, are frustrated by a lack of funding:

“The bednight funding provided does not target or cover prevention and support work with families.”

START staff, who counsel young people who have been sexually abused, point out the need for immediate response for Y7-10s:

“[They] are particularly spontaneous and need help NOW! If they have to wait they don’t.”

It seems that for many young teens who need to get out of their home environment, there is simply nowhere to go. Children are often referred to CYPFS. However, 198 Youth Health Centre sums up the frustration of many respondent organisations in their statement:

“CYPFS have difficulty responding quickly to potential crisis situations due to poor recovery and unrealistic workloads.”

Staff at Te Hou Ora find they are often filling the gap and providing temporary emergency accommodation:

“CYPFS tend to off-load kids and then provide no or little support to co-operating agencies and whanau”

“WINZ has stopped the Handicapped Child Allowance of a 14 year-old with an amputated leg, because she doesn’t need the allowance any more. (Her leg has not grown back.)”
- C.C.S

For many of Te Hou Ora young people, the options are either the couch of a leader’s flat, or the streets.

government agencies

Organisations reliant on government agencies express general frustration with agencies in their efforts to get help for young people. The Field Workers in Schools all concurred that there was a ‘bottom-line mentality’ pervading such agencies, so that only the very worst cases were dealt with. Definitions of what is a ‘crisis’ differ between those at ground level working with the children, and staff of government agencies. This does not just apply to those working with ‘at-risk’ youth. Crippled Children’s Society is also frustrated at the way clients’ needs are assessed:

“A lot of our clients will have / are having benefit cuts. It is very hard to influence WINZ - I do quite a lot of advocacy involving MPs... WINZ has stopped the Handicapped Child Allowance of a 14 year-old with an amputated leg, because she doesn’t need the allowance any more. (Her leg has not grown back.)”
- C.C.S

There is a clear issue of under-resourcing. Child and Family Specialty Service say that a solution might be to have closer liaison with CYPFS and Specialist Education Services, whom they suspect have similar resource issues.

General themes of comments to do with government agencies:

- **Resources are limited to the point of unworkability**
- **Government agencies are overstretched and slow to respond**
- **Smaller, community-based agencies are taking up the slack. These are also struggling to meet demand for their services**

One in eight respondents said their organisation struggled with long waiting lists for their services.

the need for networking & partnership

Several organisations voiced a need for more working together. Some wanted to brainstorm and share resources with others doing similar work:

“It would be good to make links with other agencies working with this age group... sharing the resources we have with each other”
- Agape Street Ministries After School Programmes

“We need a networking group for this age group.”
- RockSolid

“What’s being done elsewhere? Let’s not be afraid to borrow ideas if we can’t come up with them.”

-Park Rangers

“We need a networking group for this age group.”

- RockSolid

FUEL (City New Life) suggested a resource library for groups working with Y7-10s. Where relevant, groups could borrow equipment, games, and literature on subjects such as parental involvement. Others suggested they would benefit from databases and access to relevant research and New Zealand teaching material. Civil Defence suggested a booklet or noticeboard in each school to inform teaching staff of all the services available to them.

Some organisations wanted to talk to others who would have a better ‘feel’ for the age group and were up to date with their needs:

“*[We would like] the opportunity to discuss with other support provider organisations to get a feel for the needs of the target group.*”

- Canterbury Museum

“*We need contacts in the community who work with young people.*”

- Canterbury Asthma Society

“*What’s being done elsewhere? Let’s not be afraid to borrow ideas if we can’t come up with them.*”

- Park Rangers Holiday Programme

A theme for intermediate schools is the need to work more closely with local business and industry. One reason was in relation to careers for students. If businesses could provide work experience for children, particularly at the Year 10 level, principals and teachers felt students might have more hope for the future and a drive to succeed academically. The Middleton Grange School ‘World of Work’ coordinator was frustrated by the small number of businesses willing to take the time to give students work experience. More exposure to different industries may counter the problem of students not making the link between hard work now and getting the kind of job they wanted in the future. In total, nine survey respondents commented on a lack of motivation in children this age. Almost all of these were involved in the education sector.

Another way schools and other organisations look to be in partnership with business is through sponsorship of events, projects and programmes.

11% of respondents said that it was difficult to get community or business support for projects.

24% said their service would be improved by better coordination with other organisations.

“We need closer liaison with schools”

- Just Us Youth

“Many thanks for the positives - children do get a response if they write to the Council.”

- Chisnallwood Intermediate

“Partnership programmes work well”

- Cowles Stadium

Interestingly, while some respondents claimed a lack of support from local business for youth initiatives, there were indications that some businesses were looking for opportunities to support worthy causes, but either did not know where to look or had not yet found the opportunity.

The Palms Shopping Centre commented that they would like schools in particular to utilise the mall as either a performance venue or for educational purposes. It is possible that other malls would be similarly supportive. Northlands Mall recently provided Te Kaupapa Whakaora⁵ with a house to use as an additional venue for educational programmes.

Malls have an interest in having a good image within the community, and in establishing the mall as a community focal point. However, there are some members of the community malls would prefer not to have to deal with – young people who shoplift, tag, vandalise, and behave in an ‘antisocial manner’. Organisations that can either deter these young people from such behaviour, or just give them something else to do, are likely to candidates for their support.

The theme of partnership ran strongly through respondent comments. Many organisations are reliant on schools as the best place to disseminate information to the target age group, and expressed a wish for more opportunities, more time, and greater awareness. Some looked to schools for more support of their service:

“[We need] willing and consistent support from school staff to promote services offered...” - Public Health Nurses

“A contract to specifically develop resources for these students and the teachers in their schools would interest us.”

- FADE

“We need closer liaison with schools” - Just Us Youth

Child Helpline also cited a lack of liaison with the education sector, but saw this as a role ideally performed by the Ministry of Education. They looked to the City Council, however, for assistance in **‘getting our message across’**.

Other respondents, such as Chisnallwood Intermediate, were looking for opportunities to work with council. They were appreciative of the way students had been part of consultation

⁵ Te Kaupapa Whakaora is an alternative education centre attached to Papanui High School. Most of the students are ‘at-risk’ Maori and Polynesian young people.

processes in the past, and the way Council looked to provide for school children.

“There is a gap in support for disabled kids or those living with chronic conditions. How do we get them together?”
- Canterbury Asthma Society

“There is a need for [disabled] young people to feel that they can do something after they leave school...”
- C.C.S

“Many thanks for the positives - children do get a response if they write to the Council. Thanks for the Civil Defence classes, the Westpac Trust Music Show for kids earlier this year, thanks for the tiles on the Stewart Fountain, for the videos made available on water...”

Other plaudits came from Tahu FM, who said that 4YP were doing ‘a tremendous job’, and Cowles Stadium who were in favour of working in tandem with other organisations in running programmes for young people:

“Partnership programmes work well - eg. Just Us Youth use us and we provide equipment, tutors etc.”

198 Youth Health Centre were very positive about working in with the Child and Family Specialty Service and having a counsellor weekly on secondment.

In general, respondents were looking for more opportunities to work in partnership. The City Council was sometimes looked to as a provider, but more often as a facilitator, a coordinator, a link to resources and other organisations. While the vast majority said they needed more funding to do a better job, there appears to be a general awareness that funding is limited. Pooling resources and working together was seen by many as a key way of getting around the problem.

issues to do with special needs & disabilities

One of the characteristics of Y7-10 children highlighted by several respondents was their tendency to have to be ‘cool’. Any activity is weighed up in terms of their image. As it happens, disabilities are not good for the image:

“It is difficult to get kids to attend anything outside school identified as ‘disabled’ or ‘different’.”

- Canterbury Asthma Society

One provider for children with disabilities remarked that it was difficult to get not just other children, but schools as a whole to be accepting of the disabled. School did not necessarily see education around disabilities as a priority, particularly because of the cost of such programmes.

There appeared to be a ‘lack of understanding of the issues’ amongst the public generally to do with disability. Canterbury Asthma Society saw it as important that children with disabilities not always be on the outer, but be able to spend time with others going through the same things:

“There is a gap in support for disabled kids or those living with chronic conditions. How do we get them together?”

- Canterbury Asthma Society

Other needs highlighted were similar to those of most Y7-10s. Research shows that for children of this age, the need 'to belong' is strong, as is the need to feel worthwhile and

youth cannot come.”
- FUEL

“The service is primarily accessed through parents, not young people themselves.”

- Youth Law Service

“We don't have centres handy to all parents. They have to travel to Burnside at present... “

- NumberWorks Maths Coaching

“The age group of 10-12 years are dependent on their parents/ caregivers to come. If parents are busy or tired, or cannot be bothered, the

important. CCS pointed out that this was especially true for disabled children, who need to feel that they have some sort of a future. This means being able to look forward to job opportunities, or at least to know there will be financial assistance to allow them to live a 'normal' life.

the need for better access to services

There are three main types of barrier to services – physical, financial and psychological. Physical access issues are largely to do with traffic and transport:

“Traffic congestion especially around Hagley Avenue [is a problem] - this age group are transported almost exclusively by parents.”
- Canterbury Netball Union

Y7-10 children are especially dependent on parents to ferry them around the city. They are too young to drive and buses do not necessarily go to the right place at the right time. It helps parents if services are close to home. This is not always the case:

“We don't have centres handy to all parents. They have to travel to Burnside at present...”

NumberWorks Maths Coaching

Over half of all services surveyed had a base in the city centre. While centrality may seem beneficial in terms of access, it has its own problems.

“We have parking and disabled access problems given our central city location” - Child & Family Specialty Service

Canterbury Netball Association also expressed the need for parents to be able to park close to amenities, especially if the amenity is surrounded by busy (and potentially dangerous to cross) roads. Difficulty in getting a park close to the Hagley Netball Courts on a Saturday morning is an issue that has been well documented.

Ideally, children are able to use facilities in their own neighbourhoods that can be easily reached by foot or bike – the modes of travel most used by Y7-10s unaccompanied by adults. Several children interviewed for the Y7-10 video admired or enjoyed facilities and services offered in other parts of the city, such as skate parks, basketball half-courts, swimming pools and malls; and expressed a desire for one closer to home.

Y7-10 children are not just dependent on parents for physical access. There are several services available to young people either that they are unaware of, or are unlikely to have the confidence or initiative to go to alone. Youth Law⁶ stated that one major issue for their service was that it is primarily accessed through parents, not the children themselves.

“Events have to be affordable... also children need to be able to get to and from events - either the event is held close to home, or accessible by bus route.”
- Sockburn Recreation Centre

“No special services provided.”
- CTL Red Bus

- ⁶ Youth Law is a division of the Community Law Centre

Children are therefore dependent on their parents to be 'on to it' both in knowing what the child's needs are, and what services are available to meet those needs. This is not always the case:

"A huge change in special education policy has meant some schools/parents are unsure of what's available."

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Then, of course, parents are often required to participate:

"The age group of 10-12 years are dependent on their parents/caregivers to come. If parents are busy or tired, or cannot be bothered, the youth

cannot come." - FUEL

There are some problems Y7-10s encounter that they may not want to involve their parents in, particularly to do with health issues. If they know a service that can help, they may then need to find transport and money. Such hurdles stop some young people from seeking out help:

"A young person's need for confidentiality or privacy and their lack of transport and financial support may impact on them accessing services" - Public Health Nurses

Approximately one in five survey respondents mentioned that some children or parents struggled to pay for activities:

"This group does not have a large expendable income, thus we do not make a lot of provision for them... They may still come to our centres (but not spend money) just because they don't have anywhere else to go."

- Time Out Leisure Centres

"Some parents can struggle to pay subs - but we don't want to kick out the kids because of that..."

- Scouting Canterbury

Organisations like the International Antarctic Centre and Science Alive expressed a wish for funding for groups from lower socioeconomic brackets. Some children were said to be missing out on such services because low-decile schools could not afford to take them.

In terms of access to services for Y7-10s, the key issues are:

- Lack of transport and/or parking (10%)
- Inability of children/parents to pay (19%)
- Parents/children unaware of what is available
- Children unable to access service by themselves

the need for appropriate venues

Linked with issues of access is the need for appropriate venues. Some services, such as programmes run by the Campbell Centre, need a central venue:

"It is difficult to find premises in the suburbs. Purpose-built education centres in the suburbs that could be rented out to private groups would be helpful."

- NumberWorks Maths Coaching

"The kids I talk to... say

'I didn't rush into sex with this guy! I waited three months.'
Youth Alive

"A central or many youth centre(s) where I could deliver programmes by advertising and working more closely with other youth services [would be helpful]. A centralised area would provide a user-friendly area to work more closely in meeting the young people's needs, i.e. when tailor-making programmes."
- The Campbell Centre⁷

Other respondents needed venues in the suburbs in order to be closer to clients:

"It is difficult to find premises in the suburbs. Purpose-built education centres in the suburbs that could be rented out to private groups would be helpful."
- NumberWorks Maths Coaching

Venues also need to be affordable, particularly for groups run by volunteers and without subs or other revenue. Youth groups fall into this category, and are on the lookout for low-cost recreational facilities such as gymnasiums. Such groups are usually reliant on children bringing money to pay for facilities.

Scouting Canterbury suggested that free rental of venues would help a great deal. Most Scout dens are on Council reserves. One other way it was suggested the City Council could help with venues was to do with lifting restrictions on buildings:

"Finding the right premises is my main difficulty - having to comply with the building code, disabled access, fire walls, the City Plan, etc etc etc!"
- NumberWorks Maths Coaching

issues to do with sexuality

Puberty hits most young people during Years 7-10. Several respondents pointed out the difficulty children have with the physical changes they go through. Through all this, they are discovering their sexuality, and this can be the area in which other problems are manifested:

"When kids hurt in the areas [of family break-ups], early alcohol/sex initiation is almost always going to happen. It's a problem area, but basically a symptom. The kids I talk to... say 'I didn't rush into sex with this guy! I waited three months.'"
- Youth Alive

Children of this age are learning how to behave with the opposite sex. Some providers pointed out that things like sexual initiation are happening at a much younger age than they were even a few years ago. Where this was once a youth issue, it now affects Y7-10 children. Many, according to Baptist

⁷ Run by Presbyterian Support Services, The Campbell centre is a social work, counselling and education centre for young people aged 10-19 and their parents. Courses on issues like anger management, assertiveness, grief and self esteem are run from the centre and in the community

“Alcohol and drug issues are very unique to young people - we need many more (effective) services to cater for this.”

-The Campbell Centre

“More Schools would use our service if the funding was available.”

-Foundation for Alcohol and Drug Education (FADE)

Youth Ministries, have to be taught what sort of behaviour is appropriate, and what is not.

“It is best to have some activities that [boys and girls] do separately and ones in which they come together and learn to relate.”

While most children are taught about aspects of sexuality at school, some providers pointed out the need for parents to be educated about sexuality and their children. Family Planning Association would like this service more widely available:

“Funding for classroom teaching/Puberty Evenings for schools which can’t afford the normal fees [would help]. Also funding for community workshops on ‘Talking with your Children/Teenagers about Sexuality’ to allow wider community access to these important education services.”

the need for more alcohol & drug programmes

According to the Drug and Alcohol Resistance programme (DARE), there are compelling reasons for beginning drug resistance education at middle school age, rather than leaving it until later. Dr Eric Ashcroft [DARE programme evaluator] explains that early intervention is the key:

“[W]ith older and habitual users, friendships, relationships and lifestyles all form around and reinforce the person’s use of drugs, so that it becomes a huge task, virtually impossible, to break the habit...”

However, providers dealing with alcohol and drug issues amongst young people agreed that more programmes are needed in this area:

“Alcohol and drug issues are very unique to young people - we need many more (effective) services to cater for this.”

- The Campbell Centre

“The majority of TKW students have drug and alcohol issues impacting upon their education”

- Te Kaupapa Whakaora

“There is a gap in services for adolescent alcohol and drug rehabilitation. Adolescent mental health provisions are very minimal.”

- City Mission

The problem is not necessarily just to do with the number of programmes available for Y7-10 children. Most drug and alcohol education programmes run through schools, but not all schools can afford the service:

“More Schools would use our service if the funding was available.”

- Foundation for Alcohol and Drug Education (FADE)

“The demands of interacting with young people this age require more than the average volunteer can give.”
- FASTA

“We have the expertise and the goodwill, but we would very much appreciate not having continually to apply for funding”
Christchurch
School for Young
Writers

The Police Youth Education Service (who run the DARE programme) recognise the need for drug education, particularly Years 9 and 10. They are currently exploring this option.

the need for volunteers

“As with any volunteer service... [we need] volunteers. People who are motivated and willing to invest into the youth of the city.”
- Team Xtreme⁸

It is no secret that most service groups working in the community are somewhat cash-strapped. This brings a dilemma when it comes to staffing. Many service providers are dependent on volunteers. However, those who are available and willing to help for free also need to be skilled at working with young people, often in very specialised areas:

“The demands of interacting with young people this age require more than the average volunteer can give. They need time to commit to a weekly programme. The leaders need to be mature adults - not just old teenagers.”
- FASTA⁹

Other youth group leaders also commented on the high turnover of volunteers. It can be frustrating for service providers when volunteer staff get involved, learn the ropes, and then have to move on because of other commitments or pressures. If a replacement is found, they then also have to be trained up.

More than one organisation stressed the need for incentives for volunteer staff or leaders. It was thought that compensation might prevent valuable skills and experience being lost.

19% of survey respondents said they struggled with finding or keeping skilled staff, leaders or volunteers.

the need for funding

“(1) Money. (2) Money. (3) Money.”
- Papanui Youth Community

Money is definitely the number one struggle for Y7-10 providers. One issue is that applying for funding is a time-consuming job. Small community organisations often find themselves in a ‘catch 22’ situation. In order to be effective, they need funding. However, the amount of time staff spend on funding applications lessens time spent on activities that make the organisation effective with young people. The Christchurch School for Young Writers summed up the sentiments of many :

⁸ Team Xtreme run programmes in schools to promote self esteem and good decision-making.

⁹ FASTA is a youth group for Year 6 and up run out of St Aidan’s Anglican Church, Bryndwr.

“A lot of funding is spent on stuff that is ineffective...”
- Fijian Social Services Trust

“Incredible amounts of money are wasted on keeping up with fads... You don’t have to spend lots of money on things like creating wearable arts out of rubbish - but that sort of thing goes off.”
- Baptist Youth Ministries

“We have the expertise and the goodwill, but we would very much appreciate not having continually to apply for funding in order to be able to extend our service into much-needed areas.”

- Christchurch School for Young Writers

Successful applications for funding require both knowledge and skill. Organisations need to know who the potential funding bodies are and what aspects of their service to highlight in order to be attractive to funders.

23% of survey respondents said that securing funding was a main struggle for their organisation. Although Community Boards already play a role in advocating for community organisations and disseminating information of funding, there is clearly a need for more of this sort of service.

45% of survey respondents said that more funding would help them provide a better service. 23% said that securing funding was a main struggle.

Not every organisation catering for Y7-10s is looking for more money to be spent. One strong theme that came through in the Y7-10 Survey was that money could be more smartly spent:

“A lot of funding is spent on stuff that is ineffective...”
- Fijian Social Services Trust

Several respondents remarked that there was a trend towards making programmes and events bigger, brighter, and more expensive. However, if providers are in tune with what Y7-10s are in to, then there are ways of attracting them that do not cost a lot of money.

“Incredible amounts of money are wasted on keeping up with fads... kids see through all that stuff - the big stars, the big names. They love seeing people like themselves up there on stage - it’s reassuring. They could get there too... You don’t have to spend lots of money on things like creating wearable arts out of rubbish - but that sort of thing goes off.”
- Baptist Youth Ministries

the need to balance events with relationship-building

Y7-10s love big events. They enjoy being with a large group of other people their age and ‘whooping it up’. NOISE is good. However, while these events are important, their effect is short-term and can be quickly forgotten if not backed up. Youth groups pointed to the need for the event to be seen as a

“People think that ‘high-tech’ is the way to go, but relational stuff is the key. You do need to get their attention, but the thing they enjoy most of all is the relational side. It’s what keeps them coming back.”

- Community Development Network

“The positive relationships built between a leader and a youth have a lot of impact.”

- FUEL

“How about training/workshops on working with Y7-10s?”

- RockSolid

chance to build lasting relationships with and between young people, rather than an end in itself. According to Spreydon Youth Community, there was a need to build into things that would have lasting value:

“We need more people to befriend young people in a real way rather than throw it away at events and programmes.”

The Community Development Network¹⁰ echoed this idea:

“People think that ‘high-tech’ is the way to go, but relational stuff is the key. You do need to get their attention, but the thing they enjoy most of all is the relational side. It’s what keeps them coming back.”

10% of survey respondents said there was a ‘gap’ for Y7-10s in ‘one-on-one’ relationships with mentors/role models

the need for adults who understand Y7-10s

Y7-10s can be a difficult age group to ‘get a handle on’, even for those who work with them all the time. Many adults struggle to relate:

“...adults have difficulty seeing things through the eyes of kids this age.” *- Park Rangers Holiday Programme*

The Anglican Youth Advocate pointed out that adults do not tend to be aware of the uniqueness of this age group:

“A lot of adults perceive this age group as children and believe therefore that they should be happy to do children’s activities, however, not taking into account developmental differences between children under ten and those between 10 and 14. There is a perception among some communities that there is no need to do things for this age - or simply older people do not understand young people today and are not really willing.”

The YMCA struggled to find leaders who really knew what was ‘going on’ with Y7-10s. Other organisations, including Scripture Union in Schools¹¹ and intermediate schools spoke about the struggle to remain relevant to the needs of this fast-changing group.

¹⁰ The Community Development Network runs programmes and camps for young people referred through schools and government agencies. A social worker works with the families.

¹¹ Scripture Union in Schools (formerly Inter-School Christian Fellowship) run adventure and holiday camps, along with a support programme in schools for Christian students.

“We would like a clear idea of what they want, like, and enjoy doing. This way we could plan events that we know they would enjoy.”
- Sockburn Recreation Centre

“What’s ‘hot’ and what’s ‘not’?”
- The Palms Shopping Centre

Methodist Youth Ministries suggested that adults needed to be educated on how to relate to Y7-10s. RockSolid¹² wanted to see training and workshops on working with this age group. Others planned to initiate a consultation process with young people themselves in order to better provide for them.

16% of providers said they struggled to be relevant and keep up with Y7-10 children’s tastes

It seems that one of the key problems for providers, particularly those in the recreational field, is the difficulty of keeping up with young people’s tastes in fashion, music, and activities.

“We would like a clear idea of what they want, like, and enjoy doing. This way we could plan events that we know they would enjoy.”
- Sockburn Recreation Centre

“[We struggle with] constantly changing tastes - what’s ‘hot’ and what’s ‘not’”
- The Palms Shopping Centre

Particularly difficult was dealing with competition from other pursuits, especially of the electronic/interactive kind:

“It’s hard to entertain this group when we can’t compete with the current markets. Who wants to play snap when you can go on the latest flight simulator game?”
- Papanui Youth Community

“It is a struggle to provide enough real action and entertainment to compete with TV, movies and video games!”
- Spreydon Youth Community

The Christchurch School for Young Writers expressed an opinion that the proliferation of recreational options for young people made it difficult for them to commit to and focus on any one thing. One theme that came through from a few respondents was that children used to being entertained did not always know how to create their own entertainment, and did not want to put any effort in. The media was seen by some as a major contributor to a lack of initiative in children.

the need for places to ‘hang out’

Providers pointed out that there was a lack of ‘hang out’ places that are attractive to Y7-10s:

“In this particular locality there is no nearby skateboard bowl or facilities to rollerblade/skateboard, other than the school grounds or car parks - neither of which permit this activity.”
- The Palms Shopping Centre

¹² RockSolid is a programme for young teens run by Youth for Christ.

- Woolston Community Swimming Pool

“They are too old for the younger programmes and activities and yet too young for ‘adventure’/ teenager ones.” -
Christchurch School of Music

“...there’s nothing for older children/ younger teens to do - especially in school holidays and the countless days and hours the schools close for!”
- FPA Education Services

“These children are bored during school holidays.”

Along with suitable places to rollerblade or skateboard, respondents had noted that children liked tables and places to sit in parks, cycling areas, and they are also starting to enjoy malls. Recreational areas needed to have 'noise attraction', 'heaps of challenges', and be in 'all suburbs'. Children needed to feel safe in these areas, even to the point of having a police presence.

8% of providers perceived a gap in safe, fun recreational areas for Y7-10s
23% saw a need for recreational activity relevant to Y7-10s' needs

the need for out of school care and recreation

Some respondents pointed out that there is a dearth of activities aimed specifically at Y7-10s, particularly in holiday and after-school programmes. Activities aimed at 'youth' tend to be for high-school age or those aged 15-25, whereas those aimed at 'children' are usually for primary school age.

"They are too old for the younger programmes and

activities and yet too young for 'adventure'/teenager ones. Consequently they often get lumped into the younger set. [We] need more activities designed specifically to cater for and extend this age group." - Christchurch School of Music

"KidsFest is for younger children, and there's nothing for older children/younger teens to do especially in school holidays and the countless days and hours the schools close for!" - FPA Education Services

198 Youth Health Centre pointed out that after school care and holiday programmes are a difficulty, as Y7-10 children are too old for many programmes, yet too young to be left unsupervised. This was seen to pose a problem for working parents, particularly single parents.

The result of not having sufficient out of school care was seen as Y7-10s frequently having nothing to do:

"There are gaps in the wider community. These children are bored during school holidays."
- Woolston Community Swimming Pool

"With the pools being outdoor, there are no activities or events [in Sockburn, Waltham and Halswell] over winter."
- Sockburn Recreation Centre

"Younger people seem to have too much of nothing to do."
- Catholic Youth Team

OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) services have recognised the gap and tried to accommodate this age group. However, they claim a lack of resources has hindered the

"Girls are not as interested in sports as boys [at this age]... even when we run youth events in the holidays we get lots of youth but mainly boys." - Cowles Stadium

"In this age group there is a noticeable drop off in participation numbers."
- Canterbury Soccer

process. They pointed out the need for trained staff working with Y7-10s:

“Training and support staff working with this group on a daily basis [is important] as this group is legally entitled to care when adults are not available.”

Barnardos were also ‘loosely aware of a need’ for out of school programmes for Y7-10s, and at the time of the survey were doing a needs analysis:

“We will only look at delivering those programmes if there is something missing or if we could offer a different sort of model...”

13% of survey respondents said there was a gap in after school and holiday programmes for Y7-10s.

Gaps were pointed out in specific areas for children with particular interests. Science Alive had noted that there were limited opportunities for exposure to science in a fun environment:

“I see science and technology activities so often ‘ignite a spark’ in this age group and it would be great if we

could create more ongoing interests.”

Canterbury Public Library had noted a gap in meeting young people’s information needs, especially for years 11 and up, or, at least, “changing their perspective that libraries aren’t relevant to them.”

issues to do with sport

Years 7-10 were seen as important by most of the sporting organisations surveyed, as children of this age are fast developing in coordination and are starting to choose what sports they will focus on. However, this is the age at which participation levels start to drop off for many major sports, particularly amongst girls:

“Girls are not as interested in sports as boys [at this age]... even when we run youth events in the holidays we get lots of youth but mainly boys.” -Cowles Stadium

“In this age group there is a noticeable drop off in participation numbers.” - Canterbury Soccer

Canterbury Soccer pointed out that this age group’s participation and enthusiasm in sporting activities needs to be maintained “as a necessary part of their lives” as school pressures mount. Youth Alive staff had noted that it was important for young teens to maintain involvement in outside interests as they begin high school. Children belonged to some sort of small group or team (sporting or otherwise), tended

“There is a gap, particularly in the basketball area, as many kids don’t make high school teams - there is no other competition for them. No structure is set up as clubs don’t take people until they are 18!”
- Cowles Stadium

“Finding suitable personnel [is a struggle] especially during normal working hours.”
- Canterbury Rugby Football Union

handle the transition to high school better than those who did not.

For some children entering high school, lack of opportunity rather than lack of enthusiasm could be a reason for quitting a sport. Cowles Stadium pointed out that in some sports, schools and clubs do not provide teams for juniors:

“There is a gap, particularly in the basketball area, as many kids don’t make high school teams - there is no other competition for them. No structure is set up as clubs don’t take people until they are 18!”

The other main factor in participation drop-off was a lack of “suitably qualified coaches” to improve skill levels and maintain the enthusiasm of the participants.

“Finding suitable personnel [is a struggle] especially during normal working hours.”

-
Canterbury
Rugby
Football
Union

Canterbury Tennis saw coaches and volunteers as important not only in maintaining enthusiasm amongst younger players, but also in forging a ‘community link’ between clubs and schools. However, funding is an issue:

“We can only provide a small amount to each club to build up the link, but it is like a drop in the ocean. Some clubs (mainly in the more affluent areas) pour more resources into this link and have substantially increased membership and a community spirit.”

Some sports organisations did not see any particular gap in provision of sports for Y7-10s. Apart from Canterbury Cricket’s perceived need for better quality cricket pitches to produce better players, it would appear that this is one area where Y7-10s are reasonably well catered for. Although participation levels do begin to drop off, general participation amongst the age group is still relatively high.

Key issues to do with sport for Y7-10s:

- Drop-off in participation, particularly for girls
- Lack of coaches and volunteers to teach skills and maintain enthusiasm

issues to do with education

In our educational system, some children leave primary school at the end of Year 6 and attend an ‘intermediate school’ for Years 7 and 8, before completing their schooling at a high school for Years 9 to 13 (Form 3-7). This system is increasingly being seen as unnecessarily disruptive to children and incompatible with their stages of development. Intermediate principals and teachers pointed out the need for recognition of Y7-10s as distinct :

“[We need] greater public recognition of the emerging adolescent age group...” - Heaton Intermediate

“The change from primary to intermediate and high school is big and can be traumatic. The Aranui High School principal says that 30% of kids don’t overcome the trauma of starting high school”
- Youth Alive

Middleton Grange School, which goes from New Entrants up to Year 13 (Form 7) noted that Y7-10s need their own identity:

“These kids sit in limbo somewhat; being neither seniors nor juniors. Council led/sponsored initiatives would be well received!”

Linwood Intermediate pointed out the need for an appropriate middle school model for New Zealand. The transition to high school was seen as difficult for Year 9 children struggling to come to terms with their own identity:

“[Y7-10] Students need to be known, need to be nurtured, need identity with one teacher (Home Room). The importance of the peer group and relationships in the transition from child to adult needs a great deal more attention and rigour than is given at present. There is a need for greater flexibility in structuring programmes. A fully departmentalised, ability-grouped seven period day is incompatible with what we now know about 10-14 year-olds and the learning process.”

Other organisations to note the trauma of the transition to high school were Youth alive and Specialist Education Services:

“The change to high school can be very difficult for those with special needs - the need to move around rooms frequently, larger pupil numbers, more adults to learn how to interact with...”
- S.E.S.

“The change from primary to intermediate and high school is big and can be traumatic. The Aranui High School principal says that 30% of kids don’t overcome the trauma of starting high school. This issue is made worse if the family is coming unstuck as well.”
- Youth Alive

Children were seen to need support or counselling to help them cope with the challenge.

- **13% of survey respondents said Y7-10s struggled with identity or self esteem issues.**
- **7% identified changing schools as a key struggle for Y7-10s.**

the need for quick access to counselling

The number one issue for intermediate schools was the need for counsellors in schools or quick access to counselling services.

“Twelve and thirteen year old children can often experience terrible problems and their tender years make them very much at risk - they deserve more support.”

Shirley Intermediate

“‘Help’ is uncool. Getting ‘out of it’ is a more acceptable coping strategy.”

START

"A counselling service is vital for intermediate schools - we have no provision. The thought that counselling should be available only to Yr9 students onwards is crazy! Twelve and thirteen year old children can often experience terrible problems and their tender years make them very much at risk - they deserve more support." - Shirley Intermediate

"[We need] A more efficient S.E.S. or counselling service. Class teachers need to be able to talk to these people personally, and quickly. We leave messages on answer phones, then are in class when S.E.S. workers call back - what about cell phones??" - Chisnallwood Intermediate

"There are a variety of agencies/workers but the programmed support is brief and often shallow. We need in-depth, more extensive support." - Heaton Intermediate

Specialist Education Service (S.E.S.) was aware that schools found getting access to counselling a problem, particularly if families could not afford the service. Cost was also an issue for schools:

"Most of our work is now with individual children. Unless schools can afford it

we do little systems or large group work, so delivery is patchy." - S.E.S.

Access to counselling for Y7-10 children could also be an issue if children had an incorrect perception of the services available:

"There needs to be education around seeking help at schools. There is a perception that counselling is for issues of suicide or sexuality only. 'Help' is uncool. Getting 'out of it' is a more acceptable coping strategy." - START

15% of Survey respondents reported that there was a need for quick access to mental health and counselling services for Y7-10s.

the need to fill gaps in education

Much publicity has been given in the national news media to falling levels of literacy and numeracy amongst New Zealand children. Several organisations have formed to give children the one-on-one teaching that is increasingly rare in classrooms:

"...our service is designed to fill an enormous gap in the education system, i.e. those children ... who are not reading and/or spelling at the levels they need to." - Reading Tutorial Systems

"We are increasingly seeing more and more children out of the classroom who are not getting input in the classroom." - (SPELD)

“We are increasingly seeing more and more children out of the classroom who are not getting input in the classroom.”

- Special Education and Learning Disorders (SPELD)

However, getting access to extra tutoring can be a problem. NumberWorks Maths Coaching reported a need for more services in the suburbs, along with the cost of the service:

“Parents who would like to get coaching can’t afford the cost”

Reading Tutorial Systems see a need for more partnership between schools and tutoring organisations:

“...schools can be resistant to new ideas and convincing them to use our services is an ongoing challenge.”

Funding tends to be an ongoing problem for schools, and so money is not always available to help individuals with learning and other difficulties:

“There is a lack of resourcing for special needs - especially reading recovery.” - SPELD

“[We need] education support resources in schools for children with learning, mental health, physical health and behaviour problems.” - Child & Family Specialty Service

Key issues for Y7-10 education:

- **Lack of a New Zealand middle school model**
- **Need for partnership with business and para-school organisations**
- **Need for quick access to counselling services for students**
- **Affordability of specialist services for schools and parents**

issues for refugee and migrant children

Only one Y7-10 Survey respondent worked specifically with refugee and migrant children. The Community Language Support Group offers language and schoolwork tutoring, along with other practical courses for refugee and migrant children and their families. Based in Papanui, the group deals with mainly Cambodian, Thai, Kurdish and Somali families from the North Christchurch area.

There appear to be separate and distinct issues for the education of refugee and migrant Y7-10 children:

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“For migrant families, education is very important. The parents make sure their kids get tuition —whereas for refugee families the main thing is survival. The parents don’t have as much concern about language and education.”

“Teachers with the attitude of ‘You’re in New Zealand now – this is how we do it’ need patience to learn more subtle methods to achieve this end – if it is really

that important to have conformity to the 'NZ' way!"

- Community Language Support Group

"For migrant families, education is very important. The parents make sure their kids get tuition —whereas for refugee families the main thing is survival. The parents don't have as much concern about language and education."

The Community Language Support Group had considerable concern, echoed by teachers, about the general education of refugee children. It was perceived that these children could go straight through our school system without problems being detected until the first major exams take place at School Certificate level (Year 11). Schools do not tend to have the funding needed for extra help, and so the children do not have the one-on-one tuition needed to get them 'up to speed'.

A further problem can exist when parents are unwilling to recognise that a child has a learning difficulty:

"I don't know what happens with special needs children in this area. The rare situations we've had, the parents don't want to hear about it and the kid struggles and struggles and eventually we have to send them home."

The other key issues were to do with the clash of cultures, not only with the New Zealand culture, but also between migrant cultures. The Community Language Support Group identified a 'drift' of families moving away from other migrant groups. Some Kurdish families had removed their children from schools on the East Side of Christchurch because they 'don't like black people'; while some Somalis and Ethiopians were moving to the East Side. Partly this move was in order to be amongst Maori and Pacific Island families, with whom there seems to be some affinity, and partly to be closer to the Refugee and Migrant Centre in Peterborough St.

Becoming accustomed to the 'Kiwi' way of life can be tricky when refugee and migrant children are immersed in the New Zealand school system. A need was seen for teachers to be more sensitive to cultural differences.

"Teachers with the attitude of 'You're in New Zealand now – this is how we do it' need patience to learn more subtle methods to achieve this end – if it is really that important to have conformity to the 'NZ' way!"

Particularly areas of concern were camps (many Asian children are unaccustomed to 'roughing it'), school sports and swimming (in some cultures girls do not show the legs) and sex education.

"I think sexual health programmes in schools are totally inappropriate for refugee/migrant children.... A lot of it is insensitively done... Cambodian kids have said to me that their parents would die if they knew what they were being taught in school."

It was suggested that parents may not be able to adequately read notices sent home from school, and thus be unaware.

“Some of the magazines, TV soaps and videos they access are extreme in their lack of values. We are seeing the fruit of these inputs into kids lives. Unfortunately the living rooms in some families are filled with this sort of stuff...”
- Youth Alive

Children adapt more quickly than parents, and conflict can occur as they adopt the New Zealand culture. C.L.S.G. noted that some Kurdish parents were ‘bewildered’ when their children tell them that can no longer spank – this is ‘the only sort of discipline they know’.

The ‘most pressing needs’ was seen as:

- Homework support and tuition
- ESOL support in schools
- Experienced cross-cultural counsellors

Currently working with refugee/migrant children:

- Community Language Support Group
- Refugee and Migrant Centre
- Pasefika Education and Employment Training Organisation (PEETO)
- N.E.S.B. (Non-English Speaking Background) Teachers (eg. Casebrook Intermediate)

the need for values amongst Y7-10s

Six percent of organisations responding to the Y7-10 Survey commented very strongly on a ‘cultural slide’ or a lack of values becoming more prevalent amongst children. Concerned comments were made about where children were receiving their values from. Media influences came in for particular criticism:

“Some of the magazines, TV soaps and videos they access are extreme in their lack of values. We are seeing the fruit of these inputs into kids lives. Unfortunately the living rooms in some families are filled with this sort of stuff...” - Youth Alive

The Christchurch School for Young Writers respondent spoke both as a service provider and a parent:

“Observing my own children, I would suspect that they are taught about sex but not love; they learn that material possessions are desirable but not intangibles; and they operate in an education system that, in avoiding the competitiveness of the exam room, has taken away one of the channels for children’s natural competitiveness. This is consequently expressed in competitions over trivia such as clothing, hairstyle, material possessions...”

The Community Development Network had a concern for the values of young people generally, but spoke of the strategic importance of the Y7-10 age group:

“...it is a key age of influence, so the more that can be done, the better. There is a lack of wholesome input and opportunities to burn energy in positive ways.”

- Community Development Network

“Which investments will give us the community/leaders we desire for tomorrow’s generation in our city?”

- Kidzbus

“For us it is a key age of influence, so the more that can be done, the better. There is a lack of wholesome input and opportunities to burn energy in positive ways.”

Kidzbus¹³ spoke of the need for a balance in resourcing of programmes between the purely recreational – which are subject to fast-changing trends – and those which build lasting value into young people’s lives:

“...parks, playgrounds, skateboard parks, trees, footpaths, theatres and recreation areas may meet the outer needs, but we believe there is a danger of producing a ‘disproportionate investment gap’.... The question needs to be asked: ‘Which investments will give us the community/leaders we desire for tomorrow’s generation in our city?’”

Because only so many programmes, activities and events can be allocated funding, decisions on what organisations would receive it needed to be made with long-term goals in mind:

“This is a time for strategic, clear-minded and courageous investment for the limited resources any organisation may have.”

¹³ Kidzbus run after-school programmes for primary school age children. They have noted a demand for programmes for Y7-10s and are currently looking at extending to incorporate this age group.