



Child Poverty Action Group PRESS RELEASE

www.cpag.org.nz

P O Box: 56 150
Dominion Road
Auckland

TRANSIENCE AND LOW DECILE SCHOOLS: Children from the poorest families miss out again

As primary schools start school again for another year, the findings of a new report highlight the impact that transience has on the educational outcomes of students in low-income areas of the country.

The Child Poverty Action Group released a report today, prepared by housing expert Alan Johnson, on the scale of transience in South Auckland – one of the poorest areas of New Zealand.

“The findings of the report prove what many social commentators have been saying for years – the lack of stable and secure housing for those on low incomes leads to significant levels of transience. This has significant impacts on the educational outcomes for the children involved” said Mr Johnson.

“Children who move house, and therefore school, many times in a year find it difficult to settle into new classrooms. Teachers find it difficult to assess a child’s learning difficulties, and relationships between the child and his or her peers are harder to establish” he continued.

The report details the findings of a survey conducted in more than 30 low decile South Auckland primary schools about the levels of movement in their school population. The survey showed that almost one third of students from decile one schools (those schools serving the poorest communities) moved at least once during the school year. Some moved many times, each time causing significant disruption to their learning environment. **The problem was significantly worse in poorer areas – students from decile one schools were almost twice as likely to move than students from decile three schools.**

“The main directive for those families who are in a constant state of shifting homes is financial. If the state and the community cannot provide our most disadvantaged families with adequate and stable homes to live in, then we will continue to report such results. The issue is severe because these children have no control over their situation, yet they have the most to lose. They are losing educational opportunities that will impact on **all** our communities in the future – the interruptions in their

education mean they are less likely to gain qualifications and therefore enter high paid and productive employment” said Mr Johnson.

The report recommends that Government investment should be directed into increased social housing opportunities for low-income families.

“As the school year begins, it is beholden on the Government to take a serious look at its housing policy, and how it is impacting on New Zealand’s poorest children” Mr Johnson concluded.

This transience report is part of a larger policy monograph on Social Housing in New Zealand, to be published by CPAG in April. A full copy of this report is available from Larissa Wakim (larissa@asia.com) or shortly on the CPAG website: www.cpag.org.

Contacts:

Alan Johnson (Author):

(025 791 958)

ajsemail@xtra.co.nz

Larissa Wakim (CPAG administrator/researcher):

(09) 5200201

larissa@asia.com