

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 18 May 2006**

**BUDGET 2006: VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND FAMILY FOCUS  
POSITIVE STEPS TOWARDS CHILD CENTRED POLICY MAKING  
MORE TO DO...**

Putting families in the top 3 overarching themes of this year's budget is a positive step forward towards placing children in the centre of policy making, but there is more to do, according to John Bowis, Executive Director of Save the Children New Zealand.

"The family orientated view in this budget is heartening but a stronger focus specifically on children's needs and wellbeing is needed. Violence prevention, increased child support, a child health package and increased access to education are certainly good policies for supporting our children in their development and enjoyment of life. However, Save the Children continues to advocate for a specific focus on children to address their needs in a holistic manner," the Executive Director, John Bowis said today.

"The most vulnerable children in New Zealand should certainly benefit from increased support for programmes that address the issue of violence and abuse – especially those programmes run at the community level. Therefore it is good to see significant funding of \$64.3 million committed to supporting safer families and preventing violence – and programmes including, for example:

- ?? increase to resources for SKIP (the information for parents programme) to promote non-physical discipline and help parents develop parenting confidence, knowledge and skills;
- ?? more for family violence prevention and changing attitudes to violence;
- ?? further funding to improve access to family violence prevention and support services; and
- ?? more for promoting positive behaviour and reducing bullying in schools.

"Save the Children New Zealand continues to push for further reductions to the number of children living below the poverty line, especially those in families reliant upon welfare support. Twenty one per cent of children living below the poverty line is too many.

"Clearly there is a broad range of programmes that affect children, which is why a single coordinated approach is necessary. While this family focus is valuable – I call on the government to take further steps towards a child centred approach and reducing child poverty," John Bowis said.

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