



MANAAKITIA A TĀTOU TAMARIKI

**Children's
Commissioner**

28 May 2013

Food in Schools - let's get it right

Dr Wills, Children's Commissioner, says he is pleased that today's announcements about food in schools include more money for KidsCan.

"I also welcome business involvement: together with KidsCan they can supplement and support communities to make sure kids don't go to school hungry. Sanitarium and Fonterra are two of our leading companies and between them they can offer a wide range of foods to support healthy development," says Dr. Wills.

"We know hungry children find it hard to learn at school. And, the research and evidence is clear that providing food in schools done well can improve both health and education outcomes.

"The exceptional and innovative work KidsCan does with schools to meet a range of needs for children living in poverty across the country makes a real difference to children's and their families' lives.

"We need an innovative approach to Food in Schools and this response by government recognises community groups, schools, families, government and business are all part of the solution.

"Now we must make sure we do this well. We need to get it right so children are fed and can learn. It's also important that no child is stigmatised.

"Some local schools and communities already do this well. Local businesses are keen to offer their services in many communities. Some schools combine food in school projects with community gardens to support families to learn about healthy eating. Parents and whānau help garden, harvest vegies, cook and serve the food. Families feel welcome in the school

and that they are valued, so they are more engaged with their children's learning, and teaching and learning is enhanced. Children are fed and they can learn.

"We can to learn from these schools and communities about what works so that we can support all schools to provide the best programme for their children.

"The Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty report released in December last year recommended implementing a targeted Food in Schools programme to support children to learn and succeed. Since publishing the report we've been talking to schools and NGOs providing Food in Schools programmes and we've learnt more about how they work and what effective programmes look like.

"I will continue to work alongside government to support schools to do this well. We will be working bringing together a group of experts to help develop guidelines for schools so that children are not hungry, are not stigmatised and children and their families are engaged with learning.

"I look forward to working with government, business and community groups to make sure get this right for children".

Ends

If you would like to interview the Children's Commissioner, Dr. Russell Wills, please contact:
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