



How the New Zealand Public View the Causes of Child Abuse

In recent times child abuse has again been at the forefront of media attention as a result of a number of high profile court cases. There has also been much discussion about the causes of child abuse, and the views expressed seem to fall into three major groups, cultural, economic and the experience of parents involved, although, of course, there may be many other contributing factors.

Research New Zealand decided to find out how the public view the causes of child abuse and asked a question in the most recent social poll to examine this question. The respondents could select more than one issue as a causal factor in child abuse cases.

The view that child abuse is a cultural issue was supported by 51 percent of the sample; by 55 percent of those in the age group 55 years and over; by 58 percent of those who live in the Upper North Island; and by 55 percent of those in the income group \$80,000 or more per year.

The view that child abuse is more a question of parental experience was supported by 36 percent of the sample; by 40 percent of those in the age group 35–54 years; by 40 percent of Maori/Pacific People; and by 44 percent of those with incomes of \$40,000–\$79,999 per year.

That child abuse is more an economic issue was supported by 34 percent of the sample; by 40 percent of those in the 35-54 year age group; by 38 percent of respondents living in the South Island; and by 39% of those earning \$80,000 or more per year.

‘The results indicate that child abuse and its causes is very much a multi-facetted issue, although a small majority opted for the view that it is a cultural issue’, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis.

The Research New Zealand poll of 503 people aged 18 and over was conducted by telephone on 20–27 May 2011. The maximum margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/- 4.4 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.



Contact: Emanuel Kalafatelis
Director
Research New Zealand Limited
P O Box 10-617
Wellington 6143
Ph. 04-462-6401 (DDI); 027-500-4401 (M)



Table 1:

Q7. Recently there have been some more cases of child abuse reported in the papers. In your personal opinion, would you say child abuse in New Zealand is more...

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	503	250	253
	%	%	%
A cultural issue	51	48	53
An economic issue	34	32	35
To do with experience of parents	36	33	39
Or more to do with some other type of issue	27	25	29
Don't know	5	5	4
Refused	0	1	0

Total may exceed 100% because of multiple response.

Table 2:

Q7. Recently there have been some more cases of child abuse reported in the papers. In your personal opinion, would you say child abuse in New Zealand is more...

	Total	18-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
Base =	503	177	205	121
	%	%	%	%
A cultural issue	51	44	53	55
An economic issue	34	26	40	36
To do with experience of parents	36	34	40	32
Or more to do with some other type of issue	27	34	27	19
Don't know	5	7	3	4
Refused	0	1	0	0

Total may exceed 100% because of multiple response.

Table 3:

Q7. Recently there have been some more cases of child abuse reported in the papers. In your personal opinion, would you say child abuse in New Zealand is more...

	Total	NZ European/ Pakeha	Maori/ Pacific	Other
Base =	503	386	62	55
	%	%	%	%
A cultural issue	51	52	41	53
An economic issue	34	34	33	31
To do with experience of parents	36	37	40	27
Or more to do with some other type of issue	27	24	38	36
Don't know	5	5	5	6
Refused	0	0	2	0

Total may exceed 100% because of multiple response.



Table 4:

Q7. Recently there have been some more cases of child abuse reported in the papers. In your personal opinion, would you say child abuse in New Zealand is more...

	Base =	Total	Upper North Island	Lower/Central North Island	South Island
		503	216	122	165
		%	%	%	%
A cultural issue		51	58	40	49
An economic issue		34	30	36	38
To do with experience of parents		36	33	36	39
Or more to do with some other type of issue		27	30	27	24
Don't know		5	4	5	6
Refused		0	0	0	1

Total may exceed 100% because of multiple response.

Table 5:

Q7. Recently there have been some more cases of child abuse reported in the papers. In your personal opinion, would you say child abuse in New Zealand is more...

	Base =	Total	Under \$40,000	At least \$40,000 but less than \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	Don't know/refused
		503	188	148	138	29**
		%	%	%	%	%
A cultural issue		51	47	53	55	45
An economic issue		34	27	36	39	44
To do with experience of parents		36	32	44	33	37
Or more to do with some other type of issue		27	28	28	21	48
Don't know		5	6	3	4	10
Refused		0	0	0	1	0

Total may exceed 100% because of multiple response.

**Caution: low base number of respondents - results are indicative only.

Research New Zealand is an independent, New Zealand-owned research organisation undertaking social and business research.

www.researchnz.com