

10 fantastic places to raise a family in New Zealand

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New Zealand was voted **the best place in world to raise a family** by the 2014 HSBC Expat Explorer Survey, with the report describing it as “an ideal destination to raise active, outdoorsy and healthy children.”

So where are some of the best places in New Zealand to bring up your kids? REDnews looked at education, crime rates, unemployment rates, and lifestyle and came up with a list of 10 great locations for family living.

New Plymouth



With its low crime rate, low unemployment levels, and affordable family homes, New Plymouth is a great place to raise your kids.

The local oil and gas industry helps drive a thriving local economy and Taranaki performs well in both NCEA National Standards and university entrance rates for leavers.

Handy to both the mountain and the beaches, your kids can ski and surf close to home.

In 2008, New Plymouth was rated the best city of its size in the world and commended both for its Coastal Cycleway and sustainability by the International Awards for Liveable Communities.

The same year, North and South magazine judged it “the best place in New Zealand to live, love, work and raise a family.”

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Wellington



Wellington combines big-city sophistication with tight-knit community living and superb educational opportunities.

Its level of school leavers achieving university entrance level is high and they can go on to Victoria University.

With its strong emphasis on both politics and culture, families can choose from an immense range of activities and attractions, including the Royal New Zealand Ballet, NZ Symphony Orchestra, and the brilliant Te Papa.

The capital ranked 12th in the Mercer Quality of Living Survey and 3rd in Oceania, has beautiful beaches, parks and reserves, and it's highly walkable.

Wellington homes, while not cheap, are far more affordable than homes in Auckland and Christchurch.

North Shore, Auckland



Bustling Auckland can be a wonderful place to raise children because families have so many choices when it comes to their kids: education, healthcare, entertainment, sports – it's all here. There is a surprisingly large range of free activities, like Ambury Farm, the Auckland Museum, some incredible playgrounds and the Auckland Libraries' many school holiday events.

Auckland has twice been rated the third best city in the world for liveability and the University of Auckland is New Zealand's highest-ranked university. The North Shore is among the best (although also the most expensive) areas for families, due to its lower crime rate and lovely beaches.

Nelson



Living in Nelson puts families within easy reach of just about everything they could ever want. Kids do well at Nelson schools, with high levels of National Standard achievement and university entrance qualification levels.

The climate is New Zealand's sunniest and there's plenty to do with all that sunshine: parks and reserves, beaches, and you're just a short hop from Wellington.

Unemployment levels and crime levels are extremely low in Nelson; this is a safe and secure environment where kids can enjoy an enviable outdoor lifestyle.

Queenstown Lakes



Otago stands out among New Zealand districts for its low crime rates, extremely low unemployment, and its exceptionally high educational achievement for both National Standards and university entrance. Add to that its outstanding natural beauty and you can see why Queenstown is such a desirable (though expensive) place to raise a family.

Children raised around Queenstown can enjoy an enviable year-round access to world-class attractions and sporting venues, especially the ski fields and mountain biking. Laid-back attitudes and plenty of visitors give the town a global vibe.

Selwyn, Canterbury



Your kids can get an excellent education in Selwyn, while you can buy a relatively affordable house that leaves you close enough to Christchurch to enjoy most of its big-city benefits.

Selwyn has high-quality amenities for families, like swimming pools, reserves, skate parks, and many playgrounds. Perhaps the biggest drawcard are ‘Selwyn’s Six’ ski fields; Porters and Mt Cheeseman are particularly family-friendly.

Like all of Canterbury, educational achievement standards are high and employment levels are high.

Hamilton



More affordable than Auckland and growing almost as fast, Hamilton’s economic indicators are currently pointing to ‘boom’.

The city has a youthful, multicultural demographic and 3 major tertiary institutes: the University of Waikato, Te Wananga o Aotearoa, and the Waikato Institute of Technology.

Kids can enjoy the Hamilton Zoo, Hamilton Gardens, the Waikato Museum, and the Otorohanga Kiwi House and Native Bird House, or try something more active like walking tracks, Waterworld, or kayaking.

Dunedin



A relaxing pace of life and low crime levels make Dunedin a great place for kids, especially those who love our native wildlife: kayak with seals, walk with penguins, and see the Royal Albatrosses.

A 2009 city survey ranked Dunedin as the best place in New Zealand to live, scoring particularly highly for social connectedness, community strength and identity, and locals having a sense of pride about their city. Otago has great academic achievement levels and the highly-ranked University of Otago is a big drawcard for students from all over the world.

Property in Dunedin is among New Zealand’s most affordable – but the weather can be cold.

Porirua



Porirua may have “[perception problems](#)”, but it has a focus on children that few towns in New Zealand can match.

The local council has made children a priority for its future planning, and the area already puts substantial resources into family wellbeing and entertainment, including excellent local swimming pools, free activities, and libraries.

Porirua is close to Wellington, but its property is a fraction of the cost, providing affordable housing with access to the same top-tier tertiary education.

The Wellington region has the highest rate of university entrance standard school leavers in the country.

Invercargill



Invercargill has an incredible list of attributes for families, including New Zealand’s most affordable housing and extremely low unemployment and crime levels.

Educational achievement is high for National Standards and university entrance level for school leavers – and they can choose to study for free at the Southern Institute of Technology. Huge marine reserves and conservation land mean you're always connected to nature, sometimes more closely than you might like when the weather turns bad. But although it's cold, Southland has more daylight hours than any other part of New Zealand. For outdoor types, that means extra time for skiing, tramping, mountain biking, motocross, horse riding, and more.

Unemployment rates are available at [Statistics NZ](#). Rates of achievement at National Standards and UE are published at [Education Counts](#). Crime rates are on the [NZ Police's crime statistics page](#). House prices by region are available at [REINZ](#). For details about each area's attractions, check out the local council website.