



**WILL NATIONAL  
STANDARDS  
MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE TO  
YOUR CHILD'S  
LEARNING?**

# FAILED?



**Joe's just turned 6.** He loves reading and has made normal progress in his first year at school, but he's just seen his school report which says he's "below standard". He told his mum he hated school. He has refused to read to her since.

Joe is not alone. Half of all New Zealand 5 year olds are going to fail the Year 1 National Standard for reading, even though many of them read at the normal level for their age.

**Is that OK?**



**Robert is 10** and has always loved reading but after reading his last report, he came home and cried for an hour.

Despite scoring above average in a PAT test and having a reading age of an 11-12 year old, he was told he was "working toward the Standard". He took that to mean - "I'm not passing am I?"

**Is that OK?**

*These stories are based on real children, but names and images have been changed to protect their privacy.*

# FAILED?



**Maria is 11** and has just finished her first year at intermediate. She's struggled with maths in the past, but this year has become really interested. She's made heaps of progress and consistently scored well in assessments but knows her report says she's "below Standard". She now feels discouraged about trying at all and says she wants to drop maths as soon as she can at secondary school.

**Is that OK?**



**Delia is 8.** When she came to school, she found reading and writing really hard and her teachers realised she had dyslexia. With intensive support from her parents, teacher and teacher aide, she's made twice as much progress as most children in a year and now has a reading age of 6. But she's just been given a report with "well below Standard" in reading, writing and maths. "You told me I was doing well!" she told her teacher. "But look - I'm rubbish at reading!"

**Is that OK?**

# WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

**Because** National Standards have never been tested or trialled, your children are being used as guinea pigs in a nationwide trial.

**Because** National Standards are inconsistent - there is nothing national about National Standards. The Standards are fuzzy and complex and schools are interpreting and reporting student achievement against the Standards in a wide variety of ways. Any data from this process will not be reliable or valid.

New Zealand still leads the world in teaching and learning. But the way National Standards have been designed and implemented is not fair to children and threatens quality teaching and learning.

► **If you're concerned** about the impact of National Standards on your child, please talk to your principal. Visit [www.handsupforlearning.org.nz](http://www.handsupforlearning.org.nz) or email [handsup@nzei.org.nz](mailto:handsup@nzei.org.nz) for more information.

# WHY IS THIS?

In the past, your child's report may have included information about how they perform nationally compared to their age group, through well-researched assessments tests like **PAT**, **STAR** and **asTTle**.

National Standards have been pitched much higher than where children normally achieve for their age. The Minister of Education says they are "aspirational", designed so that all students who meet them will be on track to achieve NCEA Level 2. What this means though, is that even if your child's achievement is average or above average for their age, they are likely to be judged either "below" or just "at" the Standard.

The consequence is that children are being penalised for not meeting a set of National Standards that may be unrealistic. And how beneficial is it for children to be in a system that gives them three chances to be just OK, not so great or really rubbish, and just one chance to shine?

Percentages of children expected to be at or above the National Standards

	Reading	Maths
After 1 year	50%	80%
Year 4	60%	70%
Year 8	60%	35%

Source Ministry of Education, NZCER

MANY CHILDREN WHO ARE VERY SUCCESSFUL WHEN MEASURED AGAINST THE AVERAGE ACHIEVEMENT FOR THEIR AGE ARE BEING LABELLED AS "FAILURES" UNDER NATIONAL STANDARDS.

OTHER CHILDREN WHO START SCHOOL WELL BELOW THE AVERAGE CAN MAKE GREAT PROGRESS BUT WILL NEVER "MEET THE STANDARD" – THEY WILL BE TOLD THEY ARE "WELL BELOW STANDARD" THROUGHOUT THEIR PRIMARY SCHOOLING.