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A Yes Vote is the right vote for children and families

Barnardos is urging all New Zealanders to recognise that a 'Yes' vote in referendum '09 is the best way to ensure the legal protection of children through the child discipline law.

"Voters will receive voter registration information from the Electoral Commission this week. For many, this will be the first they have heard of the upcoming referendum and despite the misleading question, it's important they understand that voting 'yes' is the right vote for children and families," says Murray Edridge, Chief Executive of Barnardos New Zealand.

"A 'yes' vote expresses support for children to live free from violence. This is in the interests of all New Zealanders because children raised in this way are more likely to develop into well-adjusted, contributing and responsible citizens in the future.

"The referendum question is designed to confuse people and generate a response that will put pressure on politicians to change the child discipline law. It suggests that hitting children is part of good parenting when there are clearly better alternative practices. It also suggests that "good" parents are being criminalised by the law when Police statistics show that this isn't happening.

"We know that opponents of the current law are a minority group, albeit a vocal one. We urge voters to see through the misinformation and do the right thing for children and families.

"Barnardos supports the Yes Vote Coalition* and their work to better inform people about the child discipline law, good parenting techniques, and to ensure people understand that a 'yes' vote is the best vote in the upcoming referendum," concludes Mr Edridge.

* The YES Vote coalition is a wide group of organisations supporting parents and the child discipline law. We are working to ensure the retention of the law. The coalition includes Barnardos, Plunket, UNICEF, Save the Children, Te Kahui Mana Ririki, Women's Refuge, Childspace, Parent Centres and others. **YesVote.org.nz**

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