



**ORANGA  
TAMARIKI**  
Ministry for Children

Prepare to Care

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# Caregiver kete

A basket of information and guidance  
for caregiving whānau



# Your aroha will make a big difference

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Caregivers offer safe and stable care, filled with aroha for children and young people, when it's needed most.

Thank you for making a difference.  
Contact us on 0508 227 377

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# Thank you!

## Your aroha will make a big difference.

**You offer safe and stable care filled with aroha for children and young people when it is needed most.**

Caregivers like you help children and young people flourish by believing in them, meeting their needs, and keeping them connected to their whānau, whakapapa, significant places, and the important people in their lives.

The caregivers we support are most often people who care for a child or young person from within their whānau or family. We also support non-whānau caregivers who care for a child or young person until they can safely return home or to a caregiver from their family or whānau.

**You have a really important role to play in the child's life.**

Children and young people have told us they need caregivers who make them feel loved and part of the family, and help them to learn, heal and grow. This is a big responsibility, and we are here to support you every step of the way.

This caregiver kete is part of the package of support you will receive as we work together to support tamariki. It introduces you to your role as a caregiver, and lets you know what support you can expect to receive, including the resources you and the tamariki in your care are entitled to.



Just as you can't learn how to be a parent from an instruction manual, there are many things about being a caregiver you will learn as you go. We're always here if you want to pick up the phone and talk to us, if you have any questions, worries or need a helping hand.

You can contact us anytime on **0508 CARERS (0508 227 377)**.

Thank you for your aroha. It will make a big difference for the tamariki in your care.

## Our Oranga Tamariki Values

The Oranga Tamariki values guide us through our work and support our decision making. They were gifted to us by the Youth Advisory Panel during the establishment of Oranga Tamariki.

They are:

**We put tamariki first** – We will challenge when things aren't right for the child.

**We believe aroha is vital** – It keeps us focused on what is right.

**We respect the mana of people** – We listen, we don't assume, and we create solutions with others.

**We are tika and pono** – We do what we say we'll do.

**We value whakapapa** – Tamariki are part of a whānau and a community.

**We recognise that oranga is a journey** – We understand the long-term impact of our actions today.

How will we draw on these values as we support caregiving whānau?

In our interactions and the support we provide, you will see us drawing on these values.

## How we work with whānau and families

We know it's best that children stay at home safely, and we work with whānau, family, family groups, hapū and iwi to prevent children and young people from coming into care.

We do this by:

- supporting whānau and families to come up with their own solutions and make their own decisions
- assisting whānau and families by putting them in touch with community groups that can support them
- strengthening whānau and families to care for their tamariki and rangatahi, including through the strategic partnerships that iwi have formed with us in which iwi can support the care of tamariki and rangatahi.

If it's not possible for tamariki to stay at home safely, and we cannot resolve concerns through the Family Group Conference process, we may apply for care or protection orders through the Family Court. We then look to caregivers from within the whānau or family who can provide a safe, stable home, filled with aroha, for as long as needed.

While we primarily work with whānau, at times we also need non-whānau caregivers. These are the people who can care for a child or young person until they are able to safely return home or move to a caregiver from their wider whānau, family, family group, hapū or iwi.

We also have both whānau and non-whānau caregivers who are able to provide respite and urgent care. Respite care is when a child is looked after by a caregiver for a weekend or short period of time. Respite care is best when it is planned and regular – it provides an opportunity for tamariki to connect with wider members of their whānau or community, and for caregivers and tamariki to recharge.

## He taonga tino nui ngā mokopuna

Our children are our greatest treasure.

**Just a note:** Children and young people, or tamariki and rangatahi, in care can be aged up to 18. Throughout this kete we've mainly used the terms 'children' and 'tamariki' interchangeably, but we are referring to children and young people of all ages. For reference, tamariki refers to children, while te tamaiti refers to the child.

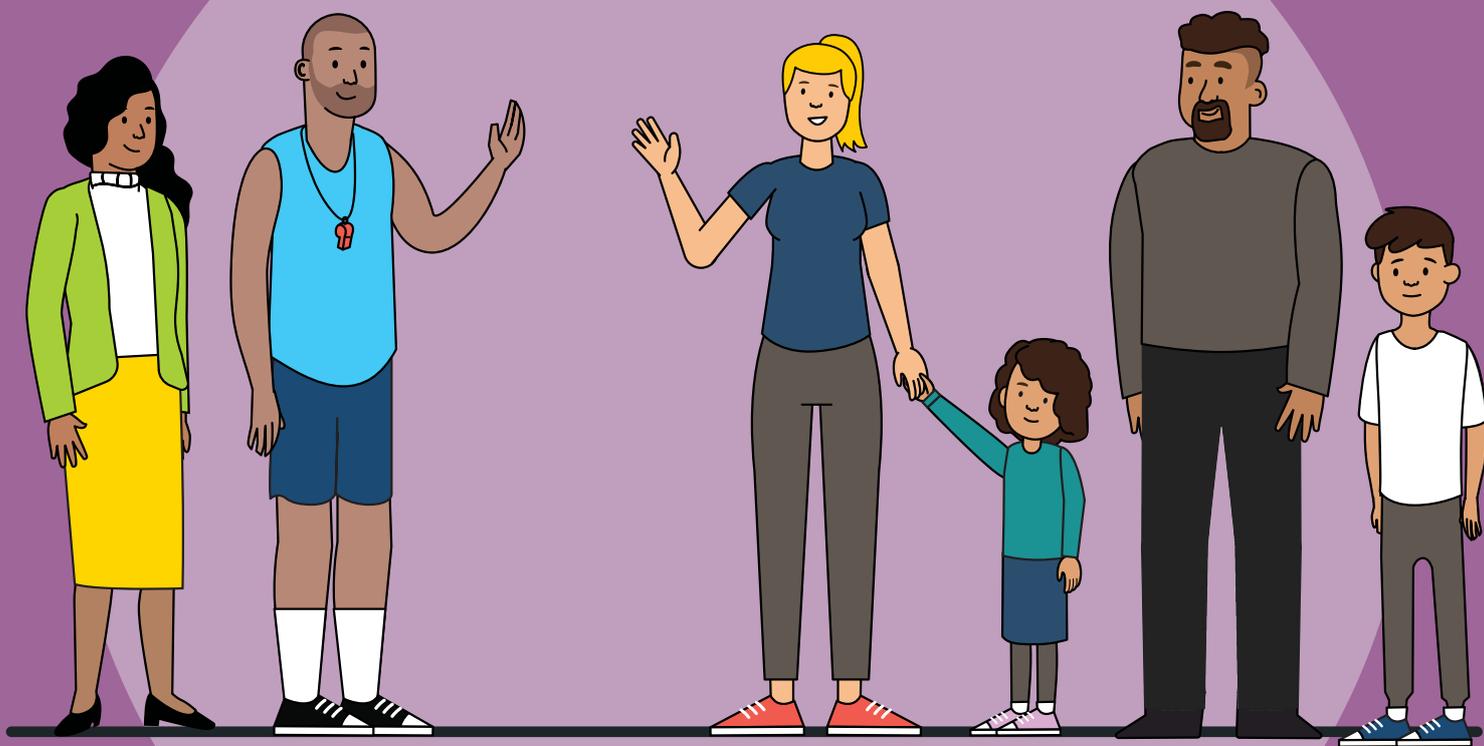
We have many types of caregivers as well, including those caring for children in their own whānau, family, family group, hapū or iwi, as well as urgent care, respite care, short-term care and Family Home care. People have different ways of describing their role, but we've mainly used 'caregiver' or 'carer' in this book. Whatever term you prefer, we value your role in providing love and care for children and young people.



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# Your care team



# Your care team

**You are one of the team and we're here to help you. Our team is made up of all the people who surround a child in order to keep them safe and well, and all the significant people in the child's life.**

**This will include the child's family, whānau, hapū, iwi and extended family, and may include their teacher, doctor, psychologist, lawyer and other professionals. Social workers are also part of your team.**

## Your caregiver social worker

Your caregiver social worker is available to give you support and help you understand caregiving. Together, you will develop and update your Caregiver Support Plan, and they will assist you with learning opportunities. Any time you have questions about caregiving, you can talk to your caregiver social worker. They will be in touch with you regularly and will make sure you get the support you need.

## The child's social worker

Every child in care has their own social worker and you can expect to have a lot of contact with them. They will work with you and the child to prepare for them coming into your care. They'll discuss the child's All About Me Plan with you and help to make sure the child's goals and needs are being met. They'll also visit the child on a regular basis. You can talk to this social worker about things relating to the child's care such as their health, education, wellbeing, or connection with their whānau.

Your caregiver social worker and the child's social worker will work closely with each other to make sure both you and the child are getting the right support.

## Caregiver Support Line

Having someone to talk to about the challenges you may be facing as a caregiver can make all the difference. That's why we have a nationwide Caregiver Support Line – **0508 CARERS (0508 227 377)**. When you call **0508 CARERS** you'll be put through to your regular caregiver social worker. If they're not available, another member of the Caregiver Recruitment and Support team in your region will respond and make sure you get the support you need. You can also call the line after hours for urgent support. If you feel you would like some free, independent counselling, you can self-refer to our Caregiver Assistance Programme. More information about this can be found on page 13.

## Our roles

As part of the caregiving team, we each have a role in making sure tamariki are safe and well cared for. Oranga Tamariki has the legal responsibility for tamariki in care, while caregivers provide children with day-to-day care, aroha and stability.

The child's family and whānau will usually continue to have guardianship responsibilities. This means they need to be consulted and give their permission for any guardianship decisions, such as change of schools, vaccinations, surgery and travel.

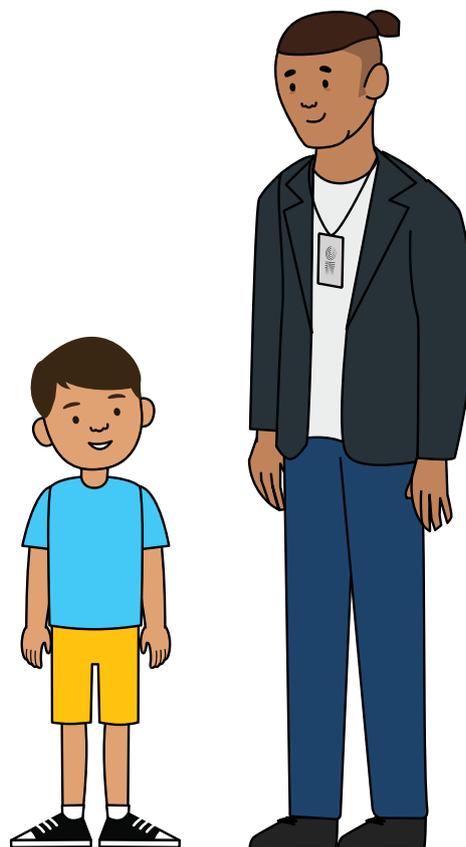
Sometimes you may feel a bit unclear about the difference between day-to-day decisions and guardianship decisions. If in doubt, just ask the child's social worker.

## Where you can get further help

We're committed to providing excellent support for the families, children and young people we work with. If you ever feel you're not getting the help you need, contact your caregiver social worker. You can also talk it through with someone on our Caregiver Support Line – **0508 CARERS (0508 227 377)**. If needed, you can contact the local office and either talk to the person you've been dealing with or ask for the supervisor or manager.

Caring Families Aotearoa provides independent support for caregivers. You can call them on **0800 693 323** or visit their website: [www.caringfamilies.org.nz](http://www.caringfamilies.org.nz)

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren provides support specifically for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. You can call them on **0800 472 637** or visit their website: [www.grg.org.nz](http://www.grg.org.nz).



# National Care Standards



# National Care Standards

## **The National Care Standards set out the standard of care every child and young person is entitled to. They also set out the support caregivers can expect to receive when they have a child or young person in their care.**

The Care Standards include a range of things that are important for tamariki, such as supporting them to express their views, keeping them connected to their whānau, culture and community, and valuing and respecting their whakapapa.

Under the Care Standards, every child and young person in care is entitled to an All About Me Plan that sets out how their needs will be met while they're in care. Every caregiver is entitled to a corresponding Caregiver Support Plan that sets out how they'll be supported to care for the child.

You and your caregiver social worker will develop your Caregiver Support Plan together. It will be updated regularly as the needs of you and the child in your care change. You should also receive a copy of the child's All About Me Plan.

## **Entitlements and resources**

Under the Care Standards the child in your care is entitled to a range of items including:

- a My Rights My Voice booklet, which sets out what they're entitled to under the Care Standards and how they can reach out for support if they need it, (more on page 18).
- a child friendly copy of their All About Me Plan, which includes information about how they will be supported while in care.
- a bag to transport their belongings, (more on page 21).
- a memory box to keep their taonga (treasures) safe, (more on page 21).
- a life events book and kit to keep a record of the important things that happen in their life, (more on page 21).
- a special pouch to keep their All About Me Plan and My Rights My Voice booklet safe.
- a transitions and entitlement card (for those over the age of 15) that has information about the support they can access when they move out of care and towards independence. Oranga Tamariki supports young people as they leave care and transition to adulthood through our new Transition Support Service.

We'll work with you to create a Welcome to Our Whare booklet to share with the child. This will allow them to find out some things about you and your family, and what to expect when they come into your home. This will include information about, and photos of, things like your house, your neighbourhood, your pets, and your family's routines.

It's important that, while they're in your care, the child has a space of their own. This includes somewhere safe to keep their belongings. You can include information about this in your Welcome to Our Whare booklet, (more on page 17).

If you'd like to learn more about the National Care Standards, you can visit our website:

**[www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/being-in-care/national-care-standards](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/being-in-care/national-care-standards)**

# Supporting you to care



# Supporting you to care

**We're committed to supporting you and your whānau as you provide care. This will be done through trusted relationships with our social workers, Caregiver Support Plans, and easy access to the information and financial support you need for the child in your care.**

## Caregiver Support Plan

It's our job to help make sure you and the child in your care are doing well. To ensure this happens, your caregiver social worker will develop a Caregiver Support Plan with you. Your plan will be reviewed regularly.

**Under the National Care Standards, all caregivers are entitled to a plan to help them meet the needs of the child.**

Developing your Caregiver Support Plan with your caregiver social worker gives you the opportunity to talk about your strengths and your needs, any changes to your circumstances, and any further support you may need.

When tamariki come into your care, your social worker will work with you to make sure your Caregiver Support Plan reflects the support you will need to help meet the needs of the child in your care. Your plan will be informed by the child's All About Me Plan, (more on page 17).

Any time you have a change of circumstances in your household please let us know. We can then make sure any additional required checks are done if something changes, and any necessary changes are made to the All About Me Plan and Welcome to Our Whare / Haere Mai ki Tō Tātau Kāinga booklet.

## What's in the Caregiver Support Plan

Your Caregiver Support Plan draws on the conversations you will have held with the caregiver social worker during your assessment to become a caregiver. It will take into consideration your strengths and supports within your whānau and community, and also your needs and how these needs can be met. It will also draw on the All About Me Plan for the child in your care to identify what support will help you meet the needs of this tamaiti.

**Your plan will cover things like:**

- Information about the child coming into your care
- Learning opportunities, resources and financial support
- Keeping the child connected to their whānau and culture
- Supporting the child to stay healthy and do well at school
- Specific support to meet the unique needs of the child, such as wellbeing, babysitting or respite care
- How often your social worker will visit you
- How often the child's social worker will visit
- Responsibilities and timeframes for specific actions or tasks.

Any time you need support or are having problems, please call your social worker – they're there to help.

## Taking care of your children

If you have your own children, they might need help adjusting to a new person in the family. They'll need to come to terms with sharing your time and attention, and maybe their own toys, belongings and space.

When we develop your Caregiver Support Plan, we will take the time to talk about your children as we recognise their wellbeing is important. We can support you to have some one-on-one time with each of your children - this may help them to know they will always be special and important to you. This will also give you the chance to talk through anything that might be bothering them.

Your family and whānau play a big role in helping the child or young person feel welcomed and loved, so it's important they're included and supported.

## Caregiver groups

Connecting with other caregivers is a great way to access support from others who know first-hand the challenges and rewards of caregiving.

Caring Families Aotearoa and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren are two recognised organisations that can support you. Both hold regular peer support coffee group meetings throughout New Zealand and membership is free.

If you'd like to know more about these groups, you can visit their websites: [www.caringfamilies.org.nz](http://www.caringfamilies.org.nz) and [www.grg.org.nz](http://www.grg.org.nz). You can also talk to your caregiver social worker about joining a different support network. If there is a membership fee, we are able to cover that cost.

There are many other support groups you can join, and you may be able to get the support of people like kuia/kaumātua.

Oranga Tamariki has partnerships with iwi across the country. If you are Māori and would like to find out more around our iwi partnerships and the support you may be able to receive, you can discuss this with your social worker.

## Learning for caregivers

Caregivers have different circumstances and bring with them a range of knowledge, experience and strengths. Tamariki in care also have unique needs.

Caregivers have told us that they would like access to a range of learning opportunities, such as:

- kanohi-ki-te-kanohi (face-to-face) learning or wānanga held in the community, including at marae
- sharing experiences with other caregivers
- learning together as a family or whānau
- conversations with caregiver social workers
- online learning sessions
- videos and information to read
- 1:1 sessions with professionals.

Learning opportunities are a significant part of caregiver support and make a significant contribution to our goal of providing safe, stable, loving care for tamariki.

When caregiver social workers are creating your Caregiver Support Plan, they will explore opportunities to connect, share, learn and engage with professionals that could benefit your whānau to meet the needs of tamariki and maintain your hauora.

### Core learning: Prepare to Care

The Prepare to Care programme is designed to help you begin your journey as a caregiver with confidence. The goal of the programme is to ensure you have the required support and an understanding of your role, and are able to support the tamariki in your care, in a way that is tailored to your needs.

### Needs-based learning

Many caregivers undertake needs-based learning, which further builds on the core learning topics covered in Prepare to Care. This will meet learning needs identified through support plans and the child in your care's All About Me Plan.

### Specialist learning

More intensive specialist learning can also be provided for caregivers supporting tamariki or rangatahi with higher than usual needs.

Please talk to your caregiver social worker about the right learning opportunities for you and your caregiving whānau. We provide free learning opportunities for all caregivers and can help with the costs of childcare and transport.

## Time to recharge

To ensure that we're caring for your wellbeing, it's important that your Caregiver Support Plan includes details about how we can support you to relax and recharge.

Tamariki who are not in care may stay with whānau and friends, or have a babysitter over to take care of them while the adults take a break. Caregivers need this opportunity too. Regular and planned respite is very important to support a primary caregiver to continue to provide safe and stable care.

Your caregiver social worker will talk to you about what this will look like for you and your caregiving whānau. It may mean that the child in your care goes to another approved caregiver for respite care. This could be for a day, an overnight stay, a weekend or during the school holidays.

It is ideal for every caregiver to have a respite caregiver who they know to support them and the tamariki in their care. Preferably a respite caregiver is someone within the whānau of the tamariki, or known to the tamariki, or, if this is not possible, someone who can build a relationship with the tamariki before respite occurs. Respite is a great opportunity for tamariki to strengthen their connections with wider whānau, hapū, iwi, or natural community networks and to grow their experiences. That's why we look for respite caregivers from within a child's existing network if we can.

If this isn't possible, we'll work with you and the child in your care to build a positive and trusted relationship with someone who can provide safe and stable respite care. All our respite caregivers are assessed and approved to provide care.

If there are members of your whānau who tamariki in your care may regularly spend time with, get them to connect with your caregiver social worker so they can be approved as respite caregivers for the tamariki in your care. They don't have to already be an approved caregiver. Once this is in place it will be straightforward to share care with these trusted members of your whānau.

It's important that respite care is planned so that the child in your care knows what to expect. It's also important that respite care is meeting both your needs and the needs of the child in your care.

All new caregiving whānau should think about who the other members of their whānau are who know or will know the children well who can become approved respite caregivers.



## Looking after yourself

Being a caregiver has lots of rewards, but we know it can be stressful and challenging. It's important to take time out now and then, and do things you find relaxing and enjoyable. If things get tough, we suggest you:

- talk with someone – us, a friend, another caregiver or a family member. It really helps to talk things through with someone who understands
- plan for a regular break, whether it's a weekend away or an afternoon coffee
- make sure you have support people – put the phone numbers of key friends and family in your phone, or have them to hand
- join one of the support groups listed. It really helps to share your experiences with other caregivers
- connect with an iwi group, and get the support of a kuia/kaumātua
- join a parenting group or play group appropriate to the child's age – especially if children are younger, it really helps to get out of the house and interact with other adults.

The main things are to make sure you have a good support network and are not isolated, give yourself regular breaks and make sure you call us if you need help.

## Access to counselling support and advice

All Oranga Tamariki caregivers can access the Caregiver Assistance Programme. This means you're entitled to free, confidential counselling and advice from trained counsellors through a trusted provider called Benestar.

You can use the Caregiver Assistance Programme to get support in your role as a caregiver, or for personal issues. Support is available face-to-face, over the phone, or via email or online. You can self-refer for up to three free sessions every year, and more can be arranged if you need them.

You can access this service by calling 0800 360 364 and letting them know you are an Oranga Tamariki caregiver. They'll then set up an appointment for you. If you have any questions, please contact your caregiver social worker for a confidential chat.

## Financial support for you and the child in your care

### Caregiver Allowance

You will receive a non-taxable Foster Care Allowance (also known as board payment) from the time a child or young person comes into your care. This is to help you cover the everyday care costs of having a child in your home, such as their food, household costs, general transport, and all the other opportunities and experiences you'll give them as part of your family. How much you receive is based on the age of the child and is adjusted each year. This will be paid directly into your bank account each fortnight.

### Children's finances and pocket money

Bank accounts for children in care generally need to be jointly operated by an adult. Please discuss this with the child's social worker.

Pocket money for the child or young person in your care is included in the Foster Care Allowance. This needs to be paid to them on a regular basis as it's part of their entitlement. The amount of pocket money depends on the age of the child or young person. You can find these rates on our website [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/caring-for-someone/financial-help](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/caring-for-someone/financial-help).

In Family Home care, two adult caregivers care for up to six children or young people in a home environment, which is owned by Oranga Tamariki. For Family Home caregivers, pocket money is paid in addition to the Foster Care Allowance.

We ask caregivers not to withhold pocket money as a form of punishment. If this money is to be used for another specific cost, you must first seek the agreement of the social worker for the child or young person.

### Small cost payment

When you receive the Foster Care Allowance you will also receive an additional \$20 each fortnight to pay for small items like extra school stationery, school outings, presents for a friend's birthday party or a koha. Larger costs can be met by discretionary payments. Please talk to your caregiver social worker about these.

### Clothing allowance

You will receive a clothing allowance so you can buy the child in your care the clothes and shoes they need. You'll receive these payments into your bank account every four weeks along with the Foster Care Allowance. Children and young people are entitled to have this amount spent on the items they need. For older children and young people, you may like to discuss with them how the two of you can shop together or how they can shop for themselves.

The amount is based on the age of the child. It covers:

- a reasonable range of appropriate clothing and shoes
- a bag
- replacement of school uniform items.

### Christmas and birthdays

An extra allowance is paid to you to cover birthdays and Christmas. This will be paid automatically into your account in December and in the month of the child's birthday. The money can be used for celebrations and presents, and is half the standard weekly Board Rate.

Current board rates, pocket money, clothing, Christmas and birthday rates are on our website [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz) or call **0508 227 377**.

## Health and education costs

We'll make sure the health and education costs of the child in your care are covered. This includes doctor's visits, prescription costs, dental work, and school costs like compulsory fees, voluntary donations, camps, stationery and computer equipment.

Before buying items or services for tamariki in your care, speak to their social worker to check that Oranga Tamariki can cover the costs and purchase these for the child.

**In an emergency:** If the child in your care needs to make an emergency visit to the doctor, we understand that you may not be able to let your social worker know first. In this case, the doctor's surgery may ask you for an 'order number' or 'purchase order'. Please tell them the child's social worker will send this on the next working day and contact your social worker as soon as you can, so they can send an order number to the doctor.

## Other costs related to the child

You might also have other costs related to the child in your care. Talk to the child's social worker before committing to any expenses so they can make sure these costs can be covered, and you can be reimbursed if appropriate.

### Set-up grant

Caregivers qualify for a set-up grant. This money, if needed, can help you to prepare to care for a child. Please talk to your caregiver social worker about this.

### School uniforms

You can receive additional money for school uniforms for children starting at a new school, or for their first year of intermediate or college where they need a uniform for the first time. Assistance for replacement uniforms is included in the clothing allowance payments you receive.

### Transport and travel

The Foster Care Allowance covers the cost of reasonable travel involved in providing for the day-to-day care of the child or young person in your care. When the travel need cannot reasonably be met, with prior approval a reimbursement can be paid. Please talk to the child's social worker to understand how we can help with travel costs.

We can help with certified car seats for children's safety, so if you have a child in your care under the age of seven – or an older child who may require a specialist seat – and the child's social worker hasn't sorted out a car restraint for you, give us a call.

## Sports, recreation and cultural activity

Being involved in sport, recreational and cultural activities (such as kapa haka) helps young people to develop and feel proud of themselves. It can help them to learn new skills, build confidence and make friends with others in their community.

If the child in your care wants to play sport or be part of cultural activities, we will pay the reasonable costs for their chosen activities. Talk to the child's social worker to ensure that the costs you are seeking are covered and can be considered as a part of the child's All About Me Plan. Talk to the child in your care about what their interests are. We'll then help you to make it possible.

It is also important to support tamariki and rangatahi to stay connected to whānau, hapū and iwi, through activities like regular visits with family and whānau, attending events, activities and experiences, and visiting and connecting with marae, whenua and other places significant to their culture.

Talk to the child's social worker about the child's needs to maintain and strengthen family and whānau connection, the plan to meet them, and any associated costs. We can provide financial support for activities to support te tamaiti to develop, maintain and strengthen family and whānau connections.

### Nappies

If the child in your care is wearing nappies, you are entitled to the nappy allowance, in addition to the Foster Care Allowance.

### Higher foster care allowance

If there are special costs associated with looking after the child in your care, you might be eligible for extra help through the higher foster care allowance. This is generally for children with very complex needs, like severe emotional distress, special dietary needs or children with a disability that requires specialist intervention. How much you receive is based on the child's needs, and we review this payment every six months.

## Financial assistance from Inland Revenue

### Best Start

You may be entitled to support through Inland Revenue.

Please contact Inland Revenue on **0800 227 773** to see if you qualify. You will need the child's IRD number, so talk to your child's social worker first.

You can also find out more on their website [www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz).

## In-work Tax Credit

You might be able to receive the in-work tax credit if:

- you're receiving the Foster Care Allowance and you are working
- you're the child's main caregiver
- you do not receive a main benefit from Work and Income, a Student Allowance or Children's Pension.

Payments vary depending on your income and the number of children you have living with you.

Check out [www.ird.govt.nz/wff-tax-credits](http://www.ird.govt.nz/wff-tax-credits) for more information.

You can also phone Inland Revenue on **0800 227 773** to see if you qualify. You will need the child's IRD number, so talk to your child's social worker first.

**Please note:** If you are caring for a child you may be eligible for Best Start payments and/or in-work tax credits, but you are not able to claim any other Working for Families Tax Credits for the child such as Family Tax Credit.

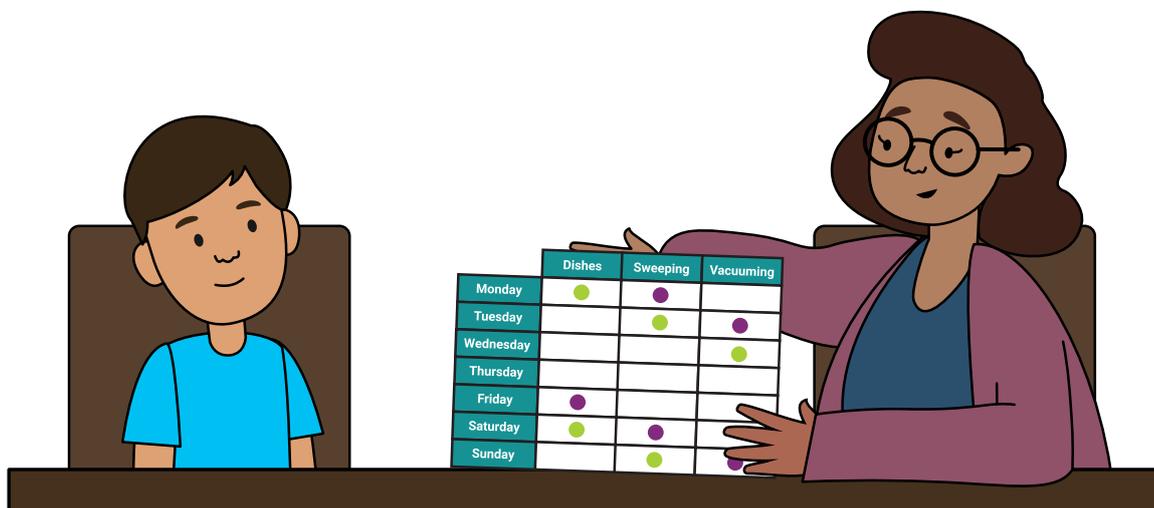
## Insurance for your belongings

It's important that you have insurance for your home, contents and vehicle in case something gets damaged by the child in your care. For some tamariki, the distress they have experienced materialises through damaging the property of their caregivers.

Some companies don't insure families if they have a child or young person in care living with them, and some will cover for accidental but not intentional damage. We recommend that you check with your insurance provider to make sure you're covered.

If you are a Family Home caregiver, you'll need to have your own insurance for your personal possessions and personal vehicles.

Oranga Tamariki has a policy to cover all caregivers for non-accidental damage to their property caused by the child in their care. We'll consider all requests for reimbursement if a child in your care has caused non-accidental damage.



# When a child comes into your care



# When a child comes into your care

**The way a child comes into your care will vary depending on whether you're a whānau caregiver, a non-whānau caregiver, or a Family Home caregiver. Changing homes can be a particularly stressful time for children and young people, so it's important we work together to make their transition as smooth as possible.**

Tamariki have all experienced their own unique pathway into care. This will come with a number of different emotions tamariki can feel, and not necessarily understand or know how to express. It is important that you and your whānau take the time to create an environment that helps tamariki feel safe, comfortable and secure. Acknowledging the journey they have been through is the first step in doing this.

Some tamariki who come into care may have experienced several caregiving homes, resulting in them experiencing several different routines. Some would have learned to quickly adapt to new changes, while others may not.

There are many factors that may have shaped their experience before coming into your care:

- The way they were moved into care, and if it was an urgent or a planned move.
- Their understanding of why they needed to come into care if they previously felt safe.
- Their understanding of why they needed to come into care, if they were previously safe, or not, and what it takes to feel safe now.
- Their feelings about and attitude towards the people who were caring for them before you.

## Welcome to Our Whare booklet/Haere Mai ki Tō Tātau Kāinga

***Young people have told us "I should know lots about my caregiver before I meet them."***

It's important that the child in your care feels safe and prepared for coming to live with you. Wherever possible we give them information about you and your whānau beforehand and arrange for them to come and visit you.

Your caregiver social worker will help you make a Welcome to Our Whare / Haere Mai ki Tō Tātau Kāinga booklet about your whare/home, if the child isn't already familiar with the home. It's a chance to share information about you and your household that a child may like to know, such as who lives there and who visits, mealtimes, pets, and local parks. This booklet, and the chance to visit your home, can make all the difference in reducing any anxiety the child may be feeling before they come to live with you.

## All About Me Plan

When a child comes into care, their social worker will assess and identify their immediate and long-term needs. To gather this information, they will talk to the child, their family and whānau, hapū, iwi, other important people in their lives, and caregivers – as many are whānau and may know the child – who can contribute.

After a full in-depth assessment of the needs of the child has been done, their All About Me Plan is developed. It provides information about the child that will help you get to know them, and outlines what needs to be done to ensure their needs and goals are met.

We'll get the All About Me Plan to you as soon as the child comes to live with you. It may not be complete (particularly in urgent situations), but it tells you the things you need to know about the child, such as: any special health needs, likes and dislikes, things that make them feel safe, medications or allergies, cultural or religious beliefs, schooling arrangements, and things about their circumstances that will help you understand them and provide the care they need.

The Plan will have information about how the child will connect with their whānau. It will also include details about when, where and how often the child's social worker will come to visit them.

The All About Me Plan aligns with the overarching goals and objectives of the Family Group Conference or Court Plan. It provides more details about how those goals and objectives will be supported and achieved by everyone who is part of the team around the child.

As a key member of the team, there will be opportunities in this plan for you as a caregiver to support the child. The child's social worker will talk to you and work these out with you. Your caregiver social worker will work with you to develop your Caregiver Support Plan, which will set out the support you will need to meet the needs of the child in your care.

The child or young person will also receive a version of their All About Me Plan written in a way to help them understand the plans to support them. This is called the Tamariki All About Me Plan. It's completed by the child's social worker in discussion with the child or young person and sets out how their needs will be met while they're in care, in a format they can easily understand.

## Keeping information private

Please respect the privacy of children in your care. The All About Me Plan given to you will contain personal information about the child and their family. Please keep this in a secure place and only share information about the child's circumstances and family background with people who need to know in order to help with the child's care. It's a good idea to check with the child's social worker if you're not sure what can be shared. When it reaches the point that the child eventually leaves your care, we'll ask you to return any confidential paperwork. You'll find more information about privacy, including when dealing with the media, on page 29.

## Rights of tamariki and rangatahi

Oranga Tamariki must provide every child and young person in care with child-friendly information about what they are entitled to under the National Care Standards. This includes information about how they can be supported to speak up if they feel they are not getting the care they are entitled to.

To do this we have developed a My Rights My Voice booklet and cards. Our social workers use these to explain to children and young people what their rights are in a way that is understandable for their age, development, language, or any disability. Their social worker will also tell them where they can get further support and provide them with a copy of the booklet (if age appropriate).

As a caregiver you also have an important part in the promotion and protection of the rights of tamariki in care. Your caregiver social worker will make sure you also have a copy of the My Rights My Voice booklet.

**VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai is the key connection and advocacy service for tamariki in care.**

## Contact with VOYCE Whakarongo Mai

VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai is an independent organisation that supports and advocates for tamariki and rangatahi in care. They get alongside tamariki and rangatahi to ensure their views and voices are heard, so their experience of care is the best it can be.

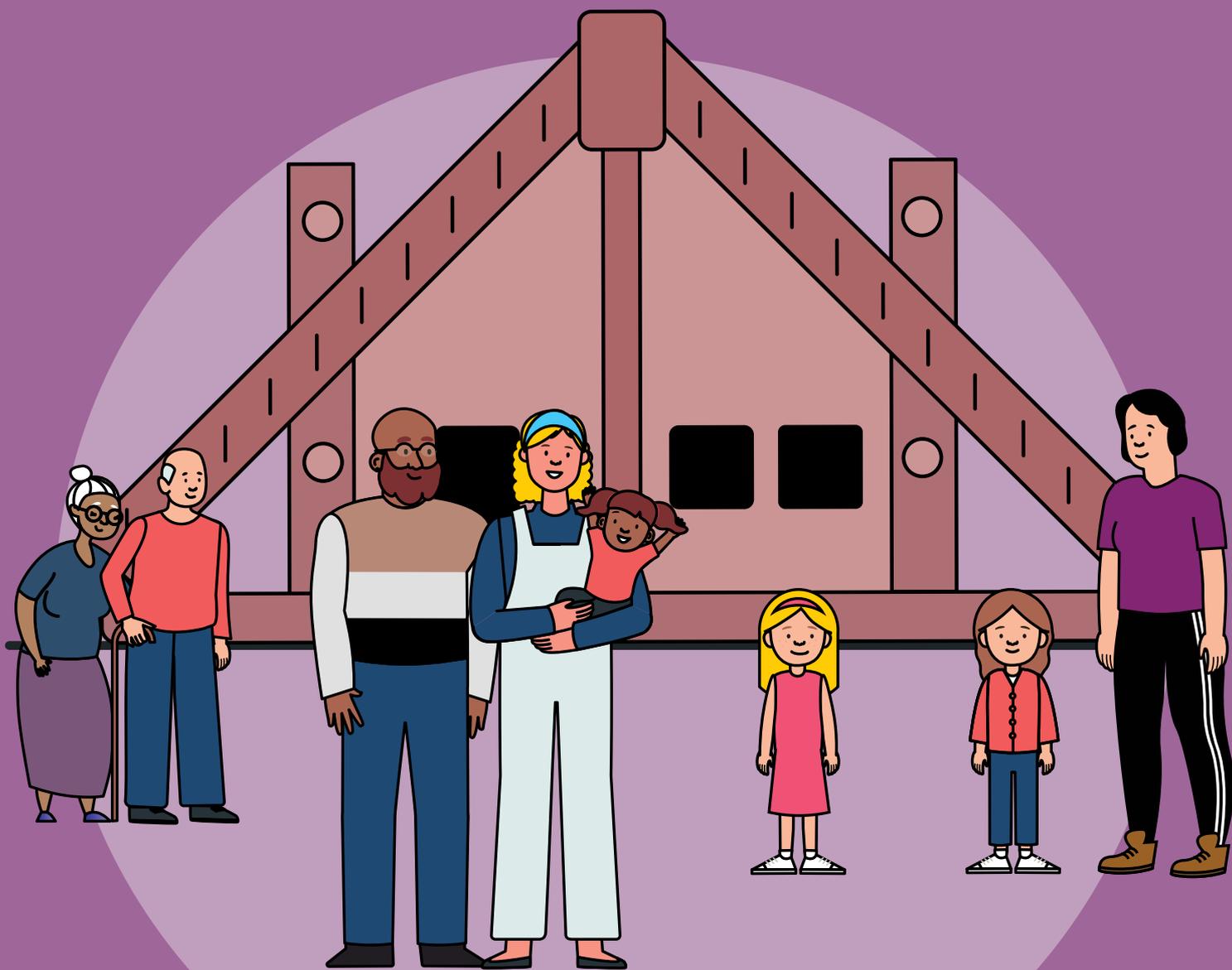
VOYCE is also there to support tamariki and rangatahi to develop their leadership potential and organise fun events so they can connect with others in care. Understanding they are not alone in their experiences is empowering. It can help reduce stigma and create a strong and positive care identity.

We want to ensure tamariki and rangatahi in care can access the support provided through VOYCE. To do this, we share basic contact details for tamariki and rangatahi in care with VOYCE, including contact details of the caregiver they are living with. This is so VOYCE can contact tamariki and rangatahi to let them know about the support offered and the work they are doing.

You can contact VOYCE by phoning **0800 486 923** or online at **[www.voyce.org.nz](http://www.voyce.org.nz)**.



# Meeting the needs of the child



# Meeting the needs of the child

**The child's All About Me Plan captures the objectives and goals for the child. It covers all aspects of their wellbeing, healing and maintaining connections with their whānau, culture and other important people in their lives. For tamariki to heal and thrive, we need to work together to ensure their needs are being met.**

## Keeping children connected with their family and whānau

*I kore au e ngaro, he kākano i ruia mai i Rangiatea*

*I will never be lost, for I am the seed which was sown from Rangiatea*

While tamariki are in care, it's important we support them to establish, maintain and strengthen their connections to their family and whānau. This includes siblings, hapū and iwi and others they or their family identify as important. Connecting the child with important people in their life, like kuia/kaumātua, helps the child build their identity, understand their place in their whānau, and gain a sense of belonging.

For tamariki Māori, whānau connections are established through whakapapa. This refers to the genealogy and bloodlines that tie tamariki Māori to their ancestors, past, present and future in their whānau, hapū and iwi. Whakapapa also includes significant ancestral places, like whenua and marae.

Ideally, we want tamariki to establish mana-enhancing relationships across the breadth of their whānau connections. Creating meaningful engagements with people, places and events will promote a sense of belonging, wellbeing and identity.

Whether you are a whānau or non-whānau caregiver, we will help children in your care stay connected with their birth family and other important people in their lives. We'll support them to do this in a way that is safe and healthy for them.

The best way for family visits to happen is worked out between the child, their family, you and the child's social worker. Agreed visiting arrangements are set out in the All About Me Plan and their social worker will talk these through with you. They will also keep the family involved in key decisions and up to date with how their children are doing.

## Helping children with family visits

Family visits can be a big deal for children. They sometimes come with a mixture of anxiety and anticipation, which, as their caregiver, you may be able to support them through.

The child could be worried or excited, and you might be able to help by encouraging them to talk about how they're feeling. Remind them that you're there to help.

There may be changes in the child's emotions before and after the visit, which can be due to many different reasons. Be patient and consistent, it may just take some time for the child to adjust. If you're concerned, take note of the emotions you are seeing and discuss this with the child's social worker.

It's important to remain neutral and supportive. It's upsetting for a child or young person to hear negative things about their family and, if you have any concerns, it's best to discuss these with their social worker.

## Culture, belonging and identity

**Young people have told us: "I want carers to respect my culture and know about it."**

Central to the wellbeing of tamariki is a sound and positive sense of culture, belonging and identity. Belonging and identity can cover things like faith, sexuality, gender, age, disability and more.

You have a key role in encouraging tamariki to build their sense of culture, identity and belonging, and we will help you with this. Talk with your child's social worker about the types of events, activities, knowledge and connections that can be supported.

Tamariki can be supported to learn about languages, customs, ceremonies and rituals by gaining a greater awareness of beliefs, values, and practices. For tamariki Māori, identity and belonging is embedded in te reo, and Māori beliefs, values, practices, whakapapa and tikanga. Children have their own special identity and things from their family, whānau and background that are unique and important to them, like their religious or spiritual beliefs, their culture, where they come from and how they look.

Acknowledging and celebrating these things will help a child retain their identity and builds their mana and self-esteem. Most aspects of the child's identity will be reflected in their All About Me Plan.

Talk to the child about the kind of food they like to eat and respect their language if it's different from your own. If the child you're caring for is Māori, knowing their iwi affiliation will help you celebrate their identity. If you need help with any of this, please ask your child's social worker so they can help you understand the child's cultural needs.

If you practise a religion and would like to include the child you are caring for in religious activities, such as attending church, please let their social worker know so they can discuss this with the child's family and whānau.

## Life events book and memory box

Tamariki who spend time in care sometimes have gaps in their childhood memories, because of the disruptions in their life. By helping them to build a picture of their whakapapa and cultural identity it will help them understand more about who they are and where they belong. This supports and helps build their mana, experiences, achievements, attachments and relationships.

You, along with the child's social worker and the child in your care, must consider how you can save their memories for the future, so they have a record of their life journey. Depending on the child's age and development, you may be more or less involved. It will also depend on the child's wishes and needs. The child's social worker will provide you and the child in your care with a life events book and kit, and a memory box to keep the things that are important to them safe. You might have some other good ideas that you can talk to the child's social worker about.

Encourage the child in your care to tell you about the things that are important to them. They might be small things like a shell found at the beach that they can put in their memory box or book.

Make sure you gather photos, cards, certificates from school, school reports or their own drawings and add them to the life events book or memory box.

## Getting to know your home

By being sensitive to cultural differences, you can help the child feel valued, respected and at home in your family. Talk with them about what they were used to in their previous home, and about anything they may be finding uncomfortable or strange. By being aware of these things, you can make small changes that can help a child feel at home.

The child or young person will know a little bit about your home from their visit and the Welcome to Our Whare booklet you prepared. Once they are living with you, it is a good idea to explain things like:

- set times for meals, where the wharepaku is, bathroom routines and bedtimes
- what time everyone gets home from school and work
- your family habits like shoes off at the door, knocking before entering bedrooms, the use of technology.

You should encourage them to ask as many questions as they like. It's also respectful to consider any new ideas they have about things the family might like to do.

You might also want to get them helping with everyday household chores that they are capable of doing successfully, rather than those you think are age appropriate. You might need to talk about this a few times as they settle into the household routines – it's easy to forget things at times of change or stress. Allow for mistakes and give them time to adjust.

Helping with small chores around the house will help encourage children to feel part of the family and learn about responsibility.

## Belongings

When a child comes into your care, they will have their belongings with them. If they did not have a bag to use prior to this move, their social worker will have given them one to use and keep.

It is important to respect and look after the child's belongings, as they are part of their identity.

Please make sure there is somewhere appropriate at your home for them to keep their things, making sure they are safe and the child can access them whenever they want. When the time comes for the child to leave your care, it is important they take their belongings with them. This will include items purchased for them whilst in your care.

## Moving between caregivers

At times, tamariki in care will move to another caregiving whānau. It could be they're moving to family or whānau care, that their current caregiver can no longer care for them for some reason, or that the current arrangements aren't working.

Moving can be a difficult experience for tamariki. How we manage it can make all the difference to a child continuing to feel loved and supported, even during a change in circumstances.

The child's social worker will work with the child and you to plan the transition (where possible). You can help by:

- talking to the child about why they are changing homes and caregivers
- taking them to visit their new caregivers or whānau
- being involved in events to farewell them from your home.

## Health and education assessments

When a child enters care, their social worker refers them for a Gateway Assessment. This is where we find out if the child has any health or education needs that we can help with, so they can feel well and be at their best. We can then make sure they get all the right help. This might be anything from a dental or hearing check to getting extra support at school, or specialist mental health or emotional support.

You're the person who gives your care every day, so we'll ask you lots of questions and keep you involved all the way through the assessment process.

We'll ask for consent from the family and whānau/guardian of the child in your care before seeking information about their health and education, or taking them through a health check. A young person over the age of 16, or deemed competent to consent, can consent to have a Gateway Assessment.

If you are caring for a child or young person who has health or wellbeing needs, you can ask your social worker to arrange a Gateway Assessment.

## Meeting health and education needs

The health and educational needs of tamariki and rangatahi will be included in their All About Me Plan and, as their caregiver, we will ask that you will support us to meet these needs.

Your caregiver social worker will work to ensure your Caregiver Support Plan includes the support you need so you can encourage and support the child in your care with educational activities and progress, and their health needs so they can be the best they can. This includes things like engaging with the school and the child's teachers, attending events like parent-teacher sessions, and sharing any school reports with the child's social worker.

More information about visiting the doctor, as well as around consent and signing permission slips, is on page 27.

## Permanent care

Tamariki need a safe, stable and loving home. We're committed to, first and foremost, working proactively with children and young people, their family, whānau, hapū, iwi or family group, and those that support them, to prevent the need for them to come into care in the first place.

When it's not possible for tamariki to have their long-term care needs and safety met in the care of their parents, we must find safe, stable and loving permanent care for them. If children and young people are unable to go home, Oranga Tamariki will strive to achieve permanent care that meets their needs from within their family, whānau, hapū, iwi or family group. Doing this means the child can maintain family and whakapapa links, their identity and a sense of belonging, and have their cultural and spiritual needs met.

Non-whānau permanent care is an exception and can only occur where no family, whānau, hapū, iwi or family group alternatives which meet the child's needs are available. This decision will be made alongside the child and their extended family or whānau, hapū, iwi or family group.

In the case of tamariki or rangatahi Māori, a non-whānau permanent care decision can only be made after working alongside iwi, mana whenua, or Māori organisations, as appropriate.

In all cases, we will work closely with the child, their family, whānau, hapū, iwi and family group, and the caregiver, to agree arrangements to maintain and strengthen connections. Specifically, we will focus on supporting an ongoing relationship between the child and their family, whānau, hapū, iwi, and family group, including supporting whānau to exercise their whanaungatanga responsibilities. As a permanent caregiver, it is important that you help to maintain this contact, as well as the connection to their culture and community, and that you value and respect their whakapapa.

## The legal process

Permanent care for a child may involve custody and/or guardianship orders through the Family Court. At the same time, the Family Court will discharge custody or guardianship orders held by Oranga Tamariki, and the child will no longer be in the care of Oranga Tamariki.

The child's social worker will support you through the Family Court process if you are to become a permanent caregiver.

## Support for permanent caregivers

Oranga Tamariki will make a referral to the Permanent Caregiver Support Service (PCSS), the service responsible for supporting you once you become permanent caregiver.

We'll also work with you to put you in touch with support agencies such as Work and Income to access services like Working for Families payments for assistance with the costs of raising a child.

To find out more about what it all means and how it works, talk to your caregiver social worker.

## Transitioning out of care

The Transition Support Service is a service established to provide eligible rangatahi leaving Oranga Tamariki care or custody with support and networks to safely move from care to adulthood. Rangatahi can choose whether they want to engage with this service. The Transition Support Service includes multiple layers of support that rangatahi are entitled to, including:

### Transition worker support

The transition worker's role is to provide a more gradual and supported transition for rangatahi leaving care or custody to help them get a good start to their adult lives. Rangatahi will be referred to a transition support partner in the community when they turn 16, the transition worker will work alongside the rangatahi social worker to build a relationship with and encourage rangatahi to have more say and increasing responsibility in their future.

As rangatahi leave care, the transition worker will be their key support, proactively maintaining contact with them until they are 21, supporting them through a youth-led approach to connect with their identity, culture, whānau and wider support networks. They will assist rangatahi in the development of skills and knowledge over time, and support them to develop and learn from their experiences with a focus on building and strengthening a network of support, which can endure into their adult lives.

### Advice and assistance

Eligible rangatahi aged from 15 up to 25 years old are entitled to ask for advice and assistance from Oranga Tamariki. This can be done through their transition worker or the Transition Support helpline, where a dedicated transition support team will provide specialist advice and assistance. Advice and assistance may include:

- providing information about entitlements (such as about other services in their community) and support to access these entitlements
- assisting rangatahi to obtain accommodation, enrol in education or training, or obtain employment
- assisting rangatahi to receive legal advice or access counselling and career advice
- providing financial assistance to support rangatahi to move towards or achieve independence.

You can also contact the Transition Support team on **0800 55 89 89** if you have any queries around what supports rangatahi may be entitled to, or if you want to know more about the service.

## Entitlement to remain or return to living with a caregiver

Rangatahi in care can remain living with their caregiver, or return to living with a caregiver, after they turn 18 until they turn 21. This is a voluntary living arrangement and must be agreed to by the caregiver and the rangatahi. The arrangement is intended to be a step down from care so that independence can be more gradual, while rangatahi are in a safe and stable environment. Oranga Tamariki can continue to support through financial contributions and caregiver social worker support.

As a caregiver who agrees to offer support in a remain or return living arrangement, you will be supported by your caregiver social worker to negotiate the terms through a 'Living Arrangement Agreement' between you and the rangatahi. This agreement details things like financial costs, duration of stay, support you can provide, house rules and conflict management. Your caregiver social worker will then continue to support and maintain contact with you, until the rangatahi turns 21 or moves on to live independently.

If you have an 18- to 21-year-old living with you under the entitlement to remain or return, it is likely you'll also develop a relationship with their transition worker, as they will be supporting the rangatahi to understand and navigate their living arrangement agreement, while your caregiver social worker will support you with yours.

Transition Support is committed to reducing barriers that caregivers may face in order for rangatahi to remain living, or return to living, in a caregiver's home. Talk to your social worker if you would like to learn more about how rangatahi can remain or return to living with you.

## If a child talks about abuse

If the child in your care talks to you about abuse, or wants to share very sensitive information with you, there are some guidelines you should follow:

- listen and believe what they say
- reassure them that it's good they told you about it
- let them know it's not their fault
- let them know it's not okay for things like this to happen to children
- tell them you will get help.

It's best not to question them about their experience – just listen and be reassuring.

The best response might be: "Thank you for telling me about that. Now I need to talk to your social worker so we can make sure you're safe."

When a child talks about abuse we take it seriously and want to support them, so please follow these steps:

- write down what the child tells you, and how you responded, as soon as possible, using the same words they say
- tell their social worker straight away so they can take steps to ensure the child's ongoing safety.

If this ever happens, it's natural to feel a bit anxious, but don't worry – we'll be there to support the child and you.



# Day-to-day care



# Day-to-day care

**As a caregiver you're there to meet the day-to-day needs of the child in your care and provide encouragement and love. Caregivers often have questions about what they can and can't do when they're providing this care for a child or young person. This section helps answer some of these.**

## Values and keeping everyone safe

It's important for all families to have values – things like the way you treat each other and how you want your family to be. A child coming into care also comes with their own set of values.

It can take a child a while to get used to the different sorts of values you may have. You might want to talk them through as a family, to help them understand why they are important. It's important to have an insight into their values as well.

Sometimes children who have been harmed or neglected have difficulty with their own boundaries, and you may need to help them with their wellbeing. Some extra things you need to think about include:

- whether children play in the lounge, rather than unsupervised in bedrooms, until you feel confident the children can play together well
- 'no hitting' rules for children and adults
- knocking when a door is closed, so that everyone knows their privacy is respected
- telling all children in the family that they have a right to say "no" to hugs, tickling or cuddles.

## Keeping a caregiving journal

We suggest that all our caregivers keep a journal, as this is a great way to record how things are going and what has happened in the child's life.

It is a good idea to note any significant changes in the way the child is expressing themselves, feeling and interacting with others, and to record great moments, or jot down things you want to talk about with their social worker.

This may also prove to be a helpful resource to reflect on when you are meeting with the child's social worker about the child's plan, or your caregiver social worker about your own support plan.

As well as helping to keep track of how things change over time, journal entries are a good way of keeping everyone safe if there is an issue, accident or disagreement over something.

We recommend you keep a separate journal for each child in your care so it can form part of their record. When the child leaves your care, we'll put the journal on the child's file.

The journal needs to be kept in a secure and safe place as they are not just your records – they belong to tamariki and their whānau. It is important that what is written in the diary is safeguarded and kept private.

Please talk to your social worker and the child's social worker about what works for you and the tamariki in your care. Each child is unique, and this is their story and their journey, so the journal should reflect that.

## Safe sleeping

The child's social worker will ensure tamariki in your care have a safe sleeping environment, including a safe, age-appropriate bed. They will also work with you to put plans in place for sleeping practices to keep tamariki safe and reduce sudden unexpected death of infants.

If you have any questions or worries about children's sleeping arrangements, please don't hesitate to talk to the child's social worker.

You can also talk to a health professional by calling Healthline on **0800 611 116**, or PlunketLine on **0800 933 922**.

## Smoking and vaping

Providing a healthy environment for the child in your care to thrive in is important. It's important for you and other members of your family too.

We ask all caregivers to keep their homes and cars smoke and vape free, and not to smoke or vape when children are around. That doesn't mean you can't smoke or vape; we just ask that you do this outside and not when the child is around.

For Family Home caregivers, we ask that you do not smoke or vape in any space on the property, as these are smoke and vape free government owned properties.

All smoking harms babies, as it reduces the level of oxygen available. Babies exposed to second-hand smoke are more likely to develop illnesses like chest infections, glue ear and asthma.



## Keeping children safe

Your caregiver social worker will have spoken with you during your assessment about safety around your home. Here is a short checklist of things to consider when keeping children safe:

- make sure no one smokes or vapes around children, or smokes in the house while you have a child in your care
- make sure the children in your care are sleeping safely
- ensure no children are on your driveway when moving your car
- always use car safety belts, child car restraints for under-sevens, and child car seats for younger ones – ask us if you need one (go to [www.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.nzta.govt.nz) for more information on child restraints)
- keep swimming pools and spa pools fenced
- store cleaning products and medicines safely out of reach of children
- keep smoke and fire alarms in working order if you have young children
- make sure stairs, windows and gates are safe for children
- in sunny weather, always use sunblock and make sure children cover up
- make sure children wear a helmet if they are riding a bike
- use safety equipment during sporting activities
- ensure that you have an up-to-date civil emergency plan (go to [www.getthru.govt.nz/how-to-get-ready](http://www.getthru.govt.nz/how-to-get-ready) for more information and to download a Household Emergency Plan) and have a plan in place for dealing with the potential impacts of COVID-19.

## Holidays, playdates and babysitting

### Taking a holiday

Let us know if you're going on holiday and give us advanced notice if you're planning an overseas trip. You might want to take the child in your care with you. If so, we will talk this through with their family and whānau. Or perhaps you're planning a break on your own, in which case we will work out alternative care for the child. Either way, please give us plenty of notice so we can work together to make plans for the child in your care.

### Playdates, sleepovers and camps

Just like children everywhere, the child in your care needs friends, fun, play and sleepovers. Decisions about short-term arrangements, like babysitting and sleepovers with friends, are usually up to you. As with usual parenting decisions, please check on the arrangements so you know who will be looking after the children, what they will be doing, and what the arrangements are for the next day.

Let us know if the child in your care is going to be away for more than a night, as we need to know where children in care are. We also need to know about things like school camps ahead of time so we can sort out any consents needed and help with any other arrangements.

## Babysitting

As part of your caregiver role, you can choose a babysitter you trust, and who has the skills and maturity to care for the child in your care.

Sometimes caregivers like their own older teenagers to babysit, and this is usually fine, but please check with the child's social worker to make sure it's appropriate.

Sometimes a young person in your care may want to do babysitting. It's a good idea for you, the young person and their social worker to discuss their skills, experience and how appropriate it would be.

Legally, any young person must be 14 years of age before they are able to be a babysitter.

## Other care arrangements

If you or the child in your care need any other additional or different care arrangements – like daycare or an after school programme – contact the child's social worker and they can discuss the options with you.

## People in your home

You may have changes to your home life, such as a partner moving in, or moving out, or new people living at your house, like a flatmate or boarder. Let us know beforehand about any changes to people in your house or your circumstances for a period of time, as this will help us plan for the child in your care.

We need to ensure the children in your care are safe around every adult aged 18 and older living in your household. If you have any questions about this, please check in with your caregiver social worker.

## Health matters

Information to help you care for the child's health needs will be in their All About Me Plan, including contact details for their regular General Practitioner if they have one, plus any medical history and treatment. If the child doesn't have a General Practitioner, their social worker will help find a suitable health professional and ensure the child is enrolled in a Primary Health Organisation.

If a child in your care has significant health concerns, their needs will be addressed in their All About Me Plan. There is a range of assistance available, and the child's social worker can help you find up-to-date information, resources and supports.

If the child is on medication of any kind, please make sure they take the right dose at the right time, and the course of medication is completed.

You're the one who cares for the child every day, so please let the child's social worker know if you think they are having trouble with their sight or hearing, or you notice any other health issues. We'll help get the child any healthcare or checks they might need.

If you're unsure about any health matter related to the child in your care, or accessing health services including natural remedies, it's best to check in with your caregiver social worker.

## Going to the doctor

If the child in your care is sick or appears unwell, please take them to the doctor.

It's best to take the child in your care to their usual doctor, but if this isn't possible you can take them to your own doctor. Please keep notes from visits to the doctor so you can talk about these with the child's social worker.

## Age of consent for medical treatment

If the child in your care is under 16, please talk to their social worker about any medical treatments that may require a guardian's consent. Although routine day-to-day health issues do not normally require formal guardianship consent, we encourage you to check with your or the child's social worker first – except in the case of an emergency. More major interventions like immunisations, surgery and counselling will need guardians' consent.

A young person over the age of 16 years can give their own consent to medical, dental or surgical treatment and procedures.

## Accidents and illness

If the child in your care gets a serious illness or an injury, please let us know straight away. We'll need to inform their family and whānau, and work with you to make sure the right consents for treatment are in place. If you're having trouble getting hold of the child's social worker at short notice, call the Caregiver Support Line on **0508 227 377**.

In an emergency: Take the child to the doctor or the hospital immediately. Emergency treatment can be given by doctors without consent, where delays could put the child's safety at risk. Let the child's social worker know as soon as you can, so they can talk to the child's family and whānau about what's happening.

If you're ever unsure about whether a child needs medical help, you can call the free Healthline on **0800 611 116**. They have health professionals on-call 24 hours a day.

## Dental treatment

All tamariki and rangatahi should receive regular dental care.

If the child you are caring for is at school, they'll go along for regular dental checks. However, at times children can wait a long time to receive dental treatment through school.

If you have concerns about the child's dental health, please talk to the child's social worker.

## Immunisation and vaccinations

Oranga Tamariki encourages children and young people to be immunised. The immunisation record for the child in your care should be in their All About Me Plan, and we'll let you know what needs to happen when.

Decisions about immunising children lie with the guardians, so the child's social worker will need to get their consent first.



## Education matters

It's important children in care have every opportunity to engage in education. As a caregiver, you'll be spending a lot of time every day with the child in your care, and you'll come to know the child's strengths and challenges in relation to learning.

We encourage you to take part in conversations with teachers and other professionals to best support tamariki with their education. The child's social worker will also support the child with this, and connect with you to decide how we can best meet the needs of tamariki around their learning. This information will be included in the child's All About Me Plan. Your social worker will work with you to make sure you have the resources and support needed, and this will be included in your Caregiver Support Plan. We will help you support the child's learning at home, when needed.

For advice about how to support the education of a child in your care, talk to their teacher and visit the parenting section of the Ministry of Education's website [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)

It's important that we keep the child's family, family group, whānau, hapū and iwi involved, so please let us know about:

- **School reports:** As their caregivers, school reports will be important to you. But please also pass them on to the child's social worker, since it's important information for us and the child's family and whānau as well.
- **Parent-teacher interviews:** You may be the best person to go, but it may be important for the child's family and whānau or social worker to go too.

### Permission forms

**Guardian permission:** If the school sends out permission forms which require a guardian's permission, please talk to your social worker so they can arrange consent. These are typically things like medical permission forms.

**Parent or caregiver permission:** As a rule of thumb, if the form asks for parent or caregiver consent, you can give your permission as part of your day-to-day care. These are typically things like school activities or daytrips.

### Early childhood education

We know that children who get a good start in life are more likely to do well later on. Early Childhood Education (ECE) provides a strong foundation for a child's ongoing learning, development and socialisation. These things can help a child develop into a positive, confident and capable person.

At an ECE service children learn how to:

- interact with new people and form relationships
- trust adults and other children
- play and learn with people outside their immediate family
- take turns and negotiate
- take part in learning experiences in a group
- ask questions and find out more.

If the child you're caring for is aged between 18 months and three years, Oranga Tamariki will help fund ECE. Our subsidy covers up to 20 hours of ECE per week for each child, to a maximum of \$600 per month.

Our ECE funding continues if a child moves from care to permanent care until they are three years old, as long as ECE starts before guardianship and/or parenting orders are made. All children in care over three years of age are eligible for 20 hours free ECE from the Ministry of Education.

You'll be in the best position to know about local childcare options and, with the child's social worker and whānau, can choose an ECE service that best suits you and the child in your care.

**The Ministry of Education's website has a very helpful page: [parents.education.govt.nz/early-learning](http://parents.education.govt.nz/early-learning).**

### After school and holiday programmes

Contact the child's social worker to discuss how tamariki can participate in after school and holiday programmes.

### When a child or young person goes missing

We have a responsibility to know where tamariki and rangatahi are at all times. We need to respond to any incident of them going missing seriously and as soon as possible.

If a child or young person in your care is missing and you are worried about their safety or welfare, ring 111 immediately and report it to Police. Then ring the child's social worker.

If there are no immediate concerns for their safety or welfare, you need to call the child's social worker. If the social worker is unavailable, please call their Oranga Tamariki site and ask for the supervisor or duty social worker, or call us on 0508 326 459.

Do not leave a voicemail message about a missing child or young person – there's a risk the message won't be picked up immediately, and it's vital for us to know if a child or young person is missing.

If it is clear the child or young person is missing, the child's social worker will make a missing person report to the Police.

There are some other things you and the social worker can do together over this time to help locate the child or young person, including:

- regularly phoning and texting the child or young person, and checking emails and social media
- visiting and contacting places where it is known they spend time or people known to them, such as friends, family and whānau
- working in partnership with the child's family and whānau, considering their views about where the tamariki or rangatahi might be and how best to find them
- keeping family and whānau, and anyone else who needs to know, updated on actions taken and progress made.

### If you know where they are

Some rangatahi run away from their home for a short period and then return. Often you'll know where they are, or can find out by speaking with them, or their family, whānau or friends.

Even when you believe the child or young person is not at risk, these situations should still be discussed with the child's social worker.

Careful monitoring of an unauthorised absence is important, as the child may later be considered a missing person that is, their whereabouts are 'unknown.'

## Suicide or self-harm risk

If a child or young person is talking about suicide or self-harm, or if you think they are at risk, please ring their social worker immediately. If you can't reach them, please call us on **0508 326 459**.

Do not leave a voicemail message for your child's social worker as it might not be picked up immediately.

## Guidance around sharing personal information publicly

### In the media

- Sometimes media might be interested in your story, or that of the child in your care, so it's important that you know about any legal or wellbeing issues that could arise.
- Under the Privacy Act, we're legally bound to ensure information about a child or young person in care remains confidential and is only shared with family or whānau, caregivers and professionals working alongside us. Breaching this privacy can put the child and you at risk.
- There are times where we'll support children or young people to share their story with media. However we have a thorough process we follow – in consultation with their legal guardians, social workers, and you – to ensure everyone is kept safe.

### How to deal with media interest

If a child or young person in care is part of a high-profile case, a journalist might contact you. Please don't share information with them. Contact the child's social worker, or the manager of the office (site) they work at, to let them know this has happened. They will then consult with the Oranga Tamariki media team.

If you want to talk to media about being a caregiver, please talk to your caregiver social worker, and they will organise support for you. In an interview you can't give details which may identify a child or young person you have cared for, and they can't be included in a photograph which identifies them.

If you take part in a media interview about another part of your life, you can share that you're a caregiver. However, please remember the privacy conditions surrounding the child or young person in your care, or those that have been in the past.

Tamariki and rangatahi in care will sometimes be involved in other activities, like sporting and cultural events, which journalists are interested in. In these cases, it's okay for the child to be photographed and their name included (consent needs to be given by the child and their guardian/s) as long as the article does not mention Oranga Tamariki care or the child's background. If you think a journalist has received this information, please contact the child's social worker.

If a young person wants to share their story about being in care, we can help with this. Please contact their social worker.

## Consent to publish identifying information

When a child or young person in care is being identified in the media, consent usually needs to be given by the child and their guardian/s.

## Social media guidance

### Social media

Like media, social media has the potential to reach a large and public audience. As a caregiver using social media, you should always consider the privacy of the child in your care.

### Photos on social media

As a proud caregiver, you may like to share photos. However, it's important not to post photos that identify a child or young person as being in care, or any information about their care status.

Before you post, stop and think about whether this could put you or the child in your care at risk, if there could be any impact on the child in care being identified as living in care, and whether others could see the photos or posts and ask children about their situation and form opinions about this.

If you're unsure, or if you are approached via social media by a birth family member, call your caregiver social worker and they can help.

### Caregiver social media groups

Social media is a great way to connect with caregiver peers and, although these groups are often closed, it's still important not to post photos or information that might identify a child in your care.

### Young people using social media

At times, a young person in your care may have a social media account. This can be difficult to navigate as a caregiver. What's important is having a conversation with them to make sure they understand the dangers of social media and how to manage situations they don't feel comfortable with.

If you would like more help in this area, check out the website [www.netsafe.org.nz](http://www.netsafe.org.nz) or speak with your caregiver social worker.



# Suggestions, compliments and resolving concerns



# Suggestions, compliments and resolving concerns

**We value your feedback – good and bad – and are committed to responding to you and working with you to resolve any concerns you may have. We also know that caregivers can have an important role in supporting tamariki and rangatahi to have their say. This section gives you some guidance around this area.**

## Sharing your suggestions, compliments and concerns

Caregivers are important to us, and we appreciate all you do for the tamariki and rangatahi in your care. We want all caregivers to have a positive experience – and feel supported and valued by Oranga Tamariki – and we need to hear about when this is not occurring so we can do better.

The easiest way for you to share your feedback and sort out a problem is to talk to your social worker or the child's social worker in the first instance. If this does not lead to a satisfactory outcome, you can ask to speak with the social worker's supervisor or manager.

You can also share your concern, compliment or suggestion by calling **0508 326 459**, or by completing a feedback form at your local Oranga Tamariki office or online, through our website: [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/contact-us/feedback](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/about-us/contact-us/feedback).

You're also welcome to seek support from an organisation like Caring Families Aotearoa (by calling **0800 693 323**), who will help you sort things out.

## Supporting children to have their say

Children and young people have told us that, if they're relying on an adult to help them share a concern, they need that adult to be trustworthy, reliable and caring.

If the child in your care has concerns or ideas about the service they receive from Oranga Tamariki, you can help them by listening and helping them tell us what they think.

Information on how to support a child or young person to have their say can be found on our website [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/children-in-our-care/information-for-children/how-adults-can-help](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/children-in-our-care/information-for-children/how-adults-can-help).

There is also information on our website for the child or young person to help them to understand how they can tell us what they think: [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/children-in-our-care/information-for-children/tell-us-what-you-think](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/children-in-our-care/information-for-children/tell-us-what-you-think).

It could be that they want to share a good thing, something they are worried about, or ways to improve our service.

This also includes an online feedback form.



# Allegations of harm (ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation) against caregivers



# Allegations of harm (ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation) against caregivers

**Sometimes children in care, or their families, make allegations that they have been harmed by their caregiver. While a complaint or concern covers day-to-day care or a dissatisfaction, an allegation relates to abuse or neglect.**

**This section gives you a brief overview of the investigation process when an allegation has been made.**

There are many reasons why a child may make an allegation, and it is not necessarily a reflection of what's happening in your family. However, whatever the circumstances, we have a responsibility to look into the allegation.

We know this can be an extremely distressing and stressful time, and we'll make sure the child is safe and support you during the process. You can be assured your caregiver social worker will help you understand the process and guide you throughout this time. You can also always have a support person with you while we investigate the allegation.

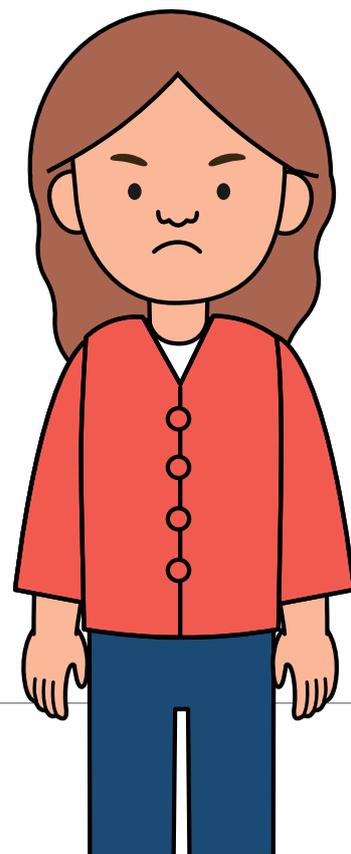
We can also put you in touch with Caring Families Aotearoa, which provides advocacy and a trained support worker to help you throughout the enquiry.

You can contact their Allegation Support Service on **0800 693 278** or email [criticalsupport@caringfamilies.org.nz](mailto:criticalsupport@caringfamilies.org.nz)

We will talk to you about how long the investigation will take. You can expect us to:

- address the issues, while showing you and your family respect at all times
- be transparent about the investigation or assessment process and provide clear information about the allegation, as soon as possible
- keep the child or young person at the centre of all considerations
- maintain the dignity, integrity and wellbeing of your whānau
- gather all relevant information before making any decisions or coming to any conclusions
- provide a written report for you, giving you an opportunity to comment on the report before it is completed.

If you are a Family Home caregiver, and together we decide that the best step at the time is that you to move out of the property during our enquiry, we'll assist you with accommodation.



# The questions caregivers frequently ask us

## What should the child call me?

There are no real rules about what a child in your care should call you – just go with what you both feel comfortable with. Lots of caregivers prefer to be called by their first name.

In Māori culture, whaea for a woman and matua for a man is often used.

Some children naturally prefer to call their caregivers mum and dad after a while. This is okay, as long as it's initiated by the child and you are sensitive to the fact that they also have their own mum and dad.

As a rule of thumb, start off with using your first name or something else appropriate to your culture, and let the child initiate any change to that. They'll do what they feel comfortable with.

## I know I can organise regular haircuts and clothes, but what if the child wants to do something different – like getting dreads or dyeing their hair?

The child has their own identity, which includes how they dress and look. This is okay and it's good to encourage the child's identity – as long as it is only through minor changes, like a simple trim when they get a haircut.

If they are planning a change in their appearance it is a guardianship issue, so please talk to the child's social worker. They will contact the whānau if necessary.

## What do I do if I think the child could benefit from counselling, or I think they have a health condition that needs looking into?

Things like counselling, specialised help and medical treatment are part of our role in caring for children. Please talk to the child's social worker about extra support if you think it's needed. They will look into it and work with you to make decisions about what would help the child. Things like this often require guardianship consent, so we will also work with the child's whānau to make these decisions.

## Can I give the child prescription medication, or non-prescription medication like paracetamol?

You can give the child in your care medication prescribed by their doctor when it is for a routine medical issue, such as an ear infection. It's also okay to give some non-prescribed medications, like paracetamol, but please check with us if this is becoming a regular occurrence.

You can't consent to medication that is not considered 'routine,' such as medication for ADHD or other special needs the child might have. It is important that you let the doctor know you are not the child's guardian and can't give consent to non-routine medication.

Please keep a record of health issues for the child in your care and go over it with their social worker. However, unless you are worried about the health issue, you can look after their health as part of your day-to-day care.

## What are the things I need to get special permission for?

Consent or permission for big decisions about the child in your care can generally only be given by their legal guardians – their family and whānau. These would be about things like their education or changing schools, major medical decisions, religion, and going on holidays – especially if you are thinking about going overseas.

You can give permission for day-to-day things, like school day trips. Talk to us if you have questions or need permission for something.

## When should I ask for help?

Anytime you want to. Call us if there is something worrying you, or you just want another point of view on a problem or idea. We're here to help you if your own family is having trouble adjusting to a new person in the house too, and to make sure you have the support and information you need.

If you have any trouble getting through to your child's social worker, call our Caregiver Support Line on **0508 227 377**.

We'll make sure you have someone to talk to.

## Want more info?

Talk to your caregiver social worker or other caregivers for ideas about caregiving.

**To find out more about who we are and what we do, ask us or go to [www.orangatamariki.govt.nz](http://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz)**

# Notes





[New Zealand Government](#)