

Checking in and offering practical support to families and whānau around you

Parenting and caregiving can be rewarding, but it can also be hard work, particularly for new parents and those with young children. Parents and caregivers can carry a lot of stress — tiredness, financial pressure, worries about their tamariki, or simply trying to get through the day. When families feel overwhelmed or isolated, everyday pressures can become harder to manage.

That's why checking in matters. Children do better when the adults around them feel supported. When parents and caregivers have people they can talk to or rely on, it becomes easier to cope with challenges and create safe, caring environments for tamariki.

Check in with your family, your neighbours, your friends, especially if you haven't heard from them for a while or if you've noticed any worrying changes. Or just to let them know you're there for them.

A village of support

"It takes a whole tribe to tiaki, to protect tamariki, it takes a whole tribe."

Mokopuna

A collective approach to care and support helps mokopuna feel safer, valued, and more connected to the people around them.

Mokopuna have told us that **"being supported means a community"** made up of the important safe people in their lives: **"some of my teachers, and some of my friends, and some of my friends' parents..."**

This excerpt comes from our mokopuna voices report ["A place to talk peacefully": Mokopuna voices on healing from family violence and sexual violence in Aotearoa](#)

Be present and listen

If someone shares that they are having a hard time, listening without judgement can be incredibly helpful.

You don't need to solve problems or have the perfect words. Simply being present, listening calmly, and responding with empathy can help someone feel supported.

Offer practical help

Sometimes practical support can ease pressure more than words. This could include:

- dropping off a meal
- offering to pick up groceries
- helping with school pick-ups
- looking after the kids for an hour
- inviting parent/caregiver for a cuppa.

Small acts of kindness can make daily life feel more manageable.

Keep checking in

One conversation may not be enough. Ongoing connection can be especially important for families under pressure.

A simple "how are things going this week?" can have genuine and ongoing impacts.

Consistency builds trust.

"A better environment for our whānau and parents creates a positive and better environment for our children."¹

Mokopuna

Be an active bystander

Take action if you witness or hear about harm occurring. If you see that a family is stressed or struggling, or if you're worried about a child's safety and wellbeing, it's important to speak up safely and respectfully, or seek support from someone who can help.

You might gently ask how they are coping, offer support, or help connect them with trusted services.

In an emergency or if a child is in immediate danger:

Call 111

If you think a child or young person may be suffering from harm, abuse or neglect:
Call freephone [0508 326 459](tel:0508326459) or email contact@ot.govt.nz

Remember...

Checking in with families and whānau is about building a culture where people feel supported, connected, and cared for.

A message, a conversation, or a small act of kindness may seem simple, but it can help reduce stress, strengthen relationships, and create safer environments for tamariki.

“If people in the community are caring and are respectful for each other and the environment, everyone would have a happy life because they would feel respected and that is a big thing.”²

Mokopuna

Find out more about:

- [playing your part](#)
- [how to spot abuse and neglect](#)
- [an overview of the right to safety](#)
- [the barriers to safety and what we think needs to change.](#)

Where to reach out for help

- [Where to go for help - Help & Resources - Dear Children](#)
- [Te Rau Ora \(directory of Māori providers\)](#)
- Parent Help 0800 568 856 (parenting advice and support)
- Plunket Line 0800 933 922 (early childhood health and support)
- Are you OK? 0800 456 450 (family violence support and advice)
- Free call or text 1737 (mental health support)