

*What happens when we are*

# working with you

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- ⋮ You and Child, Youth and Family*
- ⋮ Family/whānau agreements*
- ⋮ The family group conference*



At Child, Youth and Family  
we want to work with you to help  
protect, support and care for your  
children. Together we can help  
our children be:

safe

from harm and well cared for

strong

as part of a loving family  
and whānau

thrive

by helping your child be  
the best they can be.

Talk to us about how  
we can help you.

Contact Child, Youth  
and Family at  
0508 FAMILY (0508 326 459)  
[www.cyf.govt.nz](http://www.cyf.govt.nz)



# why are we working with you?

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Raising children to be happy and healthy is a big job. It's also one of the best jobs. Most of the time families do this with help from friends, family, whānau and their community.

Sometimes families need more help, and sometimes that help needs to come from us at Child, Youth and Family.

You may be talking to us because someone has told us they are concerned about your child or teenager, or they may have been harmed in some way. We know that this may be a worrying time for you, but we are here to help.

**We want to help you keep your child safe and nurtured. We'll work with you to:**

- ⋮ deal with your problems
- ⋮ make the changes you need to keep your child safe
- ⋮ achieve your goals for your child's future.



# helping your family be safe, strong and thrive

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Children are our greatest treasure, and it's important they grow up in safe, loving homes.

There are things you can do every day to help your children grow up happy and healthy. Here are a few quick ideas:

## **Help your child feel safe and secure**

Your children feel loved and safe when they have the things they need. This means:

- ⋮ feeding them when they're hungry
- ⋮ keeping them warm, dry and safe from danger
- ⋮ helping them if they are in pain, scared or upset
- ⋮ providing a routine and boundaries for them
- ⋮ listening and talking to them
- ⋮ making sure there is always someone you trust to look after them.

## **Give kids praise**

It can be easy to say 'no' or tell our kids off, but children want to please their parents. Focus on the positive and praise them when they do something right. It will make them want to do it again!

## **Think about your own childhood**

*What do I want to pass on to my kids?*

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*What do I want to do that's different?*

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# how can we help you?

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## Your social worker

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The person you will be talking to the most is your social worker. They are there to help you keep your children safe and well cared for.

Your social worker will help you look at any problems you are having that are making it difficult for you to care for your child. They can put you in touch with people in your community who will support you with things like:

- ⋮ parenting skills
- ⋮ solving problems that your family might have
- ⋮ budget advice
- ⋮ help if you're feeling stressed
- ⋮ your child's health and education
- ⋮ drug or alcohol problems
- ⋮ family violence.

### **Ask your social worker:**

- ⋮ if you have any worries and would like some advice on how to care for your child
- ⋮ if you want to know about ways we can work with you.

*Ways we can work together*

## family/whānau agreements

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You might be having some worries or difficulties in caring for your child or teenager, and need some help to get back on the right path.

We will bring you together with your extended family and whānau to talk about your problems, and come up with solutions. Then together we will be able to make a plan called a 'family/whānau agreement', where we will agree to do what is best for your child.

*“My social worker always wanted the best for me. She helped me find out what I’m good at, and looking back I learnt a lot from her.”*

YOUNG PERSON



## Who is the agreement between?

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The family/whānau agreement is between you and us. It's about looking at the concerns there are for your child and:

- ⋮ what will be done about those concerns
- ⋮ who will do what to help
- ⋮ and how we can support you.

Other people, like counsellors in the community, might also be part of the plan.

## What will be in the agreement?

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The kinds of things that will be in the written agreement include:

- ⋮ the goals for your child
- ⋮ what each one of us will do to make this happen
- ⋮ the kind of support you will get
- ⋮ the services and people that will support you
- ⋮ when the plan will be reviewed.

## What happens next?

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The agreement can last for up to three months. When we are coming to the end of that time, we will take a look at the agreement and see how we are getting on with meeting the goals for your child. Then we'll decide what happens next.



*Ways we can work together*

## the family group conference

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Your family and extended whānau are the main people who care for your children, protect them from harm and make sure they are loved and nurtured. At times though, families need help with this in a more formal way.

A family group conference, or FGC, will be held if:

- ⋮ there are concerns about your child's safety and wellbeing
- ⋮ you need more support than a family/whānau agreement can give you
- ⋮ we want to get more of your family involved in keeping your child safe.

### What is a family group conference?

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This is a formal meeting where we get together with you and as many of your extended family or whānau as possible, to talk about what is best for your child.

Together we will talk about:

- ⋮ what needs to happen for your child to be safe and well cared for
- ⋮ how you and your family can do the best for your child
- ⋮ how other people, like your social worker, school and others can help you.



## What happens at the FGC?

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Each FGC is unique because you and your family will help decide how the meeting will be run. But this is generally what will happen:

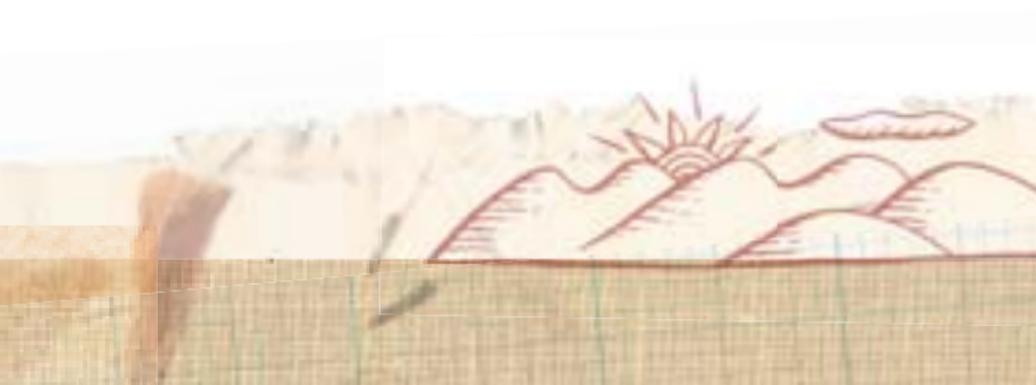
1. **Getting information:** You and your family will be given information about the concerns the social worker has for your child.
2. **Family time:** You and your whānau will have some time to talk on your own about the concerns and how your child needs to be cared for and kept safe.
3. **The plan:** You will talk to us about what you think your child needs, and together we'll come up with a plan that we all agree is best for your child.

## Who can come to the FGC?

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- ⋮ your child or children
- ⋮ your family and whānau – as many as possible
- ⋮ a social worker
- ⋮ a 'care and protection coordinator' – this is the person who runs the meeting
- ⋮ there may also be other people who can help, like the police, a lawyer, a nurse or teacher.

If you want to know more, pick up our booklet on the family group conference.



*Ways we can work together*

# taking care of your child

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Children belong in families, and we will do all that we can to help your children be happy, healthy and thrive in your home.

Sometimes children need to live away from home for a while. This is mainly when they are not safe at home, have been harmed or are in danger of harm in their own family.

Our top priority is doing what is best for your child, so when a child can't live at home we find other family members or caregivers who will give them a safe home.

## **If your child is in our care we will:**

- ⋮ do all we can to keep your child with your extended family
- ⋮ find a safe and loving home with caregivers if they can't be with family
- ⋮ make sure your child is healthy and has the things they need
- ⋮ help you to get your child back home
- ⋮ involve you in making decisions for your child
- ⋮ make sure you can keep in touch.

You can find out more about this in our booklet *'When kids need care'*.



# please ask us

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We want you to have all the information you need. We're here to help your child and you, so ask us if there is anything you don't understand.

**And remember you can...**

- ask for an interpreter if you need one, for example, if you are deaf or English is not your first language.

**My social worker:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**



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child, youth  
and family

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