



Giving 2 Kids – 1: Stable, nurturing families

Families have the biggest responsibility for raising their children, but many are struggling and need extra support. Children with stable, nurturing families tend to get the best start in life. Nurturing parents are likely to be less violent towards children, have better emotional attachment to their children and do things like reading, singing and talking to their infants that support the development required for language acquisition.

All parents benefit from more knowledge and help with parenting skills. Parents in poverty can be supported to develop and practise nurturing parenting, which can mitigate some of the negative effects of living in poverty. Sustained parenting and mentoring programmes are more useful than one-off seminars.

#	Ideas for investment	Why this matters	Target age
1.1	<p>Provide parenting skills programmes, for all expecting and new parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it the norm to attend parenting skills sessions. Providing universal access to parenting programmes pre- and post-birth will ensure parents get better information on their child's needs and development. This empowers parents to raise their children well. 	<p>Some DHBs only fund 10% of pregnant women to attend free antenatal classes, and these subsidised places are not well targeted. Pregnancy is an ideal time for parents to get parenting advice, but many programmes only focus on birth. Ante-natal classes need to be free and accessible for all mothers, and appealing for fathers to be involved too. Following birth, there are limited parenting support programmes available. All parents benefit from parenting knowledge, but those living in poverty are less likely to be able to afford programmes that require payment.</p>	pregnancy - 2 yrs
1.2	<p>Make it 'cool to be a good dad' - support fathers better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with midwives, hospitals, Well-Child /Tamariki Ora providers and/or men's groups to tailor antenatal and parenting classes to men and empower them to be good fathers to their children. Supportive mentoring and group activities with other fathers can help those young men, who may feel overwhelmed or resentful of fatherhood, to recognise their new fatherhood role as being fun and cool and help them to develop more positive attitudes towards their children and partners. 	<p>Many antenatal classes are attended by women only, for many reasons, e.g. partners are at work, or at home minding other children, or they have no permanent partner. Consequently, some men find the classes are uninteresting, too women-focused, and even hostile toward men.</p> <p>However, where programmes are run that target fathers – either before or after children are born – they can help men be better fathers and more involved in caring for their children. This improves the bonding between father and baby which can reduce the risk of future abuse, as has been the case with similar classes for women.</p>	pregnancy - 4 yrs

#	Ideas for investment	Why this matters	Target age
1.3	<p>Support vulnerable families to engage in maternity services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support culturally relevant services for Māori and Pasifika. • Help families with the practical things that might be preventing access to maternity care such as transport or care for other children. • Support in-home maternity check and baby health visits. 	<p>There are groups in the population that are less likely to access the maternity care they need. Some simply are unaware the services are free, while others face barriers to accessing maternity care.</p> <p>These include transient families, e.g. people in insecure tenancies, families who move due to a parent being a prisoner, and those who avoid government services (e.g. due to stigma felt as a result of their life situation and poverty, or having irregular immigration or beneficiary status). It is important to have non-judgemental and culturally relevant services that focus on the welfare of the baby.</p>	pregnancy - 2 yrs
1.4	<p>Provide parenting education for vulnerable families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target parenting education at vulnerable families with babies at risk - such as those in severe poverty and sole parents with lack of support, or those from families with violent backgrounds. • Non-judgemental education and counselling services can support parents to reduce risks to babies, and teach behaviour (e.g. warm parenting) that will support child development. 	<p>Parenting is more difficult when parents face additional life challenges such as poverty, mental illness or disabled children.</p> <p>All parents benefit from knowing how to respond to their baby/child, but vulnerable families often don't have the resources to access the right knowledge, and need particular support.</p>	pregnancy - 2 yrs
1.5	<p>Support parents of developmentally-challenged children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support parents of children with developmental challenges to learn how best to manage the abilities and disabilities of their child. • Help families to navigate the system of supports provided by the government, health and education services. 	<p>Some children develop difficult behaviours and / or have brain damage before birth as a result of stress, poor nutrition, alcohol consumption or other unknown factors during pregnancy. Other children may have delayed development or present on a spectrum of a disorder (e.g. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, etc). While this can happen to any child, those living in vulnerable families face difficulties receiving the nurturing care they need.</p> <p>Special parenting skills are needed to manage these conditions and optimise the potential outcomes for children. Diagnoses of some conditions (e.g. at age five when they start school) can occur too late for parents to adjust their parenting behaviour to meet the child's needs.</p>	2 to 4 years

#	Ideas for investment	Why this matters	Target age
1.6	<p>Provide practical help for families with premature babies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund counselling services for parents with babies in neonatal care • Fund breast-feeding (pumping equipment), transport to hospital, accommodation near intensive care units or hospitals, and other similar practical supports. 	<p>Premature babies or underweight babies require intensive neonatal support. This can create added stress for parents. Babies born into poverty are more likely to have lower birth-weights. Babies born into poverty have fewer resources available to mitigate this stress, and support for these families is particularly important to help develop the initial parental-bonding process.</p>	pregnancy - 2 yrs
1.7	<p>Support children of prisoners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help fund organisations that provide services to children of prisoners, such as visiting, mentoring, and wrap around supports for the family. • Give toys and books to prisons and advocate for prisons to set up child-friendly visiting areas where children can interact with parents in prison in an interesting, relaxing environment. 	<p>Children and young people who have one or more parent in prison are vulnerable to a number of risks, including abuse and neglect, poor mental health, becoming involved in crime, and unemployment.</p> <p>Skilled people using best practice can provide supports that help children of prisoners to develop better self-esteem and begin a path to a positive future. Such services that are provided in non-judgemental ways sometimes need community rather than government support, and NGOs can often get better access to some hard-to-reach families.</p>	2 to 18 years
1.8	<p>Provide parenting education in schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with low decile schools to deliver programmes on parenting skills, e.g. through the health curriculum. • Provide support to pregnant teens, to help them engage in maternity services, learn about child development, continue their education, and get the additional support they need. 	<p>Teen pregnancy is usually both a consequence and a trigger of poverty. Prevention is improved by health education (how to use contraceptives) and mentoring for disadvantaged youth to improve self-esteem.</p> <p>Parenting skills and information on child development can empower teen parents to mitigate the negative factors of teen parenting (namely low incomes, stigma, and less committed fathers.. This service is best provided before birth, while the parent is still engaged in school.</p> <p>Referring a pregnant teen to the services she needs helps ensure she gets full and correct entitlement to social and health services.</p>	13 to 18 years
1.9	<p>Provide or subsidise courses on parenting pre-school-age children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund or develop courses that explain child development in the early years, and give parents tools to improve their child's physical, mental, and behavioural development. • Courses can help all parents, but those who cannot normally afford to go on such courses can benefit the most from subsidies or free access. 	<p>Courses that engage parents regularly can help them manage life's challenges, through positive approaches to discipline and routines, modelling good behavioural responses, and learning to play with their children. This supports the pre-schooler to get ready for school through learning about books and numeracy, how to behave around other children, how to share, how to respond appropriately in challenging situations and how to feel positive about themselves and not stigmatised if they are living in poverty.</p> <p>All families can benefit from parenting advice for pre-school children.</p>	2 to 4 years

#	Ideas for investment	Why this matters	Target age
1.10	<p>Provide or subsidise courses on parenting older children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund or develop courses on how to better parent school-age children. This could include how to deal with behaviours that may be challenging - such as anger management, defiance, learning difficulties and low self-esteem. • This could be provided universally i.e. available to all parents who want to attend, or targeted to those who can't afford to pay to attend parenting courses. 	<p>All parents benefit from knowledge about childhood development at all stages. Good relationships between parents and children through the school years make difficult issues easier to handle in teenage years.</p> <p>Good quality parenting can mitigate the impact of being in poverty as a younger child (e.g. helping to manage behaviour and develop good role modelling). Parents involved in school life can improve truancy problems and make children more engaged with their education.</p> <p>Parenting courses should be universal, but targeting funds to support access by families in poverty, or those with 'problem' children (e.g. 'unmanageable' behaviour), may provide greater social return on investments.</p>	5 to 18 years