

EVIDENCE CENTRE UPDATE

EVIDENCE CENTRE
TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA

UNDERSTANDING WHAT
WORKS FOR TAMARIKI

THE ORANGA TAMARIKI EVIDENCE CENTRE



Kia ora koutou katoa.

Welcome to March's edition of our quarterly newsletter. The world has certainly changed focus in recent weeks as COVID-19 wreaks havoc both here and internationally. We're probably all familiar with the famous Sun Tzu quote "in the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity" and I take heart that this event will prompt us to explore new and innovative ways of doing our work, of connecting and cooperating. We live in an age of amazing technology. I've been astounded by the rapid sequencing of the coronavirus genome and then widespread sharing of the data allowing for unprecedented international collaboration among research teams and institutions.

While our research activities will be affected by the nationwide restrictions on movement and gathering, we are well underway on our 2020 work programme that supports the Ministry.

Since December, we have published follow-up reports to *What Makes a Good Life*, which canvass the views of young parents, and children and young people. *Raising Children on the Orphan's and Unsupported Child* benefits presents views from a survey of 1300 caregivers and we have delved into the New Zealand

and international evidence around therapeutic residential care models. Finally, we looked at factors that seem to maximise victim participation in the justice system.

Our December seminar featured presentations from Matt Walsh (AUT) discussing Growing Up in New Zealand (GUiNZ) data looking at protective factors for children at high risk of adverse experiences and from Shae Ronald (CEO, Youthline) who shared findings from a recent 'State of the Generation' survey.

February saw presentations from members of the Analytics and Insights team on a health case study using data from the Children's Wellbeing Model, and insights into youth justice and offending. Links to transcripts and video footage of all seminars is below.

Given the current environment, we will not be running a seminar in April but will continue our work to generate and publish research and evaluations.

Take care and thanks as always for your interest in our work.

Noho ora mai, Vasantha.

OUR RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people, and their whānau.



FOLLOW-UPS TO 'WHAT MAKES A GOOD LIFE'

The first report focuses on the views of children and young people in care, particularly those living in non-family care arrangements. The children and young people were asked for their views on what a good life meant, and how they described wellbeing. Their responses were compared against answers from young people not in care, and for every measure of wellbeing we found those in care fared worse than those not in care.

Key findings revealed the importance of family and whānau. Ways to improve the wellbeing of children in care include ensuring their rights are upheld and greater recognition of the particular challenges they face. Read the [full report](#).

A short summary reports the views of 15 young parents whose ideas of a good life are inextricably linked to their

ambitions for their children's wellbeing and future. Read the [summary](#).

RAISING CHILDREN WITH THE ORPHAN'S AND UNSUPPORTED CHILD'S BENEFITS

This report presents findings from a [survey of 1300 caregivers](#) looking after about 17,500 children, who receive these benefits. The survey asked what extra help these children and carers needed and sought to better understand their financial challenges.

THERAPEUTIC RESIDENTIAL CARE

This brief was written to inform our understanding of therapeutic residential care for children and young people with high and complex needs. It found that while this type of care can be controversial, it plays an important role in the care continuum for a small number of the most vulnerable children. Read the full report [here](#).

MAXIMISING VICTIM ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Research suggests that when victims participate in the justice system, outcomes are improved. This is particularly so for restorative justice processes. This literature review covers NZ and international sources and looks at experiences of victims of youth crimes dealt with through family group conferences and the Youth Court, at youth victims of all crime and at Māori victims of all crime.

Read the [review for full findings](#).

Visit our [website](#) to catch up on all of our latest research.

RESEARCH SEMINARS

The Evidence Centre hosts regular seminars, in collaboration with social sector partners. Learn more about our recent seminars showcasing research for those working in areas that impact the lives of New Zealand's children and families.

Support for Tamariki and Whānau: Evidence around effective interventions



Protective factors for children at highest risk of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

Matt Walsh is Senior Research Fellow with the Centre for Social Data Analytics at Auckland University of Technology. In this presentation, Matt talks about protective factors for children at risk of adverse childhood experiences (ACES), using data from the Growing Up in New Zealand longitudinal study. Matt also talked about collaborative work with Oranga Tamariki on ACES and school readiness for children of teen mothers, and what services that might mitigate against ACES could look like.



Supporting young people in Aotearoa

Shae Ronald is the CEO at Youthline Auckland Charitable Trust, which works with over 35,000 young people throughout the country. Shae shared the findings of Colmar Brunton's "State of the Generation" research, commissioned by Youthline. The survey findings help us to understand the position of youth in Aotearoa, the key issues they face and the sort of help and support structures they would find useful.

Child Wellbeing in New Zealand: Insights into health and youth justice



Insights into the Youth Justice system

Dr Duncan McCann and Sarah Richardson are colleagues in the Analytics and Insights team in the Evidence Centre. Their presentation shares recent analysis undertaken on justice data which explores the relationship between care and youth justice, levels of reoffending and notes trends in the decline and seriousness of youth crime.



A Health Case Study using the Children's Wellbeing Model

Rosie Deutschle is manager of our Analytics and Insights team and, together with EY partner Bridget Brown and EY senior manager Abigail Marwick, presented an overview of how we are thinking about and measuring child wellbeing. They also discussed a pilot model developed through the Children's Wellbeing Model which provides an approach for quantifying the share of chronic disease in adult life attributable to poor childhood experiences.

Children, Families and the State – Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) Seminar Series



MEET STEVE MURRAY: MANAGER, LIFE-COURSE & SYSTEMS ANALYTICS



Steve is the manager of the new Life-course and Systems Analytics team in the Evidence Centre. A child of the mid-70s, he grew up in Otautahi and spent a good proportion of his life there, before pursuing a BSc in psychology. During his studies Steve discovered a real passion for human factors and a systems approach which helped carry him through a Master's and PhD studying pedestrian safety using a virtual reality road crossing simulation.

From university he moved to Wellington to work for a Behavioural Science research team at Opus International Consultants (now WSP) on a variety of projects related to transport and safety. A bonus was being allowed to use gadgets such as infra-red speed loggers, remote cameras and night-vision goggles. A couple of years working as a researcher for the Health Sponsorship Council (now the Health Promotion Agency) followed, where his work focused on nutrition and

problem gambling and then it was off to the Ministry for Primary Industries for a business improvement programme. During this time he became inadvertently knowledgeable about forestry which he describes as unexpected but fun! Once the programme was complete Steve moved to a role focusing on Tier 1 Statistics publication and ongoing business improvements. After seven years he moved to Oranga Tamariki, joining our team in January.

When he's not working, Steve spends time with his three children and tries to find the space to keep renovating a 1930s bungalow with his wife.

"It's really exciting working for Oranga Tamariki right now. My role focuses on the Children's Wellbeing Model, which includes all children in NZ, and uses anonymised cross-government data from the Stats NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure. Built into the wellbeing focus is that wellbeing is complex, so our ability to use data from diverse sources gives a better picture. As well as visualising the present we can use the model to get a sense of the future to help inform decision making. Combined with other information from across the Evidence Centre, the model gives us a holistic view of children and young people that is world-leading. It's a privilege to have been chosen to lead this new team."