

What is Family Start?

Family Start is a home visiting programme that focuses on improving children's growth and health, learning and relationships, family circumstances, environment and safety.

It helps families/whānau who are struggling with challenges or problems that may make it harder for them to care for their baby or young child.

Family Start will begin to support babies and their parents/caregivers early—before the baby's birth or in their first year.

Family Start will help:

- the child grow strong, learn, stay healthy and have positive relationships
- parents/caregivers to be more confident about caring for their child
- families/whānau create a strong and positive future for their child.

Family Start has a focus on helping parents do a great job with their child's health, growth, education and safety.

When should I contact Family Start?

It's better to get help as soon as you can.

We can start any time from when the mother is pregnant until the child's first birthday. But if a child is a bit older, we might still be able to help.

We can keep working with you until your child turns five, if you need it.



How does Family Start work? How will it help my family?

A Family Start whānau worker will:

- visit you at home, starting with once a week, and get to know you, your child, partner and family/whānau
- find out what parts of being a parent you've already got sorted and what you need help with
- help get the right health care for your child
- explain how your baby is growing and changing at different ages
- help you work out what you want to achieve, change or improve, and make a plan with you to help you get there
- offer you advice and ideas, and help you solve problems as you work towards your goals
- put you in touch with other help or services you need
- support you to keep your baby/child safe
- facilitate regular parenting discussions to help you understand your child's needs at different stages as they grow.

Family Start is not an alternative to emergency or crisis help from other organisations, but may well work with other agencies and professionals to support you in caring for your child.

Family Start is a voluntary programme.

Who can get help?

If you or the child's other parent/caregiver have any of these challenges and this is making parenting harder, Family Start may be able to help.

- mental health issues
- drinking, using drugs or gambling too much
- abuse when you were a child
- serious problems with your partner or family/whānau
- don't know how to make sure your child is healthy and growing strong
- your child has a disability or needs special care
- Oranga Tamariki (formerly Child Youth and Family) are, or have been, involved with your family/whānau
- you are a young parent with other challenges and need extra support.



How can I get started with Family Start?

Family Start is available across New Zealand. Go to www.familyservices.govt.nz/directory/ to see if there is a service in your area.

Talk to your doctor, midwife, Well Child nurse, or any other service involved with your family, or contact your local Family Start provider. They will be able to fill in a referral form with you.



Contact information and referral forms are available at www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/



New Zealand Government

Giving children the best start in life...

Family Start



Family life can be a challenge, and having a baby and bringing them up is a difficult job at the best of times.

For some of us this can be harder because of our own personal difficulties and problems or our family/whānau situation. It is at these times that getting help can be really important.

