

# How parents and carers can play their part

Every parent and caregiver wants the best for their children. There's no single right way to raise a child, and every whānau faces challenges at times. Small, everyday moments of connection, care, and support help children feel safe and loved – and seeking help when things get tough is a strength, not a failure.

## Seek help when you need it

Parenting and caregiving can be demanding, and it's okay to reach out for support. Accept offers of support from whānau, friends, or neighbours. Share experiences with other parents and caregivers and remember, you're not alone.

## Look after your wellbeing

Find strategies that help you manage stress and support your mental health. Rest, exercise, connect with others, and take time for yourself when you can. Avoid addictive behaviours and don't be afraid to reach out if you need extra support. If you don't have people close by to support you – try a [local community organisation](#).

## Listen to your children

Be curious about what they think, and tune into what they are sharing with you, however they communicate. Include them in planning family activities and decisions where appropriate.

## Celebrate and have fun with your children

Acknowledge your children's strengths and achievements. Offer them love, attention, and support, including during tough times. This could include playing at the park, going for a walk or having a picnic to bond with them.

## Talk about safety

Have regular, age-appropriate conversations about staying safe at home, school, online, and in the community. Help them think about who they can turn to for help or advice if they ever feel unsafe or unsure.

## Get involved in your community

Join a playgroup, sports club, or community group, connect with your marae, or connect into other activities where you and your children can connect with others in safe and supportive spaces.

## Be patient and understanding

Children learn and grow at their own pace. Your warmth, kindness, consistency and support helps them feel secure and makes a lasting difference.

## Build your confidence and knowledge

Parenting courses or information sessions can provide tools and ideas for responding to children's different needs and behaviours in positive, practical ways.

## Reach out early

If you notice signs of stress, anxiety, or possible harm affecting your whānau, seeking support early can help things feel more manageable.