



**Aroha**  
**in action**

**tākai**



**Mokopuna  
are taonga**

# He taonga te tamaiti. Every child is a treasure.

Mokopuna are our greatest treasure. However, we all know about tragic situations where mokopuna have been seriously hurt by someone either close to or in their immediate whānau. We all share responsibility for keeping mokopuna safe. It is important that we know what changes we can make to stop harm from happening.

Mokopuna are an expression of our tīpuna. They are our legacy and our future. Our whakapapa will be carried by them mō ake tonu atu, forever more.

# Parenting like our tīpuna

In pre-colonial times, tīpuna Māori parented in gentle and respectful ways, free from violence. We reclaim the ways of our tīpuna when we:

- Respect the mana and tapu of mokopuna.
- Provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone, especially mokopuna.
- Stop mokopuna from seeing or hearing violence.
- Keep mokopuna spaces alcohol and drug free.
- Respect all parts of mokopuna space – te taha tinana, te taha wairua, te taha hinengaro.
- See things through mokopuna eyes.

# Respect the mana and tapu of mokopuna

Mokopuna carry the mana and tapu of their whakapapa and tīpuna. By acknowledging their mana and treating our mokopuna with respect, they will learn respect and uphold ngā kaupapa tuku iho, ancestral and traditional values.

To shame and hurt mokopuna is to takahi, to trample on the mana and whakapapa they carry.

Mokopuna who are humiliated, threatened and shouted at may seem obedient and respectful on the outside but often their anger and mamae shows up in their teenage years.

Mokopuna learn by watching. If they grow up with violent behaviour they are more likely to repeat these behaviours or expect future partners to treat them this way.

**Stop  
mokopuna  
from seeing  
and hearing  
violence**



It's not OK for our mokopuna to see or hear violent and aggressive behaviour. It hurts mokopuna, even when they don't seem to notice what is going on.

Seeing or hearing violence can have a lasting impact on their brain development and can also affect physical and mental health.

Seeing or hearing violence, or experiencing violence, increases the chance of later issues like:

- Violent behaviour or outbursts.
- Mental health issues, including anxiety and depression.
- Increased risk of suicide.
- Addiction to drugs, alcohol, smoking or vaping.

**Keep  
mokopuna  
spaces  
alcohol and  
drug free**



Adults who are drunk or out of it shouldn't be caring for mokopuna.

If we are on drugs or drinking alcohol, we are more likely to:

- Be clumsy and injure a mokopuna by accident.
- Become distracted and not watch mokopuna closely enough to keep them safe.
- Swear, shout or be verbally abusive.
- Get aggro with other adults and expose mokopuna to violence.
- Disrespect the boundaries of our mokopuna.
- Think that humiliating, frightening or hurting mokopuna is funny – especially if there is a group of adults and the mokopuna does something they see as annoying or naughty.

Here are some ways to care for mokopuna if drugs or alcohol are involved at an event:

Send mokopuna to stay with safe and trusted friends or whānau if you're holding an event that will include drugs or alcohol.

Plan whānau celebrations, marae and community events so that there are always alcohol and drug free times and spaces.



# Guide mokopuna positively

Physical punishment is not tikanga. Traditionally children were not viewed as naughty and were very much celebrated as taonga. However, many of us were physically punished as children and grew up thinking it is normal and OK.

We now understand a lot more about the negative effects of physical and emotional violence, and how these kinds of punishments harm mokopuna.

The simplest  
tikanga we  
can have for  
our whānau is  
'no hitting'.

Providing a safe, nurturing  
environment will allow  
mokopuna to thrive.  
Safeguarding mokopuna this  
way maintains the mana  
and tapu of all whānau  
members and reduces the risk  
of anyone getting hurt.

There are some simple, positive tikanga we can use everyday in our whānau life.

Calm spaces

Supporting mokopuna when they make mistakes

Aroha and lots of cuddles

Time to play

Listening to what our mokopuna think



Friends and social interactions

Whānau values

Learning at school, preschool or kōhanga

Praise and encouragement

Sharing whakapapa

What else do your  
mokopuna need?





# Raising mokopuna together

There can be moments where being a parent can be stressful and tiring, especially in tough times or when we're dealing with financial pressure.

In these times we can lean on people that we trust to provide tautoko and reduce stress. Something as simple as having kaumātua, aunts or uncles look after mokopuna for a bit so we can have a breather can make a big difference.

When raising mokopuna together we can ask for support from whānau and friends with practical things like helping out with household mahi, sharing a kōrero and kai together and help with finding extra support if you want it.

Every whānau is different. Who helps you to raise your mokopuna?

**Kuia** Nana

**Koro** Grandad

**Māmā** Mum

**Pāpā** Dad

**Mātāmua** Eldest child

**Pēpi** Baby

**Kiritata** Neighbour

**Taraiwa pahi** Bus driver

**Kaiāwhina** Supporter

**Kaiako** Teacher

**Kaihoko** Shopkeeper

**Matua** Uncle

**Whaea** Aunty

**Kaihana** Cousin

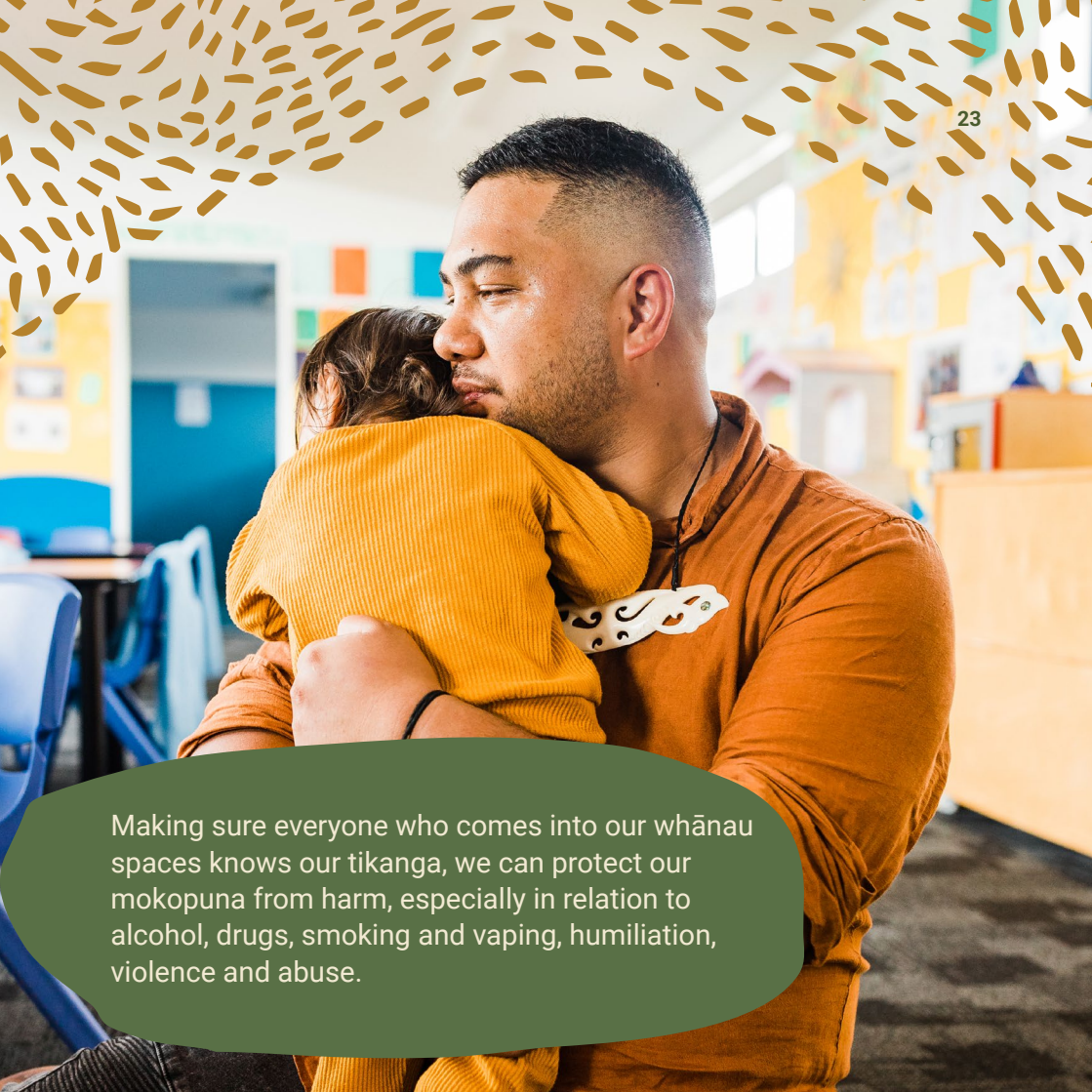
**Hoa** Friends



# Caring for mokopuna

Whānau life can be busy and stressful. We can tautoko our mokopuna by making sure there is always someone trusted around who knows their:

- Kai preferences and times that they eat.
- Sleep patterns and safe sleeping arrangements.
- Emotional needs and how they can support these.
- Health needs including medications and allergies.

A man with short dark hair, wearing an orange hoodie, is shown in profile, hugging a young child from behind. The child is wearing a bright yellow corduroy sweater. They are in a brightly lit room with colorful walls and furniture, possibly a classroom or playroom. The ceiling has a decorative pattern of yellow leaf-like shapes. A green speech bubble is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

Making sure everyone who comes into our whānau spaces knows our tikanga, we can protect our mokopuna from harm, especially in relation to alcohol, drugs, smoking and vaping, humiliation, violence and abuse.

# Pēpi can't be naughty


Tā te tamariki,  
tāna nei mahi he  
wāwāhi tahā.

It is the job of  
children to smash  
the calabash.

There are times where we can feel frustrated or stressed in response to mokopuna behaviours. They can be messy, dirty their pants, throw up, cry and stay awake when adults want to be asleep, but we need to remember that it is all part of normal development.

Sometimes they do these things all at once – but they don't do it on purpose or because they are trying to upset someone.






It's helpful to know about the stages babies and young children go through, so we can understand what is going on. Understanding mokopuna stages also helps us to cope with our responses and feelings, and support other people with theirs.

It can be helpful to kōrero with someone we trust or to seek support for ourselves, our mokopuna or whānau.

You could reach out to:

- A friend or whānau member
  - PlunketLine  
0800 933 922
  - Are you OK?  
0800 456 450
  - Free call or text 1737
- 



We can also try some simple things to help us keep cool. Try getting outside for some fresh air and sunlight, take a moment for some deep calming breaths or have a kanikani. These help reset us when we're feeling overwhelmed.

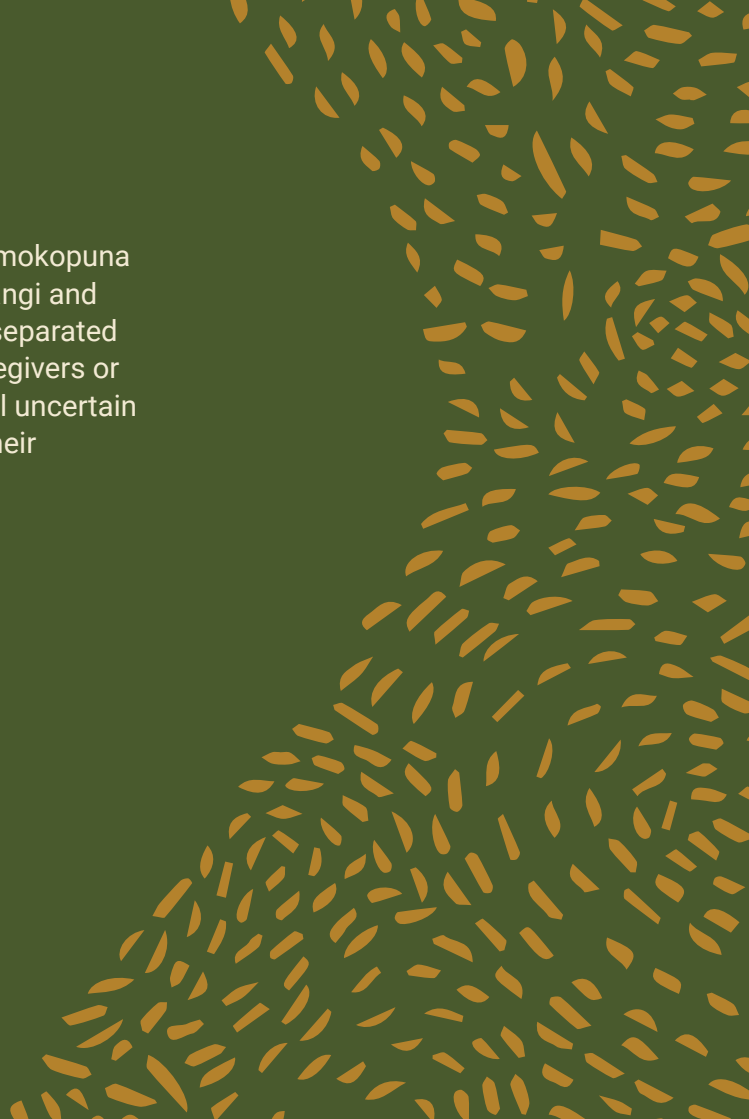
What are some other ways to stay cool?

# Respect mokopuna space

It's OK for mokopuna to say no to unwanted physical contact. They create the boundaries for their tinana and it's important to respect this. It's up to them whether or not they want physical contact such as kisses, hugs or tickling, even from people in their whānau.



At different stages mokopuna can become tangitangi and anxious if they are separated from their main caregivers or if someone they feel uncertain about comes into their physical space.



- This is a good sign – it means they are learning about relationships and trust.
- It shows their brain is developing the way it should.
- Don't take it personally or overreact.
- Be glad they are going through these important stages.
- Give them time to get used to you being around.


Being heard and respected as a baby helps mokopuna develop the confidence to talk to a whānau member if they feel unsafe when they are older.

# See things through mokopuna eyes

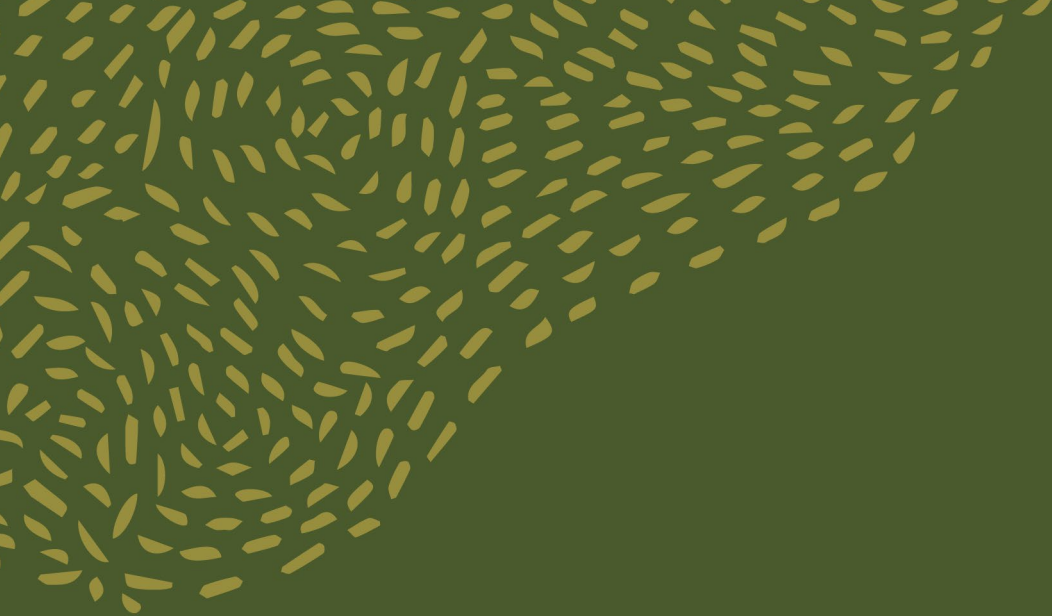
Mokopuna hold the wisdom of the world and they can teach us the power of unconditional love. They remind us about how each one of us began, and they are our connection to our tīpuna and to our future. Whānau are the centre of their world, and they learn from us.

When we love them they learn to love, when we respond to their needs they learn to respond to others, when we are peaceful then peace flows through them. Everything they learn, they learn from us.

They are our aroha in action.



Tēnei te mihi ki ngā kaiwhao  
i te kōrero, ki ngā ringa tā i  
te whakaaro o tēnei rauemi  
o aroha in action, e te kāhui  
o Amokura, tēnā koutou. E  
kore e mimiti te aroha ki a  
koutou ko Di Grennell.



**tākai**

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