

## **Maintaining mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga in practice during Alert Level 2**

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**Prepared:** 14 May 2020

This guidance has been updated for Alert Level 2.

### **THIS IS INTERNAL GUIDANCE FOR ALL ORANGA TAMARIKI STAFF**

*Oranga Tamariki provides essential services to tamariki and their whānau. In all of our engagement with tamariki and whānau, we need to:*

- *be guided by our values and ensure the safety and wellbeing of our tamariki*
- *follow our current COVID-19 health and safety guidance*
- *apply this practice guidance*
- *consider our existing practice guidance and operational policy where it does not conflict with the specific guidance provided here.*

*If you need more information, discuss with your supervisor or manager or contact [covid19response@ot.govt.nz](mailto:covid19response@ot.govt.nz), and check the daily updates on Te Pae.*

### **Introduction**

While we can return to visiting tamariki and whānau during Alert Level 2 (following the health and hygiene must-do's), whānau will be managing their own transition in different ways. Many will be returning easily to increase socialising and contact with others while some may be fearful or have more vulnerable factors causing them to move more slowly or require support to manage this change. Given the history of Māori with pandemics and the increased health and socio-economic disparities it is important to practice in mana-enhancing ways as we all progress towards a new type of normality.

### **Mana-enhancing conversations to support tamariki/whānau Māori engagement**

A critical part of our role in engaging with whānau through COVID-19 is to engage through mana-enhancing conversations that support tamariki/whānau Māori so that:

- whānau are able to be well informed
- they increase their understanding about the impacts of COVID-19 on their safety and wellbeing
- they are provided with opportunities to reflect on their own situation
- they are enabled to share their concerns about tamariki
- they experience us working effectively with them through these challenging times
- we support power sharing.

Enabling whānau to maintain some control of their own situation through active participation into our processes and interactions with us through COVID-19 helps to reduce anxiety and

supports active whānau participation with us. Mana-enhancing conversations for whānau Māori can include the following.

### Impacts of COVID-19 on their whānau

It is important that we explore the specific impacts of COVID-19 experienced by whānau Māori during previous alert levels to assist in understanding their current situation in any practice engagement we may have. Consider exploring the consequences of isolation, any unmet basic needs, employment and income stability, tangihanga that may have occurred within social isolation restrictions, tamariki/youth-specific needs, increased health vulnerabilities, anxiety about reconnecting with others and impacts on relational and whānau stressors. We can include discussions about how we can support tamariki and whānau recovery as they return to a new reality.

### Mana tamaiti

You will have established methods to maintain individual engagement with tamariki through this time. This will support you to continue to explore and understand how they are managing and understanding the changes in COVID-19 levels, conditions, and health and hygiene must-do's. Creating space for them to share and understand their thoughts and feelings through this time will assist in creating or adjusting their plans through this time. How have their relationships been within the constraints of household isolation? Do they have some kind of daily routine and supports they require and in particular a plan for their schooling?

### Power-sharing through providing information in order to actively participate in our processes

Ensure that whānau have as much information as possible so they can participate actively with us on issues affecting them. For example, helping whānau understand the changing practices of Oranga Tamariki to uphold COVID-19 requirements such as the health and hygiene must-do's that Oranga Tamariki requires of practitioners when visiting and why we have to implement certain protocols. Assist them to understand and participate in decision-making such as hui ā-whānau, family group conferences and other forums through COVID-19 Alert Level 2 that will still have health and hygiene must-do's.

### Facilitating a whānau-led process for home visiting while maintaining infection controls through Alert Level 2

It is important that we plan our visits well and that whānau processes for maintaining their home through this period are explored, understood, respected and facilitated as much as possible. Consider the following:

- Does the whānau have multi-generational members (including elderly members who may be more at risk to infection such as kaumātua and kuia) living in the home?
- Are there added vulnerabilities present for this whānau that need planned infection controls?
- Do they have underlying fears that may cause them to appear resistant to our visits or reluctant to engage?

### **Expressions of manaakitanga**

While engaging with whānau you may also be able to respond in a range of ways to support whānau to manage through COVID-19. Consider such things as:

- providing information about local resources such as food parcels and connection with online whānau activities
- checking they know how to organise/use their tamariki home-based education activities
- financial supports including mortgage/rent subsidies and Work and Income power supplements
- connection with whakapapa and whanaungatanga networks and iwi links to the supports they are providing their tribal members.

### **Working with iwi, Māori service providers and hapori Māori (communities)**

Ensure you have maintained contact with local iwi, Māori service providers and communities to understand how they are responding and adapting their activities and service provision moving into COVID-19 Alert Level 2. Consider the following:

- How can we work with our Māori communities at this time to reduce multiple people intervening in whānau lives through COVID-19?
- Are Māori communities maintaining a higher level of infection control and if so how do we support and align with those local strategies?
- How much home visiting will they be doing, what services will now be offered and when will they be back to business as usual?

We should consider the wellbeing of these partners when determining how to work alongside them appropriately to support whānau. While we want to work with them as closely as possible through this time we also have to take care that we are not exposing them to increased health risks as their workforce may also be more vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 as part of the disparities of the wider Māori population.

**Nāu i whatu te kākahu, he tāniko tāku.**

*You weave the foundational garment and we support its beauty.*