



For Kaimahi

Respite/Manaaki Care

Supporting safe,
stable, loving care

A resource to support social work kōrero
with tamariki, whānau, family and caregivers



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Ministry for Children

What is respite/manaaki care?

Respite/manaaki care is a variety of things that can offer support to a caregiver but also something that can help tamariki connect to their whānau, culture, and community.

This type of manaaki care can take different forms, depending on the circumstances. It may involve tamariki spending time with other whānau members or other caregivers. This could support the day-to-day caregiver to have time to do other things or to take a break – or it might involve the caregiver and te tamaiti doing something different together.

Respite/manaaki care can be planned or unplanned. It is most effective when it is planned and provided by trusted adults known to tamariki and their caregivers.

Respite/manaaki care can also engage tamariki in social, cultural and recreational activities and increases peer relationships. This way it's not just about time away – it's about building a village around tamariki.



Why respite/manaaki care matters

- Supports tamariki connection to other trusted adults, gives them opportunities to do new activities, and provides a break from their day-to-day routines
- Helps caregivers recharge and continue providing loving care
- Strengthens tamariki connections with family, whānau, hapū, iwi, and community
- Supports cultural identity and belonging

What's available

- Up to 20 days respite per year (doesn't affect foster care allowance)
- If further respite days are required, this can be identified in the Caregiver Support Plan
- Iwi and community providers
- Natural networks (extended whānau, neighbours, community members)
- Respite camps, holiday programmes
- Outings, babysitting, weekend stays, or help with daily routines



Respite/manaaki care can look like:

- Aunties taking tamariki to sport or cultural events
- Whānau helping with evening routines
- Tamariki spending time with grandparents or cousins
- Contact visits with parents or wider whānau

How to plan for respite/manaaki care

- Talk about respite early – during assessment and planning
- Include it in Te Aronga and Tamariki Goal Plan along with the Caregiver Support Plan
- Use whānau hui to explore natural supports
- Seek support from kairaranga ā-whānau or senior Māori practitioners
- For Pacific children, involve cultural advisors and church networks
- Revisit plans at 6 and 12 month Family Court reviews

Cultural considerations



Respite/Manaaki care can support and deepen cultural knowledge and practices. Think about what this means for individual tamariki and caregivers.



Framing ideas for conversations

You could ask:



Who within whānau, family or community of te tamaiti or your whānau, family or community could help provide care sometimes, and how can they help (e.g. take te tamaiti to training once per week or have tamaiti over for a Saturday night)?



What would support look like for you when things get busy or tiring?



Are there ways we can help you build a village around the tamariki you are caring for?

Examples of Reframed Language

Instead of: “Respite gives caregivers a break.”

Try: “Respite/manaaki care helps caregivers and tamariki stay strong and connected.”

Instead of: “Respite is needed when things get hard.”

Try: “Whānau support helps tamariki build lasting relationships and caregivers feel sustained.”

Common barriers

- The caregiver may feel that asking for respite means that they are not coping.
- The assessment process can feel intrusive or unnecessary – explain it clearly and respectfully.
- Funding and approvals need early discussion so that everyone knows what is available and what needs additional approvals to help with planning.
- Trusting others to care for te tamaiti can be hard and create worries. Caregivers may be unsure or feel unsupported – offer guidance and connection and think about the range of respite/manaaki care options that are available. Sometimes we might need to start small and build on that to help caregivers get comfortable with respite/manaaki care.
- Think about ways that we can help with supports when respite happens, so that tamariki are transitioned well between caregivers.

Helpful links



[Financial support for tamariki and rangatahi – practice.
orangatamariki.govt.nz](https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz)



[Respite Care – Caring Families \(caringfamilies.org.nz\)](https://caringfamilies.org.nz)



[Respite care: how to access support – practice.
orangatamariki.govt.nz](https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz)



[Babysitting & overnight stays – practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz](https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz)



[Caregiver support – practice.
orangatamariki.govt.nz](https://practice.orangatamariki.govt.nz)



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