The Ministry of Health (Health) and the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki (Oranga Tamariki) are coordinating across key stakeholders to provide preventative care, remove barriers to accessing and utilising health services, and improve the lives of Family Start children and their families.

Oranga Tamariki works to improve the wellbeing and long-term outcomes of children and young people. We know that when we invest early, in ways we know will make a difference, we can do better for New Zealand’s most vulnerable children.

Family Start is a nationwide early intervention intensive home visiting programme for vulnerable children (aged 0-5) and their whānau. The Oranga Tamariki programme focuses on improving children’s growth and health, learning and relationships, family circumstances, environment and safety.

In this issue we encourage health care providers to make connections with Family Start providers as the first step in improving children’s health outcomes. Contact details of providers in your region are attached, including factsheets to share with other agencies.

In this issue:

- Update on the joint work plan
- Contact details – use your contacts to make a difference
- Oral Health - Early Engagement for Family Start children
- Local initiatives make connections
- Making connections to support whānau
- Extra visits from Well Child Tamariki Ora nurses
- Factsheets to inform families and share with GPs and community agencies
Update on progress

**JOINT WORK PLAN**

Oranga Tamariki and Health have a joint work plan. The plan aims to improve access to and utilisation of universal health services for children and families enrolled in the Family Start programme.

The joint work plan involves the following existing work programmes and initiatives:

- Family Start (Oranga Tamariki)
- General practitioner and primary health organisation enrolment within two weeks of birth (Health)
- Up-to-date child immunisations as per the immunisation schedule (Health)
- Well Child Tamariki Ora health checks (Health)
- Before School health checks (Health)
- Oral Health checks and enrolment (Health)
- Newborn hearing screening (Health)
- Referrals of at risk families from health providers to Family Start (Health).

**LOCAL INITIATIVES MAKE CONNECTIONS**

**Dunedin**

Anglican Family Care and Well South Primary Health Network are collaborating to achieve joint health outcomes. They are exploring the development of an electronic data exchange which would allow for the secure sharing of identifiable client data to help ensure Family Start clients are receiving core health services, and assist in verifying their immunisation and GP enrolment status. Clients would also have the ability to be linked into aligned health services. The data exchange would also improve the overall referral pathway and connection across organisations.

**Nelson**

Family Start in Nelson is working with Nelson Marlborough DHB to identify children engaged with their service who are not immunised or enrolled with various health services. Consent from families is obtained which allows the DHB to check on immunisation status and enrolment. Family Start can then engage with families on any barriers to these services. This process can also be used to meet further health needs, such as identifying women who have missed cervical smear tests.

*Watch this space - we will keep abreast of local initiatives and share the learnings.*
UPDATE ON THE FOUR WORKSTREAMS:

Through our work together we aim to:

1. Gather and collate information to support Family Start providers to connect with health service providers.

   Update: Factsheets, information for providers, and key contacts to connect with are attached to this newsletter.

2. Identify and address barriers to children accessing services.

   Update: A survey has been completed by Oranga Tamariki which found:
   - informing parents can result in more children accessing health services
   - agency collaboration is important for facilitating access to health services
   - lack of transport can be a barrier to accessing services
   - strengthening referral pathways – the ability to get an appointment when needed and rebook missed appointments improves access to services
   - a welcoming health provider and support from Family Start can improve access to services
   - barriers to accessing services include the ability to pay medical debts, this leads some parents to delay seeking health care for their children or presenting at Emergency Departments for free treatment
   - embarrassment about children’s tooth decay is an issue for some families.

3. Strengthen referral pathways and provide messaging around Family Start health services.

   Update: This newsletter, factsheets and key contact information have been developed. Some areas of low uptake in health services have been identified, and resulted in discussions with district health boards (DHBs) and improved connections between Family Start and health service providers.

4. (a) Explore options for sharing family contact details held by Family Start providers, to help locate and co-ordinate children to offer relevant services.

4. (b) Sharing of client health and social services information may be undertaken in progressive steps to ensure that privacy and other legislation issues are adequately addressed.

   Update: Sharing information can improve children’s access to services but this must be done with the client’s consent. Several Family Start providers are now asking clients to consent to their information being shared to help them access services.
ORAL HEALTH - EARLY ENGAGEMENT FOR FAMILY START CHILDREN

In New Zealand, children and adolescents up to 18 years of age have access to publicly funded oral health services.

Most dental care for pre-school and primary school children up to school year 8 (12-13 years of age), is provided by dental therapists within the Community Oral Health Service, provided by DHBs throughout New Zealand.

Children should be enrolled with the Community Oral Health Service soon after birth and usually attend their first appointment with the service between 12 months to two years of age. The timing of the first appointment varies by DHB. Children who are at risk of poor oral health outcomes can be seen early, usually by referral from Well Child Tamariki Ora (WCTO) providers following Lift-the-Lip checks carried out by WCTO nurses. After referral children are usually seen within three months.

Parents, caregivers or Family Start providers should contact the Community Oral Health Service when children reach six months of age to ensure that children have been enrolled with the service.

The model of care used by the Community Oral Health Service focuses on whānau involvement, health education for self-care, prevention of ill-health, and early intervention. Increasing parental engagement from an early age is critical to improving oral health for children. Evidence indicates that oral health status by age five predicts oral health status in adult life.

The Community Oral Health Service can be contacted on the national Talk Teeth 0800 number (0800 825 583). This phone service is routed to each DHB’s local number for enrolments and appointments.

EXTRA VISITS FROM NURSES

Some families might benefit from an extra visit from their Well Child Tamariki Ora (WCTO) nurse. This can be discussed with the WCTO provider by calling the phone number in the WCTO booklet. WCTO nurses can also refer adults, children or families to Green Prescription programmes such as Active Families.

The primary care team at Health often get calls from the public. One particular call from a concerned grandmother stood out.

The call was initially about the cost of an after-hours visit for a baby whose mother had been charged $65 by the local after-hours clinic. Taking the time to talk with the baby’s grandmother led to a better understanding of the family situation. It quickly became clear that this young whānau needed help to access health services, including support from social services such as Work and Income entitlements.

With agreement from the grandmother, the Primary Health Organisation (PHO) responsible for local primary care services was contacted. The PHO worked with the grandmother to better understand the support needed, and the local Family Start provider was contacted for support. It was agreed that if the family would like support from Family Start then the whānau could self-refer to the service.

It felt great to make a difference and all it took was connecting with the right people on the ground. We encourage you to continue to work together and to make connections - you can use the Family Start and health service contacts we have provided for your regions.
**TEAMWORK IN Rotorua**

Family Start Tipu Ora in Rotorua are being innovative and proactive about strengthening their connection with Well Child Tamariki Ora (WCTO).

After a number of hui with WCTO they have set up an agreement to enhance how the services work together. This includes placing some members of Family Start (on a rotation) with the WCTO team, regular multi discipline team meetings, sharing risk assessments and information, joint home visits when appropriate and being cognisant of the Family Violence risk assessment and management framework from the Ministry of Justice.

**Healthy Active Mums**

Maternal Green Prescription programmes are available nationwide for women who could benefit from a better diet and more active lifestyle. Lead maternity carers can refer pregnant women with gestational diabetes, or other health problems that could benefit from the programme. Please see the contact details on the attached map Sport NZ providers are keen to help more Mums get active!

**Key Issues with Sharing Client Data**

Health and the Oranga Tamariki have explored sharing client information to coordinate access to health services for Family Start children.

Current privacy legislation does not allow Oranga Tamariki and Health to share identifiable information without client consent.

Section 22F of the Health Act 1956 (which the Ministry of Health uses to share identifiable information within the health sector) cannot be used as this is restricted to health services (through the definition of services in section 22B). This prevents the Ministry of Health from sharing health data with Oranga Tamariki and Family Start providers.

Oranga Tamariki is working with Statistics NZ to establish a regular feed of Family Start data into the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) and is working on a Privacy Impact Assessment in consultation with the Privacy Commission and Family Start providers.
Family Start

Family Start is a voluntary intensive home visiting support programme within Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki that works with the most vulnerable 0-5-year-old children and their whānau. It focuses on improving children’s growth and health, learning and relationships, family circumstances, environment and safety.

Support from Family Start

There are 38 Family Start provider sites across New Zealand. Family Start has the capacity to enrol and support around 7,200 children and their whānau.

Criteria for Family Start

Whānau with high needs can be referred to Family Start from the time the mother is three months pregnant up until the baby is 12 months old. Family Start is for families with mental health issues, addiction problems, care and protection history, relationship problems, parenting and child development issues or other issues. Please view this website for detailed criteria: https://www.mvcot.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Family-Start/Family-Start-referral-guide.pdf

Older siblings can benefit from Family Start

Family Start is child centred and whānau focused. Older and younger children are able to be supported through Family Start. Support for siblings and other whānau is important for the development of children in their whānau and environmental context.

Referring a family more than once

Health providers can refer a family more than once, provided the whānau meet the criteria and will only be enrolled as one whānau. Family Start whānau often move, whānau can be transferred from one provider to another. However a whānau cannot be on two Family Start programmes at the same time.

Providers that can refer to Family Start

Midwives, GPs, nurses, Well Child Tamariki Ora, Plunket, Early Childhood educators and any community agency can refer a family to Family Start; whānau can also self-refer.

The evidence base for Family Start

A Quasi-Experimental Study was completed in February 2016 that reported on the impact of the Family Start home visiting programme on mothers and children. The most significant finding of the study is robust evidence that Family Start reduced post neonatal infant mortality.


Further information on Family Start

For information on Family Start: https://www.mvcot.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Family-Start/Family-Start-brochure.pdf
The need for health services

Young children need access to universal health services to remain healthy, continue to grow and develop, and prevent more serious conditions that require hospitalisation. Young children in difficult circumstances often miss out on the health care they need. This is why Family Start is working with universal 0-5 (years of age) health service providers.

Universal health services

Universal health services include general practice, immunisations, Well Child Tamariki Ora, Before School and Oral health checks, and newborn hearing screening.

Free Health Services

- There is no charge for general practice visits for eligible children aged under 13, but general practices usually charge a fee for adults and older children.
- Immunisations provided from the immunisation schedule are free.
- Dental care is free until children turn 18 years old.
- Newborn hearing screening, Well Child Tamariki Ora and Before School checks are also free.

More information on universal health services

You can find health service information at: http://www.health.govt.nz/

A health and education handbook for families and carers can be found at: https://www.mvcot.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Caregiver-resources/Hand-in-Handbook.pdf

To find out more about the progress of the work streams or to add an item to the newsletter

Contact Us:

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