

# EVIDENCE CENTRE UPDATE

EVIDENCE CENTRE  
TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA

UNDERSTANDING WHAT  
WORKS FOR TAMARIKI

## THE ORANGA TAMARIKI EVIDENCE CENTRE



Kia ora koutou katoa.

Welcome to December's edition of our quarterly newsletter. As always, we're excited to share our news with you as we begin to wind down for the holiday period and reflect on the research projects that we've undertaken over the past year; amongst those some insightful publications and research seminars that help to enable and inform the support around New Zealand's children, young people, and their whānau.

Since our last newsletter, we have published work on a variety of topics, including a survey about families and children with disabilities participating in the Family Start programme, aimed at increasing our understanding of types of needs for children with disabilities; a report examining reoffending rates for recipients of three different types of Youth Court order, aimed at informing the youth justice sector about the effectiveness of interventions; and a report that provides evidence about professional models for caregiver financial assistance, helping to inform a review of financial assistance for caregivers and ensuring that they have what they need to provide safe,

stable and loving homes for tamariki and rangatahi.

Our October Evidence Centre seminar saw plenty of discussion around the impact of early intervention child support to improve financial wellbeing for families (from Inland Revenue) and discussion of a set of findings around support offered to teen parents in New Zealand.

Our next seminar and the twelfth in the series will feature two presentations, one from Matt Walsh (AUT) discussing Growing Up in New Zealand (GUINZ) data which looks at protective factors for children at high risk of adverse experiences; the other from Shae Ronald (CEO, Youthline) sharing findings from a recent 'State of the Generation' survey. The seminar will take place on Friday 6th December at 10:30am. For more details visit our [Eventbrite page](#) or email [research@ot.govt.nz](mailto:research@ot.govt.nz).

Meri Kirihimete – I hope you all have a restorative break and I look forward to sharing a host of new research projects with you in 2020.

Noho ora mai, Vasantha.

## OUR RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Evidence Centre works to build the evidence base that helps us better understand wellbeing and what works to improve outcomes for New Zealand's children, young people, and their whānau.



### UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE FAMILY START PROGRAMME

The survey of 159 Family Start workers, conducted in late 2018, was designed to increase our understanding of the types of disabilities, needs and service delivery gaps experienced by young children with disabilities and their families enrolled in the Family Start programme.

Family Start is a home-visiting programme that supports families with young children aged 0-5 years. While not specifically designed to support children with disabilities, the programme supports vulnerable children and their families, including those with disabilities. It is estimated that Family Start sites around the country have about 5,200 children enrolled at any given time, and about 8,000 enrolments each year.

Read the survey findings in the [report](#).

### REOFFENDING FOLLOWING HIGH-END YOUTH COURT ORDERS

A key aim of the youth justice system is to reduce reoffending by providing effective interventions for the young people who need them.

The court considers a number of factors when deciding which order is appropriate for a young offender, with the orders examined in this report being three of the most restrictive responses to offending available to the Youth Court: Supervision – young person must report to their supervisor when required; Supervision with Activity – young person must attend weekday, evening or weekend activities, or a programme as required; Supervision with Residence – young person must live in a youth justice residence.

[This report](#) examines reoffending for these orders, primarily focusing on 12-month reoffending rates.

### PROFESSIONALISATION OF CAREGIVING

This brief, intended to provide evidence about professional models for caregiver financial assistance, includes information on the impact these models have on the recruitment and retention of caregivers, and on caring for children and young people with additional or high needs.

It is intended that this evidence brief will help to inform a review of financial assistance for caregivers that is currently being undertaken by Oranga Tamariki. Read the full report [here](#).

Visit our [website](#) to catch up on all of our latest research.

## RESEARCH SEMINARS

The Evidence Centre hosts regular seminars, in collaboration with social sector partners. Learn more about our recent seminars showcasing research for those working in areas that impact the lives of New Zealand's children and families.

### Support for Tamariki and Whānau: Evidence around effective interventions



#### Teen Parents

Valmai Copeland is Principle Advisor in the Oranga Tamariki Evidence Centre. She has worked extensively on evaluation and research relating to families and the support provided to them by government. Valmai presented the findings from an evidence brief that synthesised information from overseas and New Zealand on support offered to teen parents.



#### Child Support Proactive Engagement Pilot

Mark Takayesu is a Programme Lead in the Customer Insight and Evaluation team at Inland Revenue, currently leading multiple insight projects in Child Support at Inland Revenue and is passionate about improving the financial wellbeing of families. In this presentation, Mark discussed the impact of an early intervention Child Support pilot to improve outcomes for new parents, carers and children. The application of these insights to improve customer outcomes was discussed within the context of a customer-centred and intelligence led organisation.

### Children, Families and the State – Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) Seminar Series



Seminar One of the VUW seminar discussed how patterns of contact with the child protection system have changed over time.

Grant Bennett (Oranga Tamariki Chief Social Worker and DCE Professional Practice), with these slides, reinforced the focus that Oranga Tamariki has on keeping tamariki with their whānau and our progress towards reducing the amount of children in care.



Seminar Two discussed the current state climate and the implications of recent policy changes – such as the integration of Tiriti o Waitangi and Children's Rights into the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act.

Erin Judge (Oranga Tamariki Chief Legal Officer) discussed the current state of the care and protection system and the journey we need to take to improve.

Seminar Three in the series will take place on 5th December 2019. Contact [lynn.barlow@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:lynn.barlow@vuw.ac.nz) for more details.

## MEET OUR DCE: ANITA WEST



Anita joined Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children in the Chief Executives office soon after Grainne Moss started as CE Designate in September 2016, on secondment from the Ministry for Culture and Heritage where she was Principal Advisor to the CE.

She was permanently appointed as Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children Director of the Office of the CE on 1 April 2017. In July this year, with the departure of Paul

Kissack back to the UK, Anita took up the role of Deputy Chief Executive Policy and Organisational Strategy, a role that she is thoroughly enjoying.

Between 1999 and 2013, Anita worked at the Ministry of Social Development and its predecessors, the Ministry of Social Policy and the DSW Social Policy Agency. She held various

management and advisory roles including Principal Advisor to the DCE Child, Youth and Family, General Manager Ministerial and Executive Services, Director International Relations, Manager Families and Benefits Policy, and Private Secretary to the Minister for Social Development. More recently she worked for the Ministry of Defence in their Evaluation Division.

Earlier in her career, Anita held leadership and operational positions in the family and sexual violence NGO sector and the Probation Services. She was the first employee and a foundation board member of WellSTOP and the joint National Co-ordinator of the Rape Counselling Network of Stopping Violence Services. She was also a volunteer for the Hutt Rape Counselling Network for many years. Anita was appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Family Violence in 1995 and was proud to be a member when the Domestic Violence Act (1996) was enacted.

Anita has an MA(Applied) in Criminal Justice from Victoria University of Wellington. She has two adult children and enjoys gardening and family history research.