



**ORANGA
TAMARIKI**
Ministry for Children

New Zealand Government

Factors associated with disparities experienced by Māori children in the care and protection system

August 2023

The Oranga Tamariki 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.

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These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) which is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI please visit www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/.

The results are based in part on tax data supplied by Inland Revenue to Stats NZ under the Tax Administration Act 1994 for statistical purposes. Any discussion of data limitations or weaknesses is in the context of using the IDI for statistical purposes, and is not related to the data’s ability to support Inland Revenue’s core operational requirements.



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Overview

While Māori over-representation in the care and protection system ('the system') relative to the full population has been known for some time, this analysis explores the extent to which demographic, socioeconomic, and parent/child characteristics (interchangeably collectively referred to as 'other factors' in this paper) can explain some of these disparities. Understanding disparities is key as part of Oranga Tamariki's responsibility under Section 7AA of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 is to provide a practical commitment to improve outcomes for tamariki and rangatahi Māori who come to our attention.

The disparities between Māori and 'New Zealand (NZ) European and Other' children¹ are explored at each stage of a child's typical pathway through the system. These include first-time reports of concern (ROCs) for those with no prior Child, Youth and Family or Oranga Tamariki interaction, and referrals to assessment or investigation, involvements in Family Group Conferences (FGCs)/Family Whānau Agreements (FWAs) for those recently reported and assessed, and placements for those recently involved in FGC/FWAs.²

This report is a quantitative exploration of disparities for Māori children, and is intended to generate further discussion and analysis about disparities in the system. It investigates the following key questions:

1. Is there measurable disparity between Māori and 'NZ European and Other' children before controlling for the influence of other factors? After controlling for these factors, are Māori children still more likely to enter and progress through the system compared to 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities?
2. How have disparities changed since the formation of Oranga Tamariki on 1 April 2017?

The analysis outlined in this report has found that disparities between Māori and 'NZ European and Other' children do exist, however these are generally smaller when the overlap between other factors and ethnicity are considered.

This report has been produced as an update to *Factors Associated with Disparities Experienced by Tamariki Māori in the Care and Protection System* (published 28 July 2020) and reflects additional experience up to 31 March 2020. Available data beyond this period is not considered due to likely distortions associated with COVID-19. This report therefore covers a limited three-year data period since the formation

¹ For detailed information about how 'Māori' and 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities are defined see Appendix 1.

² Details on how care and protection stages are calculated can be found in Appendix 1.

of Oranga Tamariki, so some of the findings shown may not necessarily be indicative of likely longer-term trends. Future work, in addition to periodic refreshes of this analysis, would likely include qualitative analysis into specific areas of the Oranga Tamariki operating model with input from practice experts.

Key findings

Findings in this report come from two key focus areas:

a) **Differences in care and protection involvement³ for Māori and 'NZ European and Other' children**

This analysis, conducted for the 10-year period to 31 March 2020, found that:

- Before controlling for other factors, Māori children in all age groups appear more likely to have first-time involvements across all stages of the system, and this is most pronounced for ROCs.
- After controlling for other factors, differences between Māori and 'NZ European and Other' children decrease. Nevertheless, ethnicity is still statistically associated with differences in all involvements across the system, except for first-time placements.

These differences are detailed in Figure 1.

Examples of factors that have been found to have a significant association with escalation in care and protection involvement include:

- Lower parent income (such as parent income in the lowest quartile, receiving main benefit).
- Parent history with Care and Protection, and/or recent Corrections involvement.
- Child's history of involvement with ROCs, with greater weight placed on more recent reports and multiple instances of reporting.
- For children under 5, emergency department (ED) contact, with additional weight on injury-related contacts.
- For teenage children, recent indicators of school disengagement (such as extended truancy and stand-downs) and mental health/substance usage treatment.
- Victimization (recorded by Police as being a victim of an offence) is a factor associated with first-time placement entry.

³ This includes both Child, Youth and Family and Oranga Tamariki involvement.

b) Differences in care and protection involvement for Māori children and children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities pre- and post-formation of Oranga Tamariki

This analysis, which explores ethnic disparities in the three-year period before and after the formation of Oranga Tamariki on 1 April 2017, found that:

- Since the formation of Oranga Tamariki, the proportion of all children having first-time ROCs and subsequently continuing on to an assessment / investigation, a first-time FGC/FWA, and a first-time entry to placement have all reduced, with the exception of first-time FGC/FWAs for 'NZ European and Other' children. Table 2 below outlines these incidence rates for each first-time escalation, split by ethnicity and pre-/post-formation of Oranga Tamariki.
- Similar to the first area of focus, a significant proportion of disparities observed, both pre- and post-formation of Oranga Tamariki, appears to be largely associated with other factors.
- After controlling for these other factors in the period post-formation of Oranga Tamariki, the disparity between Māori and 'NZ European and Other' children appears to be smaller for first-time ROCs, FGC/FWAs, and placements, but larger for first-time assessments.
- Overall, ethnicity appears to be significantly associated with first-time ROCs and referrals to assessments or investigations even after controlling for socioeconomic and other factors. This remains true both pre- and post-formation of Oranga Tamariki but does not appear to be statistically significant for FGCs/ FWAs or placements, with a few exceptions for specific age groups (shown in the table below).

Table 1: Summary of care and protection stages where ethnicity is associated with a significant difference in first-time escalation into these stages after controlling for the influence of socioeconomic and other factors, split by age group, for activity in the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2020

	ROC	Assessment / investigation (for those reported)	FGC/FWA (for those with recent reports and assessments)	Placement (for those with recent FGC/FWAs)
0-4	✓	✓	X (pre-formation) ✓ (post-formation)	X
5-9	✓	✓	✓ (pre-formation) X (post-formation)	X
10-16	✓	✓	X	X (pre-formation) ✓ (post-formation)
All ages	✓	✓	X	X

Key: ✓ Statistically significant (at the 5% level) X Not statistically significant (at the 5% level)

Detailed analysis

Guide to interpreting results

Before controlling for other factors

For each time period, the average proportion of children that progressed through each stage of the system is calculated.

For example, a 4% ROCs proportion for Māori children means that historically on average, 4% of Māori children (that have previously had no Child, Youth and Family/Oranga Tamariki involvement) have had a ROC during the year.

A 50% investigation proportion for Māori children means that historically on average, 50% of Māori children that have previously had a ROC have had their ROC investigated during the year.

The relative likelihood of Māori children moving into each stage relative to 'NZ European and Other' children is calculated based on these proportions. This relative ratio is known as the 'disparity ratio **before** controlling for other factors'.

A ratio of 1x means that Māori children appear equally as likely as 'NZ European and Other' children to be involved in an escalation in care and protection involvement, while a ratio greater than 1x means that Māori children appear more likely to be involved in an escalation. Conversely, any ratio less than 1x means that Māori children appear to be less likely than 'NZ European and Other' children to be involved in an escalation.

For example, a ratio of 1.17x means that Māori children have a 17% greater chance than 'NZ European and Other' children to be involved in an escalation in care and protection involvement, before controlling for other factors.

After controlling for other factors

Regression analysis is used to control for other factors, and to isolate the direct effect of ethnicity on the likelihood of moving through each stage.⁴ The modelled effect of ethnicity, where statistically significant, is known as the 'disparity ratio **after** controlling for other factors'.

Note, it is difficult to completely remove the impact of ethnicity from other socioeconomic effects, which are also correlated to and have some relationship with ethnicity. Further work is required to determine the proportion of the relationship

⁴ These socioeconomic and parent/child characteristics are listed in Appendix 1.

between ethnicity and other socioeconomic factors that is causal rather than correlative, that is how much systemic biasing factors are also inherent in the socioeconomic factors outlined in this paper. More qualitative information in this area will also assist in estimating the level of ethnicity bias that is associated with these other socioeconomic factors (such as identifying where operational practice may be applying 'excess' weight within other socioeconomic factors that may also reflect ethnic disparity, such as parental Corrections involvement).

For this analysis, factors with high correlation to ethnicity or other model variables have been excluded from the models to avoid multi-collinearity. For example, we have not considered sibling care and protection indicators as there is high correlation between those outcomes and the care and protection outcomes of the children themselves.

Differences in care and protection involvement for Māori children and children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities over the 10-year period to 31 March 2020

In general, before controlling for other factors, the likelihood of Māori children having a ROC (**3.26x**), referral to assessment/investigation (**1.13x**), and FGC/FWA (**1.34x**) is greater compared to 'NZ European and Other' children. This disparity is most pronounced for first-time ROCs. After controlling for other factors, these ethnic disparities reduce for most escalations in care and protection involvement and age groups. However, ethnicity is still statistically significant in explaining disparities for first-time ROCs, referrals to assessment/investigation, and FGC/FWAs.

First report of concern

- Before controlling for other factors, this transition is associated with the largest disparity across all ages.
- After controlling for other factors, the disparity ratio of **3.26x** reduces markedly, however there remains a **1.25x** disparity that is statistically significant.
- Disparities, pre- and post-controlling for other factors, are most pronounced for children aged 0 to 4.
- Compared to the previous report which analysed the ten years to 30 June 2019, the disparity ratio after controlling for other factors has increased slightly across all ages from **1.13x to 1.25x**. This reflects shifts in the association between first-time reporting rates and other socioeconomic factors over recent years.

First referral to assessment/investigation

- After controlling for other factors, the ethnic disparity ratio reduces from **1.13x to 1.05x**. However, this difference remains statistically significant.

- Compared to the previous report covering the 10-year period to 30 June 2019, the disparity for children aged 0 to 4 has increased slightly, both before and after controlling for other factors.

First-time involvement in FGC/FWAs (for children recently reported and assessed)

- After controlling for other factors, the ethnic disparity ratio reduces from **1.34x** to **1.05x**. However, this difference remains statistically significant.
- The results are largely similar to the previous report covering the 10-year period to 30 June 2019, before and after controlling for other factors.

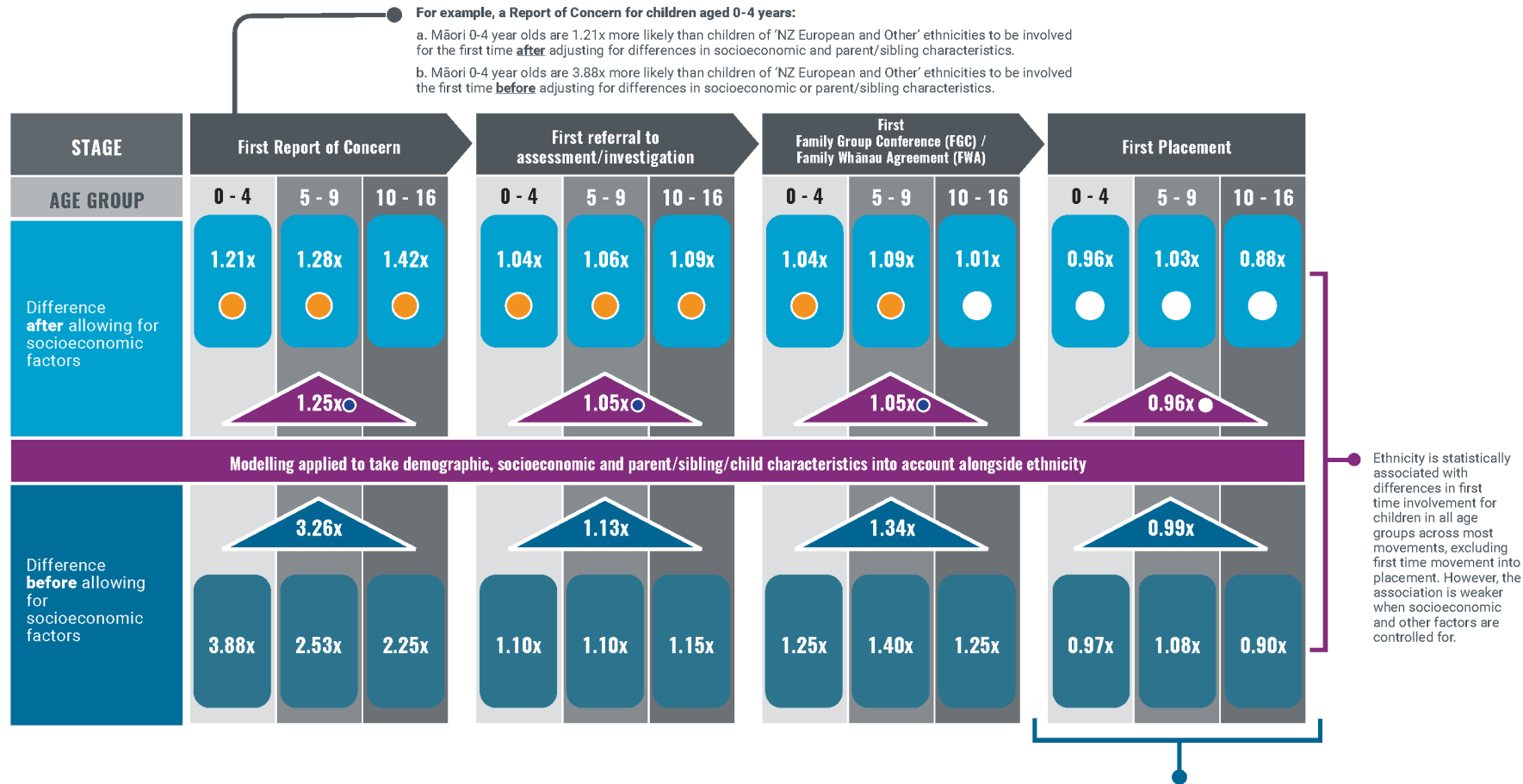
First placement (for children recently involved in FGC/FWAs)

- There are negligible differences between ethnicities for this transition. The results are largely similar to the previous report covering the 10-year period to 30 June 2019, before and after controlling for other factors.

Note, the results presented may not hold for children across all regions as there is considerable regional variation in the rates at which children escalate through the system, even after controlling for other factors in the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI).⁵ It is likely that operational and practice factors contribute to these variations and should be explored further. In general, 'unexplained' variations are greatest for first-time ROCs and younger ages, where there is limited information about children.

⁵ Refer to Appendix 3 for disparity ratios split by region.

Figure 1. Relative likelihood of tamariki Māori moving into each care and protection stage for the first time vs children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities



For children aged 0-9, there does not appear to be a statistically significant difference between Māori children and children of 'Other' ethnicities with regards to first placement entry following a recent FGC/FWA. For children aged 10-16, Māori children appear to be less likely than children of 'Other' ethnicities to enter placement for the first time following a recent FGC/FWA. However it is important to note this is after adjusting for their reporting, assessment and FGC/FWA history. For Māori children there are cumulative differences built up from higher rates of first time involvement in reports and FGCs.

This analysis compares disparities between two groups. 'Māori' includes all tamariki who identify Māori as one of their ethnicities. 'NZ European and Other' includes New Zealand European, European, Asian, Middle Eastern/Latin American/African and 'other' ethnicities. This analysis was conducted for CYF/Oranga Tamariki interactions over the ten-year period to 31 March 2020.

Differences in care and protection involvement for Māori children and children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities pre and post the formation of Oranga Tamariki

Results from this analysis are similar to the 10-year period results from above, where a significant proportion of the ethnic disparity observed for first-time escalations in care and protection involvement appears to be associated with other factors.

Note, care should be taken in drawing conclusions around potential trends in the post-Oranga Tamariki period as observations cover a limited three-year period and there have been considerable variations in the volume and rates of first-time escalations in care and protection involvement year-on-year.

Table 2: Trends in pre- and post-formation of Oranga Tamariki

Average proportion of children who moved into each care and protection stage for the first time – before controlling ethnicity for other factors				
Event	Māori		'NZ European and Other'	
	Pre-period Apr14 – Mar17	Post-period Apr17 – Mar20	Pre-period Apr14 – Mar17	Post-period Apr17 – Mar20
First report of concern	4.4%	4.0%	1.3%	1.2%
First referral to assessment / investigation ¹	53.8%	45.1%	47.4%	37.2%
First FGC/FWA ²	12.4%	11.8%	9.2%	9.7%
First placement ³	14.7%	13.3%	14.2%	13.8%
Relative likelihood of Māori children moving into each care and protection stage for the first time relative to children from 'NZ European and Other' ⁶				
Event	Pre-period Apr 2014 – Mar 2017		Post-period Apr 2017 – Mar 2020	
	Before controlling for other factors	After controlling for other factors	Before controlling for other factors	After controlling for other factors
First report of concern	3.30	1.27	3.09	1.21
First referral to assessment / investigation ¹	1.13	1.07	1.20	1.10
First FGC/FWA ²	1.34	1.05	1.20	0.92
First placement ³	1.04	1.04	0.95	0.85

¹ For those recently reported within the quarter.

² For those with recent reports and assessments within the last 15 months.

³ For those with recent FGC/FWAs within the last 15 months.

Note: 95% confidence intervals for disparity ratios after controlling for socioeconomic and other factors have been calculated and are given in the table in Appendix 2.

⁶ **Blue text** in the table above denotes where Māori children are more likely than 'NZ European and Other' children to move between care and protection stages after allowing for other factors and the difference appears statistically significant (at the 5% level).

First report of concern

- There has been a reduction in both the proportion of Māori and 'NZ European and Other' children being reported for the first time (down from **4.4% to 4.0%** and from **1.3% to 1.2%** respectively) since the formation of Oranga Tamariki. Given the larger decrease for Māori children, the disparity before controlling for other factors has reduced.
- The disparity ratio after controlling for other factors has also reduced from **1.27x to 1.21x**.
- A possible confounding factor is that first-time reporting rates were higher in 2018 than in 2017 or 2019, across all ethnicities and most ages. We only have three years of data post the formation of Oranga Tamariki, so it is not yet clear whether this is year-to-year variation or a one-off spike which we would not expect to see in future years.

First referral to assessment/ investigation

- First-time referrals to assessment/investigations from reports decreased significantly over 2014 to 2017 across all ages and ethnicities as a result of practice changes. Since then, referral rates have varied over time and by age, but to a much smaller extent.
- The proportion of referrals to assessment/investigations has decreased in the period after the formation of Oranga Tamariki. The decrease in Māori referral rates (down 8.7 percentage points) was smaller than for children with 'NZ European and Other' ethnic backgrounds (down 10.2 percentage points).
- Disparity ratios have increased for Māori children post-Oranga Tamariki's formation (up from **1.13x to 1.20x**) before controlling for other factors. The difference in the ratio pre and post formation is smaller after controlling for other factors.

First-time involvement in FGC/FWAs (for children recently reported and assessed)

- Since the formation of Oranga Tamariki, the rate of first-time FGC/FWAs has decreased for Māori children but increased for 'NZ European and Other' children. This has reduced the disparity ratio before controlling for other factors.
- Disparities have also reduced after controlling for other factors.

First placement (for children recently involved in FGC/FWAs)⁷

- The proportion of children entering placement for the first time appears to have decreased since Oranga Tamariki was formed, however placement entry rates can vary considerably from year to year – it is uncertain as to whether this is a longer-term trend given we have relatively few observations.
- The disparity has decreased for Māori children both before and after controlling for other factors. However, as noted above, the limited sample size of observations impacts the robustness of this result and may not reflect the holistic impact on tamariki Māori in our care.
- Regarding changes in entries to care, since the formation of Oranga Tamariki there have been numerous changes to practice, including:
 - investment in early support services
 - strengthening core social work practice
 - introducing and implementing the National Care Standards, and
 - a framework for cultural competency.
- However we cannot directly link the decrease in entries to care to any one cause, and the change is likely due to multiple factors working together.
- For more information please see [Entries into Care | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#).
- For updated information on entries to care patterns and trends to June 2022 see Appendix 4.

Findings split by age group

The table below summarises results by age group before and after the formation of Oranga Tamariki.

⁷ This analysis excludes placement entries where no FGC/FWA occurred in the same quarter (or in previous quarters), such as emergency placements and placements that occur well before an FGC is recorded. These entries that do not follow the 'typical' process represent around 20% of the placement entries for children aged 0-12 and around 60% of the placement entries for teenagers aged 13-16 (some of these are associated with Youth Justice activity). If placement entries following a report of concern and assessment/investigation were to be included in the definition of placements, including those that did not have an FGC, then the proportion of entries not counted would reduce to less than 10% for children aged 1-15, that is excluding children aged 0 and 16.

Table 3: Trends in care and protection stages pre- and post-Oranga Tamariki's formation – Māori children compared to 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities, by age group⁸

Average proportion of children being escalated into each care and protection stage for the first time over a year – before controlling ethnicity for other factors					
Event	Age group	Māori		'NZ European and Other' ethnicities	
		Over the 3 years to 31 March 2017	Over the 3 years since 1 April 2017	Over the 3 years to 31 March 2017	Over the 3 years since 1 April 2017
First report of concern	0 ⁹	10.0%	9.1%	2.2%	2.2%
	0-4	6.1%	5.8%	1.6%	1.5%
	5-9	2.7%	2.9%	1.1%	1.1%
	10-16	2.2%	2.0%	0.9%	0.9%
First referral to assessment / investigation (for those recently reported)	0-4	53.6%	45.8%	48.2%	37.9%
	5-9	51.5%	41.6%	45.6%	35.7%
	10-16	52.0%	42.7%	45.6%	36.0%
First FGC/FWA (for those with recent reports and assessments)	0-4	14.8%	14.4%	11.7%	13.7%
	5-9	9.1%	9.7%	6.4%	7.5%
	10-16	8.4%	8.0%	6.5%	6.8%
First placement (for those with recent FGC/FWAs)	0-4	16.1%	16.4%	16.6%	16.5%
	5-9	10.7%	9.4%	9.4%	9.8%
	10-16	9.8%	7.9%	9.1%	9.8%

Relative likelihood of Māori children being escalated into each care and protection stage for the first time relative to children from 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities					
Event	Age group	Over the 3 years to 31 March 2017		Over the 3 years since 1 April 2017	
		Before controlling for other factors	After controlling for other factors	Before controlling for other factors	After controlling for other factors
First report of concern	0 ⁹	4.63	1.15	4.34	1.07
	0-4	3.99	1.24	3.83	1.15
	5-9	2.44	1.24	2.60	1.28
	10-16	2.41	1.47	2.09	1.34
First referral to assessment / investigation (for those recently reported)	0-4	1.11	1.06	1.21	1.10
	5-9	1.13	1.09	1.17	1.11
	10-16	1.14	1.11	1.19	1.10
First FGC/FWA (for those with recent reports and assessments)	0-4	1.25	1.06	1.05	0.87
	5-9	1.38	1.10	1.28	1.00
	10-16	1.27	0.99	1.17	0.94
First placement (for those with recent FGC/FWAs)	0-4	0.96	0.99	0.99	0.89
	5-9	1.14	1.10	0.97	0.88
	10-16	1.07	1.11	0.81	0.74

⁸ The darker the blue in the cells in the top part of Table 3 the higher the proportion of children being escalated between care and protection stages. **Blue text** in the lower part of the table denotes where Māori children are more likely than children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities to be escalated between care and protection stages after allowing for socioeconomic / other factors and the difference appears statistically significant (at the 5% level).

⁹ For ROC, age '0' highlights results for babies, however for consistency with other metrics age '0' is also included in the '0-4' age group.

First report of concern

- First-time reporting rates for Māori children have slightly decreased post-formation of Oranga Tamariki (for all age groups except for those aged 5 to 9). Corresponding rates for 'NZ European and Other' children have remained relatively constant.
- Disparity ratios for children aged 0, to a lesser extent for children aged 1 to 4 (when considering the 0 to 4 cohort outlined in Table 2 after excluding the 0-year-olds) and 10 to 16, have decreased since Oranga Tamariki's formation after controlling for other factors. However, ethnicity is still statistically associated with differences in first-time ROCs across all age groups.

First referral to assessment investigation

- The proportion of referrals to assessment or investigations has decreased in the period after the formation of Oranga Tamariki for all age groups, albeit less so for Māori children.
- Ethnicity is statistically associated with disparities across all ages.
- First-time involvement in FGC/FWAs (for children recently reported and assessed)
- Disparity ratios have decreased post-formation of Oranga Tamariki across all age groups. This appears to be primarily driven by an increase in first-time FGC involvement for children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities.
- With an additional year of data, compared to results from the previous report, ethnicity is now statistically significant for first-time FGC/FWA involvement for children aged 0 to 4 post-formation of Oranga Tamariki. Children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicity now appear to be more likely to be involved in first-time FGC/FWAs, relative to Māori children.

First placement (for children recently involved in FGC/FWAs)

- Disparity ratios for Māori children decreased for all ages post-Oranga Tamariki's formation. This was driven by a combination of decreasing placement entry rates for Māori children and increasing placement entry rates for 'NZ European and Other' children aged 5 to 9 and 10 to 16.
- Ethnicity is now statistically associated with differences for children aged 10 to 16 post-Oranga Tamariki's formation, with children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicity now appearing to be more likely to enter placement. In the previous report covering the five-year period to 31 March 2019, ethnicity was not significant for this age group in both the pre- and post-formation periods.

Next steps

An update to this work will be published in two years. The work will include a focus on disparities following the formation of Oranga Tamariki to support ongoing monitoring of progress. Whether there will be an update to the pre-formation and post-formation analysis is still to be determined, as this analysis may not add significantly new information beyond the analysis published here.

This work should be also considered as one part of the process Oranga Tamariki uses to understand and reduce disparities in the Care and Protection system. Other work includes the wider Section 7AA reporting¹⁰ and analysis of internal data.¹¹.

¹⁰ [Section 7AA & Mana Tamaiti objectives | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#)

¹¹ [Report on disparities and disproportionality experienced by tamariki Māori | Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children](#)

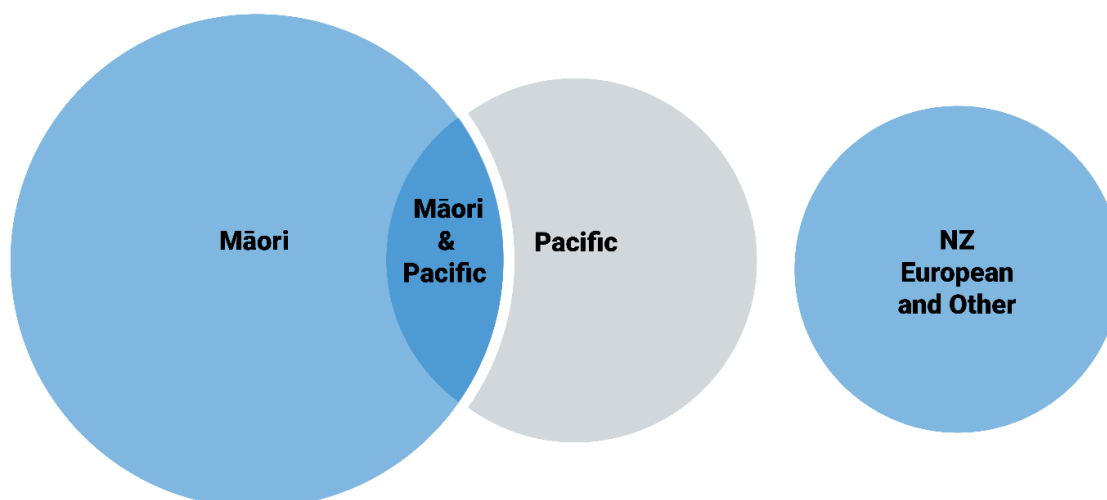
Appendix 1 – Method

Defining ethnicity

There are four high level categories Oranga Tamariki uses to describe ethnicity:

1. Māori – children who identify Māori as one of their ethnicities.
2. Māori and Pacific – children who identify both Māori and Pacific as their ethnicities.
3. Pacific – children who identify Pacific (but not Māori) as one of their ethnicities.
4. New Zealand (NZ) European and Other – children who do not identify Māori or Pacific as any of their ethnicities. This includes NZ European, European, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African, and other ethnicities.

Figure 2: Venn diagram illustrating the relationship between the high-level categories used to describe ethnicity



NB: Image has not been drawn to scale

It is not uncommon for an individual to have multiple ethnicities, particularly crossing between Māori and Pacific communities. The 'Māori and Pacific' category includes children and young people who have ever been recorded as both Māori and Pacific. The diagram above shows the overlap between these categories.

This report compares disparities between two groups (shaded blue in the diagram):

- a. Māori – this group includes the 'Māori' and 'Māori and Pacific' categories outlined above.

- b. NZ European and Other – this group includes the ‘NZ European and Other’ category. ‘NZ European and Other’ includes New Zealand European, European, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African, and other ethnicities.

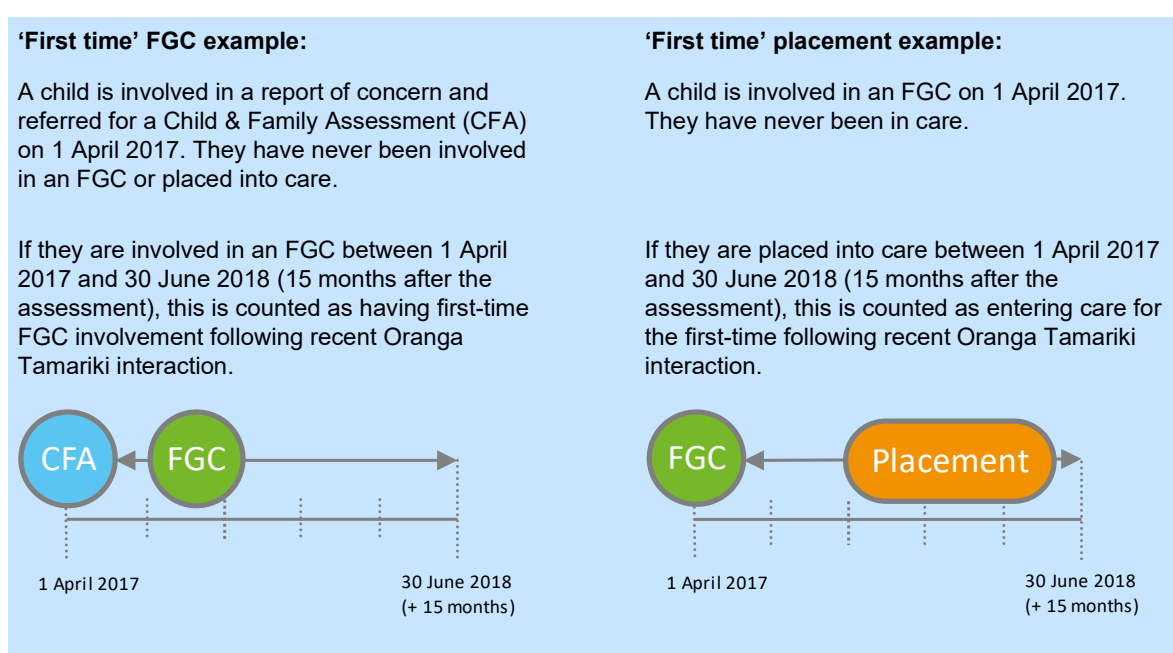
Note, the ‘Pacific’ category has been excluded from this analysis as the group of interest here is Māori. Future reporting may focus on disparities between ‘Pacific’ and ‘NZ European and Other’ ethnicities with Māori excluded. We recognise the limitations of using prioritised ethnicity vs total ethnicity and are looking to develop an improved approach to employ this definition in future iterations.

Defining escalations

This analysis focuses on ‘first-time’ involvement in reports of concern for children with no prior CYF/Oranga Tamariki interaction, and ‘first-time’ escalations between successive stages of care and protection involvement for children with recent CYF/Oranga Tamariki interactions. This report focuses on the following escalations:

1. being involved in a **report of concern** for the first time
2. having your report of concern referred to **assessment or investigation** for the first time (within the quarter)
3. being involved in a **care and protection FGC or FWA** for the first time, for children involved in reports of concern within the last 15 months
4. entering a **foster or family/whānau placement** for the first time, for children involved in FGCs or FWAs within the last 15 months.

The graphics below illustrate examples of what would be counted as ‘first-time’ escalations into FGC or placement stages.



Repeat escalations through the system (such as reports for children with prior reporting history) and escalations outside the 'standard' sequence of casework stages (such as emergency placements for children with no prior FGC/FWAs) have not been considered in this analysis. We expect that repeat escalations through the system will show similar or smaller differences by ethnicity, as any differences that appear to be associated with ethnicity will be partially or wholly captured by factors reflecting previous CYF/Oranga Tamariki involvement.

Selecting characteristics

Statistical analysis was performed in the Statistics New Zealand Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) to explore differences in Child, Youth and Family or Oranga Tamariki involvement for Māori children and children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities. This analysis considered **demographic, socioeconomic, and parent, sibling, or child characteristics** visible within administration datasets that have also been suggested by research studies as being associated with care and protection concerns.

These characteristics include:

- **Demographic:** Age, gender, and ethnicity.
- **Socioeconomic:** Parent income (grouped), education levels, recent and lifetime benefit receipt, socioeconomic decile, and frequent address changes.
- **Parent history:** Parent history with Child Youth and Family, recent and lifetime Corrections involvement, and mental health or substance usage service contact.
- **Child history:** Child and sibling reports of concern and Police Family Violence Centre notifications to Oranga Tamariki (for examining likelihood of involvement in statutory care and protection), Police-recorded victimisations, recent emergency department contact, potentially avoidable hospitalisations and mental health service contact, B4 School Check referrals, school disengagement indicators, and (for ages 13+) Police-recorded offences.

Key considerations and limitations

A key limitation to this analysis is that many of the factors considered at an operational level were not available for consideration (such as the nature of the safety concerns reported for children, child and family/whānau needs and strengths, and availability of NGO and other supports). Partly due to this, the findings highlight the association between Oranga Tamariki involvement and socioeconomic and selected parent/child characteristics at a **group-level**, but also show substantial variation between outcomes for **individual children** and across different **regions**.

It is also important to bear in mind that ethnic disparities are also present in many of the socioeconomic and parent/child characteristics controlled for in this analysis. By controlling for these, the analysis is aimed at identifying additional disparity over and

above that inherent in those characteristics. If there is ethnic disparity in the relative likelihood of different children moving between care and protection stages, then it is possible that this may be captured by these other factors, rather than being explicitly attributed to ethnicity.

Selecting time periods

This document has two key focus areas, each using data from different time periods. For both focus areas, no data is used beyond 31 March 2020. This is to exclude data that may be distorted by COVID-19.

a. Method of analysis on differences in care and protection involvement for Māori children and children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities

This first phase uses data over the 10-year period to 31 March 2020.

b. Method of analysis on the involvement for Māori children and children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities pre and post the formation of Oranga Tamariki

The second phase of this study uses data over two periods:

- the three-year period before Oranga Tamariki's formation (1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017).
- the three-year period after Oranga Tamariki's formation (1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020).

Note, compared to the prior release of this report, the assumed date of Oranga Tamariki's formation has been shifted from 31 December 2016 to 1 April 2017. This may lead to some minor differences between any pre-Oranga Tamariki figures quoted in the two reports.

Appendix 2 – Confidence intervals

The table below shows the 95% confidence interval estimates for disparity ratios after controlling for other factors. (Confidence interval estimates represent a range of values that is likely to contain the true disparity ratio. If a 95% confidence interval only includes values greater than 1, this means that Māori ethnicity is associated with an increased likelihood of escalation in care and protection involvement that is statistically significant at the 5% level, even after controlling for socioeconomic and other factors.)

Table 4: Confidence intervals for the relative likelihood of Māori children moving into each care and protection stage for the first time relative to children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities

Relative likelihood of Māori children moving into each care and protection stage for the first time relative to children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities		
Event	Over the 3 years to 31 March 2017 95% confidence interval for relative likelihood after controlling for other factors	Over the 3 years since 1 April 2017 95% confidence interval for relative likelihood after controlling for other factors
First report of concern	(1.24, 1.3)	(1.18, 1.24)
First referral to assessment / investigation ^A	(1.05, 1.09)	(1.08, 1.13)
First FGC/FWA ^B	(1.01, 1.11)	(0.89, 0.97)
First placement ^C	(0.96, 1.13)	(0.78, 0.93)

Table 5: Confidence intervals for the relative likelihood of Māori children moving into each care and protection stage for the first time relative to children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities, by age group

Relative likelihood of Māori children moving into each care and protection stage for the first time relative to children of 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities, by Age			
Event	Age group	Over the 3 years to 31 March 2017	Over the 3 years since 1 April 2017
		95% confidence interval for relative likelihood after controlling for other factors	95% confidence interval for relative likelihood after controlling for other factors
First report of concern	0 ¹²	(1.09, 1.21)	(1.02, 1.13)
	0-4	(1.2, 1.28)	(1.11, 1.18)
	5-9	(1.19, 1.3)	(1.23, 1.33)
	10-16	(1.4, 1.55)	(1.29, 1.4)
First referral to assessment / investigation ^A	0-4	(1.03, 1.08)	(1.07, 1.14)
	5-9	(1.05, 1.13)	(1.06, 1.15)
	10-16	(1.06, 1.16)	(1.06, 1.15)
First FGC/FWA ^B	0-4	(0.99, 1.13)	(0.81, 0.94)
	5-9	(1.01, 1.21)	(1, 1)
	10-16	(0.89, 1.1)	(0.85, 1.04)
First placement ^C	0-4	(0.89, 1.1)	(0.79, 1)
	5-9	(0.95, 1.3)	(0.74, 1.04)
	10-16	(0.92, 1.36)	(0.63, 0.88)

^A For those recently reported, ^B For those with recent reports and assessments, ^C For those with recent FGC/FWAs

¹² For First Report of Concern, age '0' highlights results for babies, however for consistency with other metrics age '0' is also included in the '0-4' age group.

Appendix 3 – Regional disparity

The two tables below show both the national and regional disparity ratios across care and protection stages, giving both the ratio adjusted for the influence of other socioeconomic and parent/child characteristics¹³, as well as the ratio before adjusting for these factors.

Table 6: Disparity ratios by care and protection stages (Māori vs 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities), after adjusting for socioeconomic and parent/child characteristics – by Statistics NZ region

		First report of concern	First referral to assessment / investigation ^A	First FGA / FWA ^B	First placement ^C
Ratio after allowing for socioeconomic factors	National	1.25x	1.05x	1.05x	0.96x
	Te Tai Tokerau	1.27x	1.06x	0.98x	0.96x
	North and West Auckland	1.24x	1.12x	1.09x	1.00x
	Central Auckland	1.21x	1.19x	1.05x	0.91x
	South Auckland	1.25x	1.12x	0.92x	1.20x
	Waikato	1.24x	1.13x	0.88x	1.04x
	Bay of Plenty	1.27x	1.04x	1.19x	0.98x
	East Coast	1.20x	1.00x	1.25x	0.91x
	Taranaki-Manawatu	1.24x	1.05x	0.98x	0.78x
	Wellington	1.15x	1.04x	1.04x	0.92x
	Upper South	1.36x	0.89x	1.04x	0.82x
	Canterbury	1.45x	0.87x	1.01x	0.88x
	Lower South	1.29x	0.99x	1.30x	1.07x

^A For those recently reported

^B For those with reports and assessments

^C For those with recent FGC/FWAs

¹³ Other socioeconomic and parent child characteristics include: Parental income, socioeconomic decile, recent Corrections involvement, school disengagement, mental health provider contact/treatment, involvement in victimisations and/or offending.

Table 7: Disparity ratios by care and protection stages (Māori vs 'NZ European and Other' ethnicities), before adjusting for socioeconomic and parent/child characteristics – by Statistics NZ region

		First report of concern	First referral to assessment / investigation ^A	First FGA / FWA ^B	First placement ^C
Ratio before allowing for socioeconomic factors	National	3.26x	1.13x	1.34x	1.00x
	Te Tai Tokerau	2.98x	1.09x	1.57x	1.11x
	North and West Auckland	3.19x	1.12x	1.43x	1.10x
	Central Auckland	4.51x	1.16x	1.93x	0.96x
	South Auckland	4.46x	1.03x	1.52x	1.16x
	Waikato	2.77x	1.09x	1.50x	0.84x
	Bay of Plenty	2.79x	1.10x	1.54x	0.93x
	East Coast	3.13x	1.07x	1.27x	1.01x
	Taranaki-Manawatu	2.54x	1.09x	1.29x	0.91x
	Wellington	3.43x	1.19x	1.49x	0.99x
	Upper South	2.47x	1.06x	1.06x	0.83x
	Canterbury	2.66x	1.11x	1.11x	1.12x
	Lower South	2.55x	1.10x	1.14x	1.10x

^A For those recently reported

^B For those with reports and assessments

^C For those with recent FGC/FWAs

Appendix 4 – Updated information on entries into care



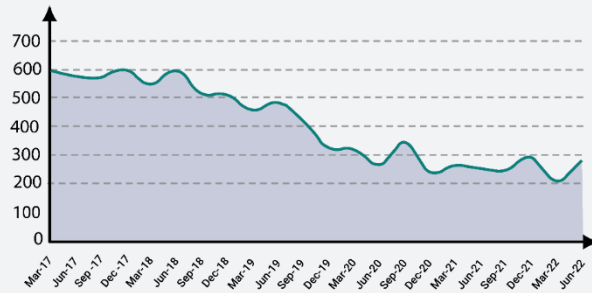
Update on what is happening with entries to care

The number of entries to care has fallen significantly over the past five years, though has tapered off in the last two years.

JUN 2022

EVIDENCE CENTRE
TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA

Entries to care per quarter



The decrease in entries to care coincides with key events

The largest drop in entries to care coincides with the attempt to bring a newborn pēpi Māori into care in May 2019 and the subsequent reviews. It also coincides with the introduction of a range of legislative changes, including the new section 7AA legislation.

Included in the legislative changes is the requirement to "set measurable outcomes for Māori children and young persons who come to the attention of the department" and to "seek to develop strategic partnership with iwi and Māori organisations." Alongside this, internal changes have been made, such as strengthened policies and practice guidance.

The largest decrease in entries to care was for tamariki Māori

Total entries to care: all children

2,397 F2017 ↓ 1,036 F2022 Children entered care (57% or 1,361 fewer than in 2017)

Total entries to care: tamariki Māori

1,642 F2017 ↓ 648 F2022 Children entered care (61% or 994 fewer than in 2017)

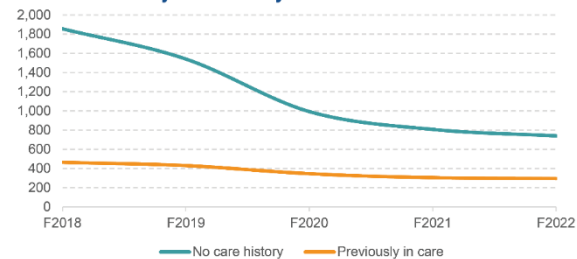
This decrease has tapered off in the past two years

648 Entries into care for tamariki Māori in F2022 (3% or 17 fewer than in 2021)

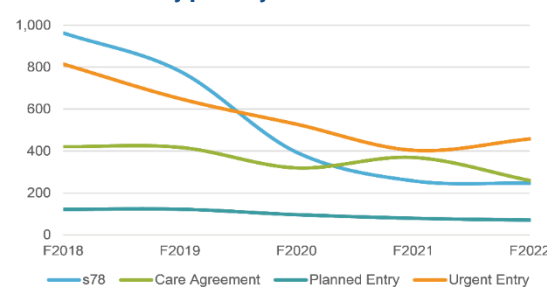
The proportion of entries that were for tamariki Māori peaked in 2017, and has remained relatively stable over the past three years

69% F2017 ↓ 60% F2022

Entries to care by care history



Entries to care by pathway*

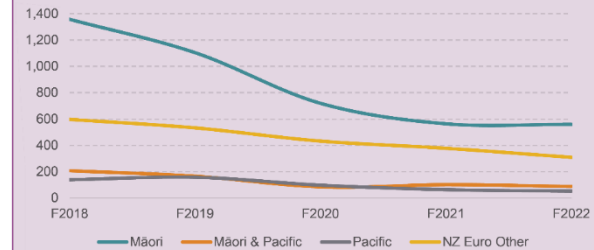


*s78: interim legal orders used to bring a child/young person into custody to secure their safety, and until a final decision can be made
Care Agreement: agreements with a parent/guardian/carer who is temporarily unable to provide care
Planned Entry: legal orders used to place a child in care
Urgent Entry: short-term interim legal orders used to remove a child/young person when there is an immediate safety concern, and until a final decision can be made

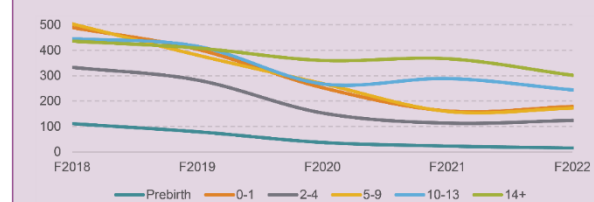
Additional Commentary

- Use of s78 dropped dramatically in the past five years. They made up 43% of entries in F2017, but only 24% of entries in F2022.
- While the overall number of Urgent Entries has also decreased in the past five years, they made up 34% of entries in F2017 and 44% of entries in F2022.
- Entries by unborn and newborn children have dropped in the past five years. They made up 26% of entries in F2017, but only 18% of entries in F2022.
- This trend tapered off in recent years, as has the overall trend in entries to care. In F2021, entries by unborn and newborn children made up 17% of entries. There were ten fewer entries in this cohort

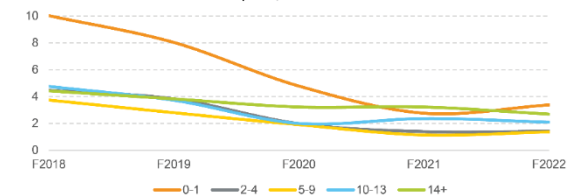
Total number of entries to care by ethnicity



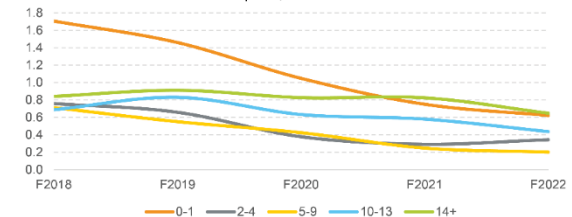
Total number of entries to care by age group

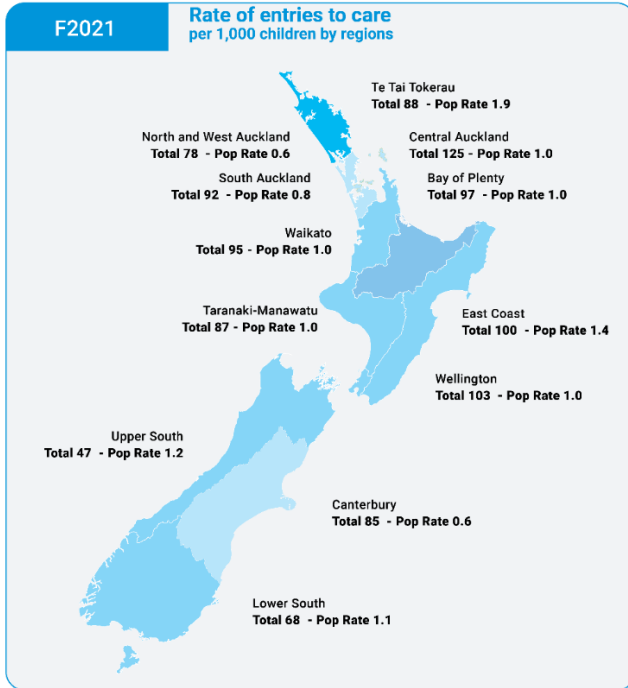


Māori entries to care by age
Rate per 1,000 children



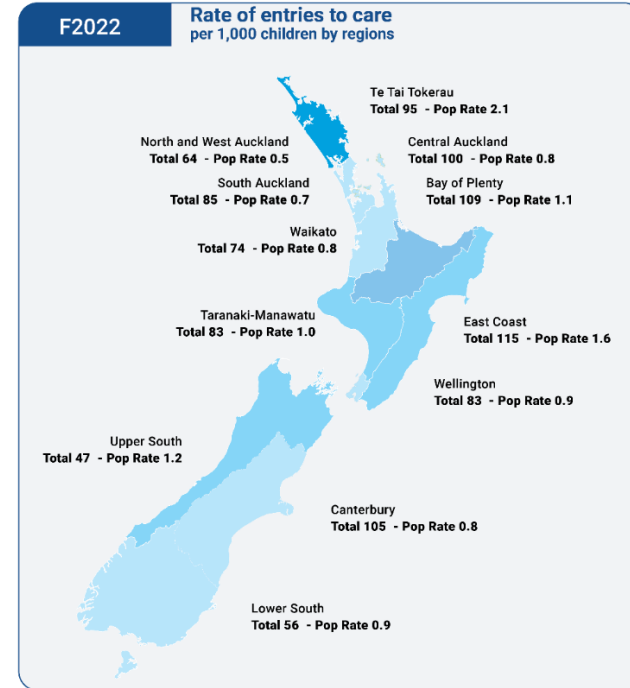
Non-Māori entries to care by age
Rate per 1,000 children





Reports of concern (ROCs) and total entries to care and protection custody by region (including warrants)

Region	Rate of ROCs per 1,000 children		Number of entries to care		Rate of entries per 1,000 children	
	F2021	F2022	F2021	F2022	F2021	F2022
Te Tai Tokerau	109	93	88	95	1.9	2.1
North and West Auckland	45	30	78	64	0.6	0.5
Central Auckland	43	36	125	100	1.0	0.8
South Auckland	61	47	92	85	0.8	0.7
Waikato	80	57	95	74	1.0	0.8
Bay of Plenty	86	77	97	109	1.0	1.1
Taranaki-Manawatu	79	66	87	83	1.0	1.0
East Coast	77	68	100	115	1.4	1.6
Wellington	51	46	103	83	1.0	0.9
Upper South	79	74	47	47	1.2	1.2
Canterbury	74	69	85	105	0.6	0.8
Lower South	58	50	68	56	1.1	0.9
Other	-	-	47	20	-	-
Grand Total	66	55	1,112	1,036	1.0	0.9



Entries to care have decreased across most care and protection regions over the past year

While the rate of entries to care has decreased slightly, the Canterbury region saw the largest increase in entries over the past year.

At the same time, reports of concern (ROCs) decreased across all care and protection regions over the past year.

The decrease in ROCs over the past year (15%) is much more pronounced than the decrease in entries (7%) for the same period.

Central Auckland, Waikato, and Lower South regions experienced a similar decrease in the rate of entries.

IN F2021
1.0
out of 1,000 tamariki



IN F2022
0.8
out of 1,000 tamariki

Central Auckland / Waikato

IN F2021
1.1
out of 1,000 tamariki



IN F2022
0.9
out of 1,000 tamariki

Lower South

Te Tai Tokerau continues to have the highest rate of entries.

IN F2021
1.9
out of 1,000 tamariki



IN F2022
2.1
out of 1,000 tamariki

