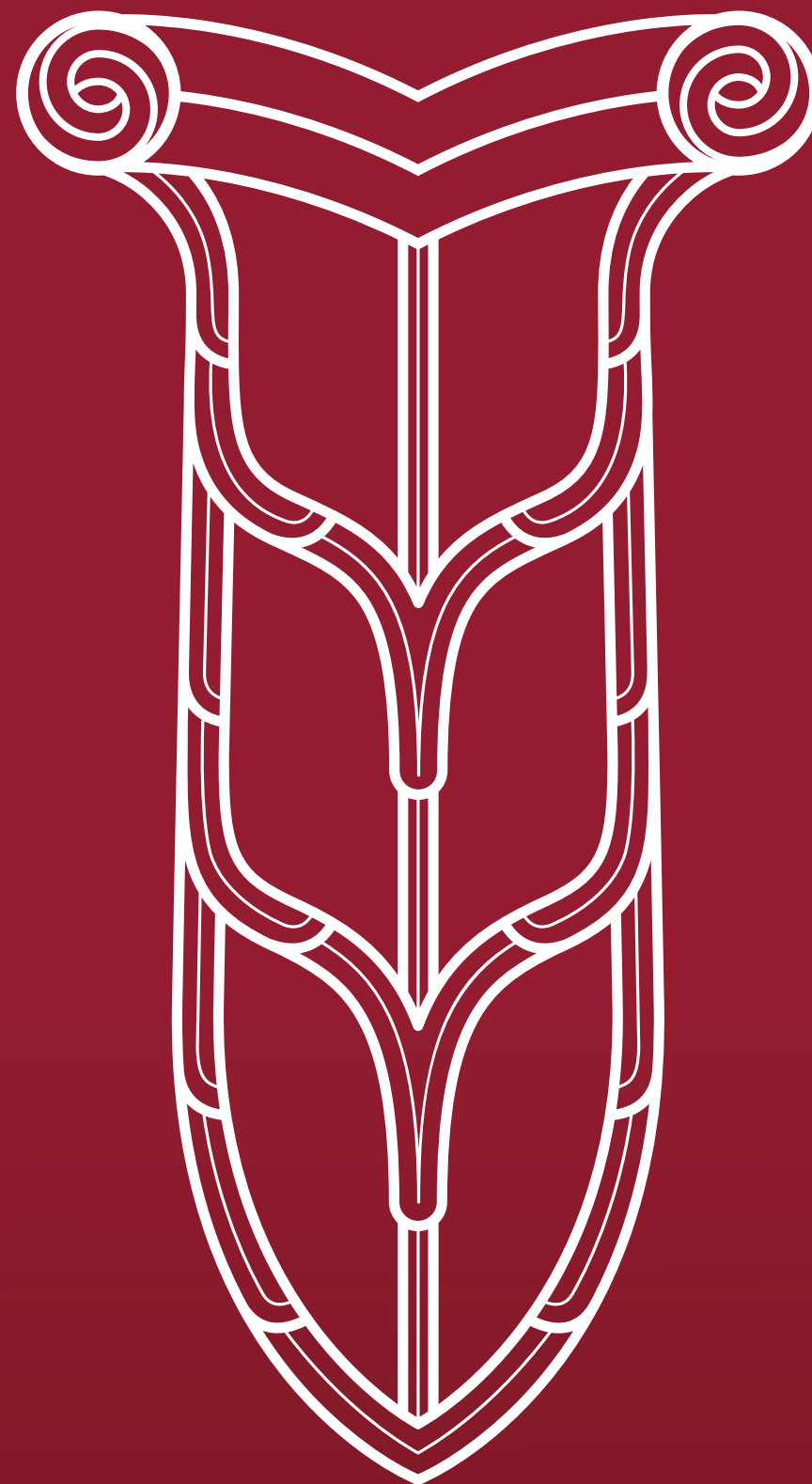

Te Mātātaki 2026



Findings from
Te Tohu o te Ora
2024/2025

Survey of tamariki and
rangatahi experiences
in care

Aurora Centre, 56 The Terrace, Wellington.

The Voices Insights and Engagement team at Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children supports the organisation to understand and respond to the experiences, needs and aspirations of tamariki and rangatahi.

Email: voices@ot.govt.nz

Author: Oranga Tamariki Voices Insights and Engagement team.

Published: August 2026

ISBN: 978-1-0670908-4-5

Citation guidance: This report can be referenced as: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children, Voices Insights and Engagement Team (2026). *Te Mātātaki 2026: Findings from Te Tohu o te Ora 2024/2025 survey of tamariki and rangatahi experiences in care*. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children.

Copyright: This document Te Mātātaki 2026 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

Please attribute © New Zealand Government, Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children 2026.

Disclaimer

Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) has made every effort to ensure the information in this report is reliable but does not guarantee its accuracy or accept liability for any errors.

Acknowledgements

To all tamariki and rangatahi who took part in Te Tohu o te Ora, thank-you for sharing your voices and experiences with us.

To the tamariki and rangatahi who did not get a chance to take part in the survey, your voices and experiences are important, and we recognise that you may have wanted to take part.

Thank-you to the Oranga Tamariki kaimahi who supported tamariki and rangatahi to take part in the survey and who helped their site deliver the survey.

We also acknowledge the Oranga Tamariki Youth Advisory Group members for their contributions to Te Tohu o te Ora and Te Mātātaki. Thank-you for your continued advocacy to improve the experiences of tamariki and rangatahi in care.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.

Foreword from Amanda Malu, Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki

Te Mātātaki 2026 is grounded in the voices of tamariki and rangatahi in care – what they told us, what matters to them, and what we must do better. Every tamaiti and rangatahi deserves to feel safe, supported, connected and hopeful about the future.

Te Tohu o te Ora, our recurring survey, gives tamariki and rangatahi the opportunity to tell us directly about their experiences of care. This is the third time we have asked them to share their views in this way.

I sincerely thank the 938 tamariki and rangatahi who chose to take part. Sharing personal experiences requires trust and courage, and I am grateful for their time, honesty and insight.

Many tamariki and rangatahi continue to describe positive experiences of care.

Most told us they feel safe where they live, are well cared for, and have people in their lives who love and support them. These findings reflect the commitment of caregivers, whānau, social workers and many others who support tamariki and rangatahi every day.

At the same time, the findings remind us there is more work to do. Not every tamaiti or rangatahi experiences care in the same way.

Some told us they do not feel confident about their future, do not always have a say in decisions that affect them, or are not as connected to their whakapapa, culture or whānau as they would like. Some raised concerns about safety and wellbeing. We will act on what tamariki and rangatahi have told us, and focus our efforts where change is most needed.



The findings in *Te Mātātaki 2026* have directly shaped four priority areas for action: supporting younger tamariki to participate in decisions about their lives; improving support for rangatahi as they transition from care; improving safety; and strengthening opportunities for tamariki and rangatahi to have their voices heard.

This year, new questions about identity, safety and goals, together with open-ended responses, give us a clearer understanding of what matters most to tamariki and rangatahi.

Te Mātātaki helps keep their voices at the centre of our work. We need to keep finding better ways for tamariki and rangatahi to be heard, and for Oranga Tamariki to be accountable for what we do in response. We are committed to listening, learning and acting on what they tell us.

Thank you to every tamaiti and rangatahi who shared their experience.

Your voices will continue to guide our work to improve care, strengthen support, and help every child and young person feel safe, connected and hopeful about their future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda'.

Amanda Malu

Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children

Foreword from Oranga Tamariki Youth Advisory Group

Te Mātātaki 2026 is a reflection of the voices of tamariki and rangatahi who are living in state care. It shares real experiences, some positive, some difficult, and all important.

As members of the Oranga Tamariki Youth Advisory Group, we know this system, not just in theory, but in the reality of what it means to be in state care.

What is shared in *Te Mātātaki 2026* matters, but it is not the full picture. The survey was only offered to 46% of those eligible. While 938 tamariki and rangatahi took part (23% of all those in care) we must acknowledge the missing or underrepresented voices including those from the rainbow community.

It is important to sit honestly with the findings. The survey results may be influenced by other factors and while there are positive insights within this report, they must not outweigh where negative experiences were reported. Small numbers are meaningful. One in five said they did not feel safe where they lived, only around half said they could *definitely* talk to or rely on their social worker, and only 35% said they got to have a say in decisions *all of the time*. “Definitely” should be the baseline, not the exception. Behind the numbers are real lives and real impacts.

We support the four priority areas in *Te Mātātaki 2026*. However, challenges are interconnected and cannot be addressed in isolation. Having a meaningful say in decisions requires tamariki and rangatahi to be truly heard, understood, and their voices reflected in the outcome.

Oranga Tamariki must create better, more accessible ways for them to give feedback. This means being able to give feedback in their own time, in their own way, and on their own terms. Oranga Tamariki also needs to record tamariki and rangatahi voice so it influences outcomes, especially in settings like family group conferences and care plans. Listening is not enough if it does not lead to action.

We believe that connection to whānau, culture, and whakapapa must remain a priority alongside the ability for tamariki and rangatahi to exercise choice and self-determination in these spaces.

We ask that you go beyond simply reading this report. Take the time to reflect how identity, age, and experience shape what it means to be in care and where the challenges are. Our hope is that those who come after us will experience a system that is safer, more consistent, and responsive to who they are.

The image shows four handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'CUR'. The second signature is a stylized, abstract mark. The third signature is a cursive name, likely 'Charlotte'. The fourth signature is another cursive name, likely 'Teita'. Below the first three signatures, the names 'Charlotte' and 'Teita' are written in a more legible, handwritten font.

Oranga Tamariki Youth Advisory Group for 2025-2027

Contents

Foreword from Amanda Malu, Chief Executive of Oranga Tamariki	3
Foreword from Oranga Tamariki Youth Advisory Group	4
Section 1: Introduction	7
Te Tohu o te Ora 2024/2025	7
Guidance for reading this report	8
Section 2: Survey approach	10
Child-centred design	10
Eligible tamariki and rangatahi	10
Survey tool and delivery	11
Survey tool	11
Survey delivery	11
Informed consent	11
Safety Disclosure Protocol	11
Survey response	12
Response by age	12
Response by gender	12
Response by ethnicity	12
Engagement with survey	12
Analysis	13
Statistical significance	13
Rating scale questions	13
Rating scale responses	13
Considerations for analysis	14
Section 3: Survey results	16
Overview of survey findings	16
Demographic questions	18
Experience questions	20
Section 4: Subgroup differences and changes over time	34
Summary of differences by age group	37
Summary of differences by gender	38
Summary of differences by ethnicity	38
Differences over time	39
Section 5: Summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi Māori	42
Section 6: Responses to open-ended questions	46
Open-ended responses to ‘Do you feel safe where you live now?’	47
Open-ended responses to ‘Is there anything else you would like to tell us?’	49
Section 7: Responding to voices of tamariki and rangatahi	54
Te Mātātaki 2026 priority areas for action	56
References	63



Section 1

Introduction

Introduction

Te Tohu o te Ora (the survey) is a regular survey conducted by Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) that seeks to better understand the experiences of tamariki and rangatahi in care.

Te Tohu o te Ora is a way for Oranga Tamariki to:

- hear from tamariki and rangatahi themselves about how they are doing while in care.
- track changes over time in their collective experiences.
- identify system improvements and drive changes to policies, practices and services based on what we have heard.

To give tamariki and rangatahi the chance to have their voice heard we aim to offer the survey to as many 10-17-year-olds in care as possible. The survey was designed with input from tamariki and rangatahi to ensure it focuses on aspects of care experiences that are important to them.

Te Mātātaki is the report of Te Tohu o te Ora survey findings. *Te Mātātaki* makes public our commitment to listen and respond to the voices of tamariki and rangatahi in care.

Te Tohu o te Ora has now been delivered three times. It was first conducted in 2019/2020 (year 1), and again in 2021/2022 (year 2). The findings from these years were presented in *Te Mātātaki 2021* (Oranga Tamariki Voices of Children and Young People Team, 2021a) and *Te Mātātaki 2023* (Oranga Tamariki Voices of Children and Young People Team, 2023).

Te Mātātaki 2026 presents findings from year 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora (this survey was conducted across 2024/2025).

Te Tohu o te Ora 2024/2025

Year 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora was broadly similar to previous years. As with year 2 of Te Tohu o te Ora, year 3 of the survey was offered on Oranga Tamariki laptops. The year 3 questionnaire was updated to include new questions about goals, identity and safety. We also added places in the survey where tamariki and rangatahi could share their thoughts in their own words.

In year 3 of the survey, 2202 tamariki and rangatahi in care were eligible to be included in Te Tohu o te Ora, 1002 tamariki and rangatahi were offered the opportunity to participate and 938 chose to take part. Responses from tamariki and rangatahi Māori make up 61% of the overall findings presented in this report.



Te Tohu o te Ora has now been delivered three times.



Responses from tamariki and rangatahi Māori make up 61% of the overall findings.

Guidance for reading this report

We have prepared this report with a range of audiences in mind. This includes:

- tamariki, rangatahi and whānau
- those working in the Oranga Tamariki system and associated government agencies
- community and iwi partners
- organisations with Oranga Tamariki monitoring, oversight and advocacy responsibilities.

We have been deliberate in choosing a reporting style that we hope will be engaging and accessible for a wide audience. The findings from *Te Mātātaki 2026* are also available in alternate formats to make it easier for everyone to read and use the findings.

For more information see <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/te-matataki>.

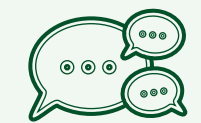
Readers are invited to approach this report with an understanding that *Te Mātātaki* is not a traditional research report. First and foremost, *Te Mātātaki* is intended to reflect the voices of tamariki and rangatahi in care, and care should be taken when engaging with their responses.

This report refers to ‘tamariki and rangatahi Māori’ when information is specific to those who identified as Māori ethnicity, otherwise ‘tamariki and rangatahi’ refers generally to children and young people. See Section 5 for summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

For readers with a particular interest in the technical aspects of survey design and delivery, a supplementary *Te Tohu o te Ora Methodology Report 2024/2025* is available on request. References to other publications or information are noted throughout and listed at the end of the report.



Te Mātātaki 2026 is available in five alternate formats.



Te Mātātaki reflects the voices of tamariki and rangatahi in care.



Section 2

Survey approach

Survey approach

This section provides information about which tamariki and rangatahi were eligible to be offered the survey, who participated, the survey tool used, and how the survey was delivered.

A full description of the overall Te Tohu o te Ora approach, rationale for questionnaire development and survey delivery is provided in *Te Tohu o te Ora: 2019/2020 Methodology Report* (Oranga Tamariki Voices of Children and Young People Team, 2021b). More information specific to the year 3 survey approach is included in *Te Tohu o te Ora Methodology Report 2024/2025* and available on request.

Child-centred design

The survey takes a child-centred approach to design, delivery, and reporting of findings. Feedback from tamariki and rangatahi and the Oranga Tamariki Youth Advisory Group led to the inclusion of new survey questions in year 3, particularly having a place for tamariki and rangatahi to tell us how things are in their own words (open-ended questions). This also meant that the survey became a channel for tamariki and rangatahi to get support by letting us know in the survey if they were feeling unsafe or that things were not going

well for them. New survey questions and the informed consent information were cognitively tested with care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi and reviewed by a speech and language service to ensure content was at an appropriate reading level.

Eligible tamariki and rangatahi

The survey is based on a census rather than sample approach so that all tamariki and rangatahi who met the eligibility criteria could be offered the chance to take part in the survey and have their voices heard. At the time of the year 3 survey, around 4000 tamariki and rangatahi across Aotearoa New Zealand were in care (Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children, 2025). Tamariki and rangatahi who were eligible to take part in year 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora made up around 56% of tamariki and rangatahi in care (total care population). Tamariki and rangatahi were eligible to take part if they were:

- between 10- to 17-years-old
- had been in the custody of the Chief Executive under a Care or Protection order for longer than 31 days
- not living in a youth justice residence.



56% of tamariki and rangatahi in care were eligible to take part in the survey.



10- to 17-year-olds in care for at least 31 days were eligible to take part in the survey.

Survey tool and delivery

Survey tool

The survey tool was designed to support tamariki and rangatahi to complete the survey in private but could ask kaimahi for support if they wanted it. In year 3, the survey tool was updated to include new survey questions and improve the experience for tamariki, rangatahi and the kaimahi (staff such as social workers and youth workers) offering the survey. This update included refreshed visual design and improved accessibility functions such as switching the survey language between English and te reo Māori, audio playback, and optional prompts to explain key words.

Survey delivery

Between September 2024 and May 2025, kaimahi offered the survey on designated survey laptops to eligible tamariki and rangatahi during routine visits. Kaimahi were encouraged and supported to offer the survey to as many eligible tamariki and rangatahi as possible.

Informed consent

A carefully designed informed consent process was used to ensure tamariki and rangatahi understood the potential risks and benefits of participating in Te Tohu o te Ora.

Tamariki and rangatahi were informed that:

- taking part was optional
- they could ask for help if they needed it
- their answers would remain private
- if the survey team had safety or wellbeing concerns from their responses, confidentiality would be overturned.

Tamariki and rangatahi were guided through the informed consent process by kaimahi and gave their own consent to take part in the survey. Caregivers were informed about the survey before fieldwork began and could choose to opt out tamariki and rangatahi they cared for.

Safety Disclosure Protocol

Year 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora included new questions, including one on safety and two open-ended questions for tamariki and rangatahi to answer in their own words using the text boxes provided. The addition of the safety and open-ended questions required a Safety Disclosure Protocol to address any safety or wellbeing concerns raised in the survey. Responses triggered the protocol either automatically (if participants reported feeling unsafe) or through manual review of written answers, with the survey team notified in both cases. Where concerns were identified, follow-up through raising a formal Report of Concern was used to better understand and respond appropriately, while balancing participant privacy. More information about the Safety Disclosure Protocol is available in *Te Tohu o te Ora Methodology Report 2024/2025*.



Taking part
in the survey
was optional.



Year 3 of Te
Tohu o te Ora
included new
questions
including
places where
tamariki and
rangatahi
could type
what they
wanted.

Survey response

At the time of this survey, the care population was around 4000 tamariki and rangatahi, and around 2200 tamariki and rangatahi were eligible to share their views through Te Tohu o te Ora. Oranga Tamariki kaimahi offered the survey to 1002 tamariki and rangatahi (46% of eligible population, 25% of total care population). Of the 1002 tamariki and rangatahi who were offered the survey, 938 agreed to take part. This was an acceptance rate of 94% for those offered the survey, 43% of those who were eligible to do the survey, and approximately 23% of all tamariki and rangatahi in care at the time.

Responses to the age, gender, and ethnicity questions were used to create the sociodemographic groupings of tamariki and rangatahi to report response rates and test for statistically significant differences between groups. The number of responses by age, gender, and ethnicity subgroups was similar to previous years of the survey, and that of the eligible survey population.

Response by age

Age in years was recorded in the survey and then grouped into three categories. Tamariki and rangatahi between 10- and 17-years-old were eligible to be offered the survey. Some 18-year-old respondents were included because we did not exclude those who turned 18 after the list of eligible tamariki and rangatahi was created. The age groups and proportion of tamariki and rangatahi who participated were:

- 10- to 12-year-olds (35% of those who participated)
- 13- to 15-year-olds (41% of those who participated)
- 16- to 18-year-olds (24% of those who participated).

Response by gender

Gender was recorded in the survey using three categories. The gender categories and proportion of tamariki and rangatahi who participated were:

- male (49% of those who participated)
- female (49% of those who participated)
- another gender (less than 2% of those who participated).

Response by ethnicity

Tamariki and rangatahi could choose as many ethnicities as applied. For analysis, ethnicity groups were categorised according to total response (rather than prioritised), so there is some overlap between the Māori Pacific, Māori, and Pacific groups. The ethnicity groups and percentage of tamariki and rangatahi who participated were:

- 61% Māori (selected Māori as one of the ethnicities)
- 48% New Zealand European (selected New Zealand European as one of their ethnicities)
- 20% Pacific (selected one or more of the Pacific ethnicities)
- 9% Māori and Pacific (selected Māori and one or more of the Pacific ethnicities).

Engagement with survey

The majority of tamariki and rangatahi (65%) answered all survey questions. The survey was available in te reo Māori and English, however, almost all tamariki and rangatahi completed the survey in English. It took tamariki and rangatahi around 10 minutes to do the survey.



The majority of tamariki and rangatahi who took part in the survey (65%) answered all survey questions.



It took tamariki and rangatahi around 10 minutes to do the survey.

Analysis

The approaches used to analyse and report on Te Tohu o te Ora survey responses for *Te Mātātaki* are briefly outlined below. More information about analysis is included in *Te Tohu o te Ora Methodology Report 2024/2025*.

The survey responses were brought together from all tamariki and rangatahi who participated so we could understand the collective views and experiences of tamariki and rangatahi based on how they answered (or did not answer) each question in the survey. In addition to combining tamariki and rangatahi responses to each question, we also:

- Analysed responses to check for subgroup differences (age, gender, and ethnicity).
- Analysed differences over time by looking at average scores for each survey year.

Statistical significance

When interpreting the results in this report, note that any difference described as 'higher or more likely than' or 'lower or less likely than' was statistically significant ($p < .05$), which does not necessarily mean 'large' or 'meaningful'. For privacy reasons, very small counts are not shown. These are simply displayed as two percent or less ($\leq 2\%$). Finally, some percentages may not total exactly to 100% due to rounding. See Section 5 for summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

Rating scale questions

Te Tohu o te Ora includes 17 questions where tamariki and rangatahi could choose their response based on a four-point scale. 'Don't know' type options were provided for five of the scale questions. All questions gave tamariki and rangatahi the option to skip the question by selecting 'skip this question' or not selecting any answer before moving on.

Most questions asked tamariki and rangatahi to answer based on their level of certainty. The level of certainty scale options tamariki and rangatahi could select from were 'no, not at all', 'no, not really', 'yes, I think so', and 'yes, definitely' and were respectively assigned a score value of 1, 2, 3, 4.

Three of the questions asked tamariki and rangatahi to answer based on how often (how frequently) something happened. The different options tamariki and rangatahi could select from for how often were 'never', 'not much of the time', 'most of the time', and 'all the time' and were respectively assigned a score value of 1, 2, 3, 4.

Rating scale responses

Responses to the rating scale questions are first presented by the number of tamariki and rangatahi who selected each answer. This number is expressed as a percentage to allow comparison between questions and between subgroups. 'Don't know' responses are reported when this was an option. 'Skip this question' responses are treated as a non-response and were excluded from the base.



Responses to each question were brought together to see what the collective voices of tamariki and rangatahi told us.



Responses were analysed for age, gender, and ethnicity differences.

Considerations for analysis

As with any quantitative self-report measure, responses cannot be analysed to provide a detailed, in-depth understanding of the 'how' and 'why' of tamariki and rangatahi experiences. Tamariki and rangatahi may have responded more positively than how they really feel (positivity bias) because they may want to please others (social desirability) or believe that things are better than they really are (self-deception). Additionally, we are unable to compare findings with a non-care cohort.

When interpreting survey results in this report, it is important to note that:

- Care-experienced tamariki and rangatahi were not involved in the analysis or interpretation of the survey results.
- Tamariki and rangatahi responses to open-ended questions may have been influenced (primed) by the earlier questions in the survey.
- Verbatim responses have not been included in this report as the informed consent approach did not specifically gain consent from tamariki and rangatahi to do so, even if anonymised. This has also limited the ability to describe less common themes in more detail without compromising privacy.

Section 3

Survey results

Survey results

These survey results are from individual tamariki and rangatahi who were eligible to take part, were offered the opportunity to do the survey and then chose to participate in Te Tohu o te Ora to share their experiences of being in care. The tamariki and rangatahi who have shared their experiences through year 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora made up around 23% of the total care population at the time.

Survey results show the collective survey responses from tamariki and rangatahi for each question in the survey. Differences seen by age, gender, or ethnicity are highlighted. Care has been taken to provide space for tamariki and rangatahi responses to be summarised with minimal interpretation and to acknowledge that not all tamariki and rangatahi shared the same experience. See Section 5 for summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

Overview of survey findings

A total of 938 tamariki and rangatahi chose to participate in year 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora (43% of those eligible, 23% of the total care population). Overall, much of what we have heard from tamariki and rangatahi through Te Tohu o te Ora has been broadly consistent across survey years, and we continue to see that some questions are responded to more positively than others (see Figure 1). There have, however, been some shifts in responses to some questions, between survey years (see Section 4).

Figure 1 shows how tamariki and rangatahi answered each rating scale question, with the results shown side by side. The questions are arranged from left to right, starting with those that had the highest number of 'yes, definitely' or 'all of the time' responses, down to the lowest. More detailed results for each question are then shown one at a time.

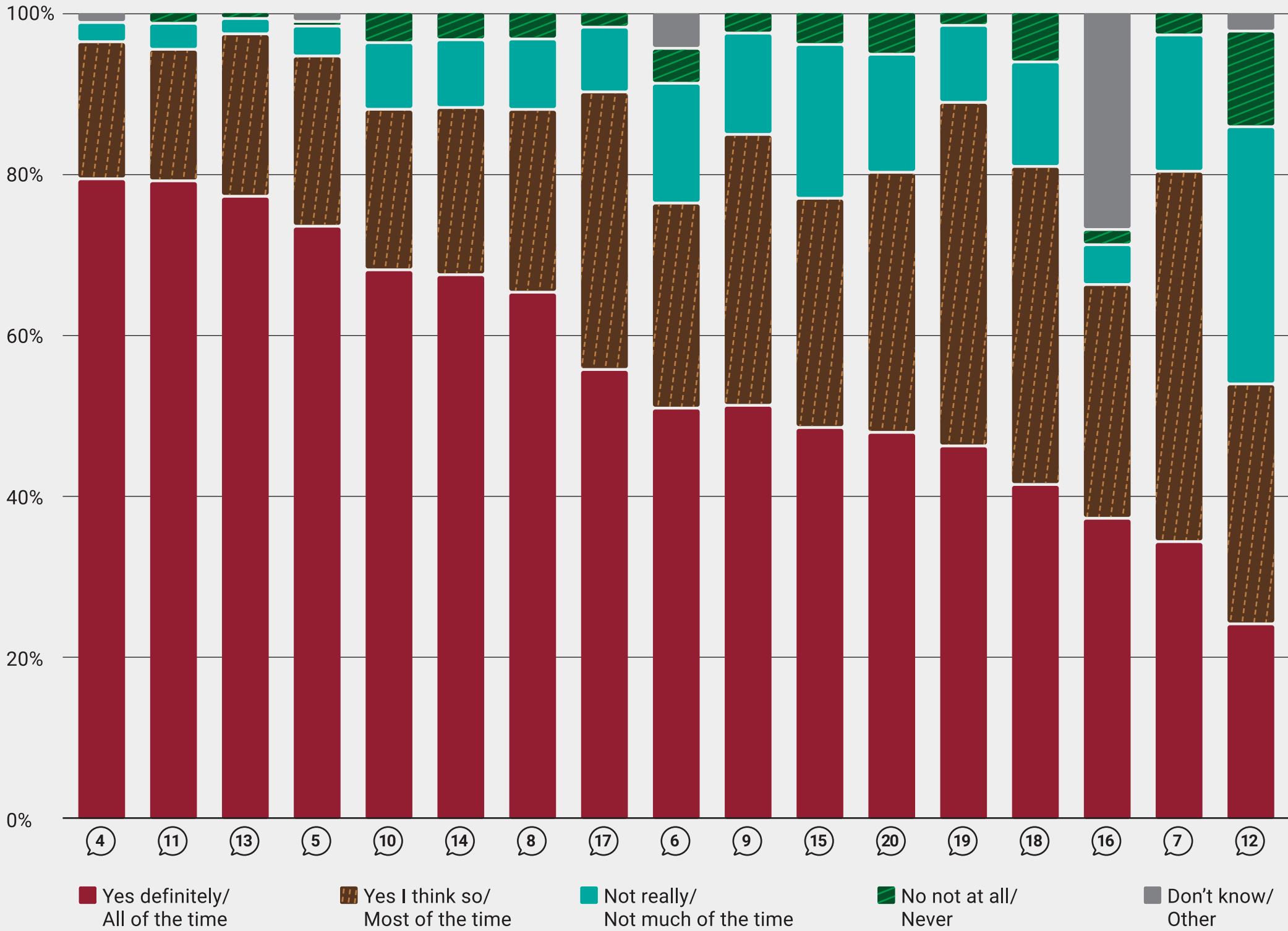


938 tamariki and rangatahi chose to take part in the survey.



The tamariki and rangatahi who have shared their experiences made up around 43% of the eligible survey population.

Tamariki and rangatahi responses for each of the rating scale questions.



Survey Questions

- 4 Do the adults you live with now look after you well?
- 11 Do you feel safe where you live now?
- 13 Do you have people in your life who love you no matter what?
- 5 Do the adults you live with now accept you for who you are?
- 10 Do you feel settled where you live now?
- 14 Do you have a friend or friends you can talk to about anything?
- 8 Do you have somewhere you feel you belong?
- 17 Do you feel supported to achieve your goals?
- 6 Do you get to keep in touch with your birth family/whānau as much as you would like to?
- 9 Do you find it easy to express your identity?
- 15 Do you get the chance to learn about your culture?
- 20 Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?
- 19 Does your social worker do what they say they will do?
- 18 Does Oranga Tamariki (OT) help to make things better for you?
- 16 Do you think you will have a good life when you get older?
- 7 Do you get to have a say in important decisions about your life?
- 12 Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)?

Figure 1. Summary of year 3 results, ranked by most positive responses.

Demographic questions



Tamariki and rangatahi were asked to self-identify their age, gender, and ethnicity.

① Age

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked ‘How old are you?’ (Figure 2). Rangatahi who turned 18-years-old during the fieldwork period were still eligible to be offered the survey and made up 2% or less of those who participated.

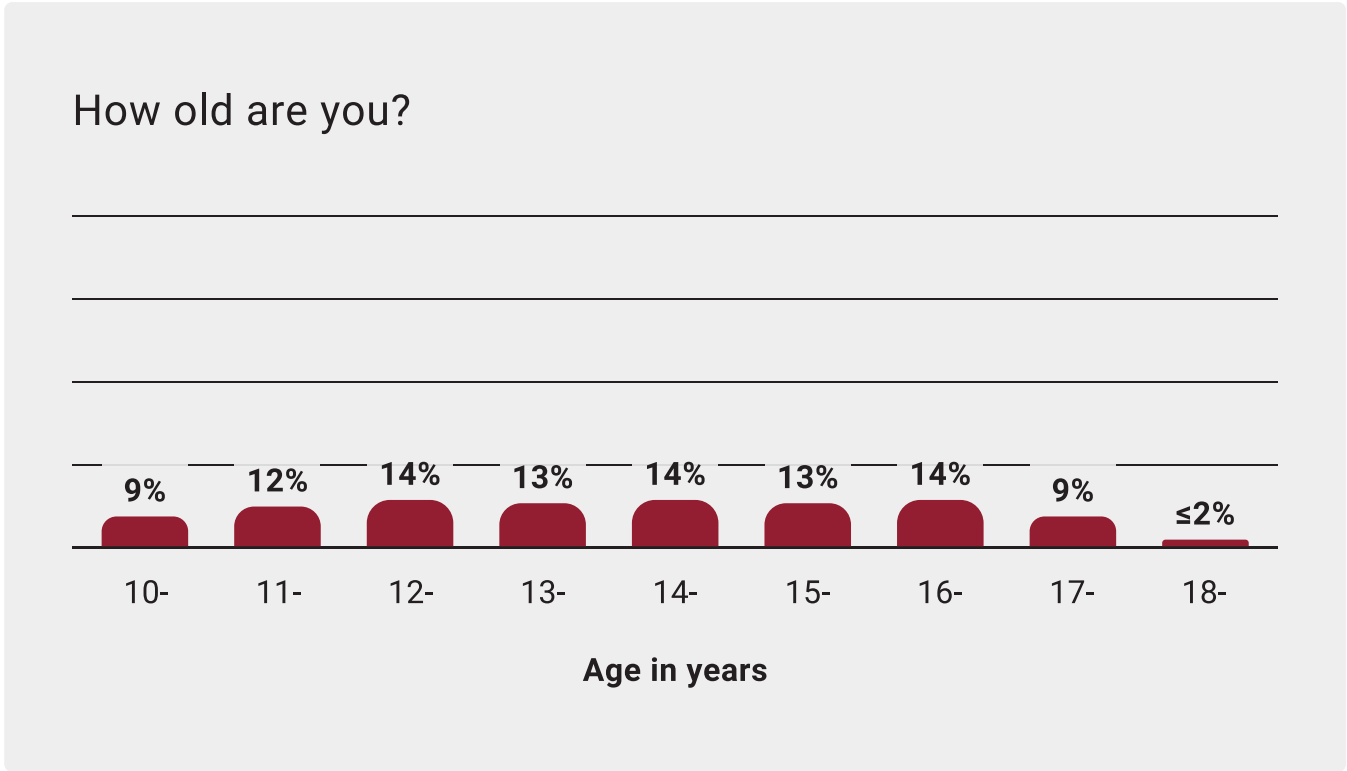


Figure 2. Self-identified age of tamariki and rangatahi who responded to this question.
Base: 933 responded

② Gender

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked ‘What is your gender?’ (Figure 3).

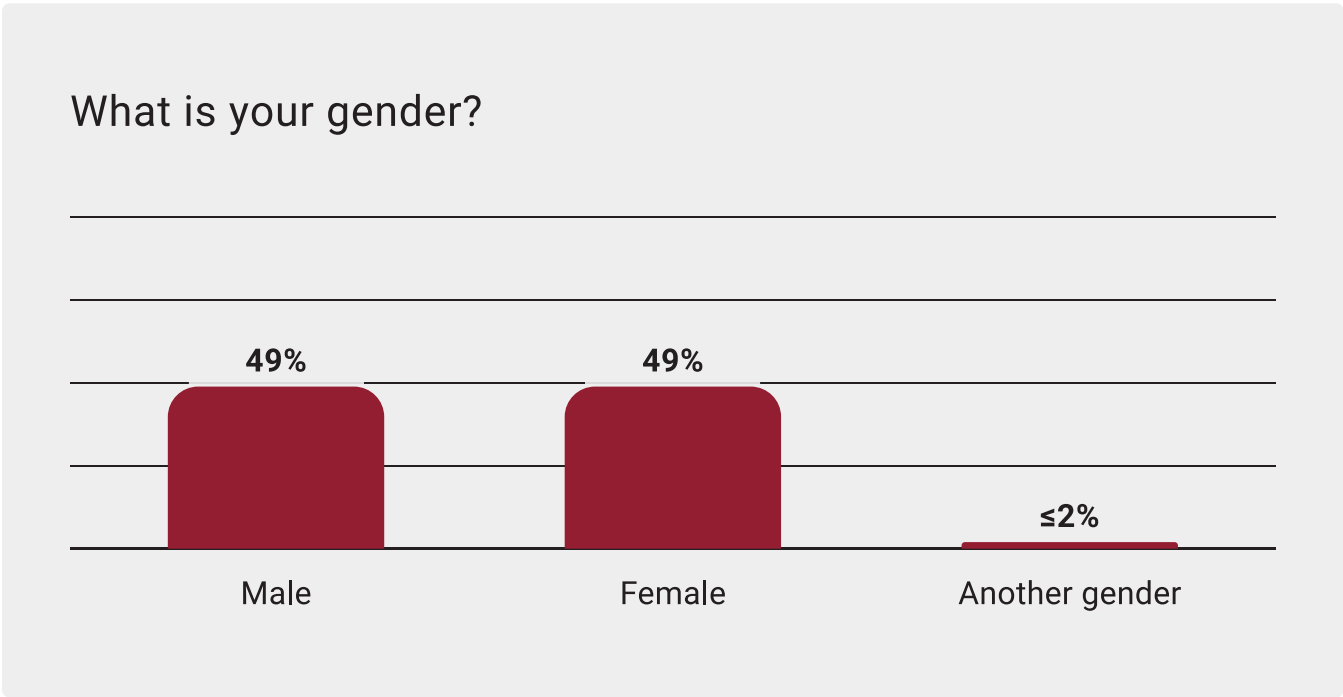


Figure 3. Self-identified gender of tamariki and rangatahi who responded to the question.
Base: 925 responded

Tamariki and rangatahi who selected ‘another gender’ were given the option to add to their answer. The most common response was non-binary.

③ Ethnicity

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked ‘Which ethnic group, or groups, do you belong to? Please choose all the groups you belong to.’ (Figure 4).

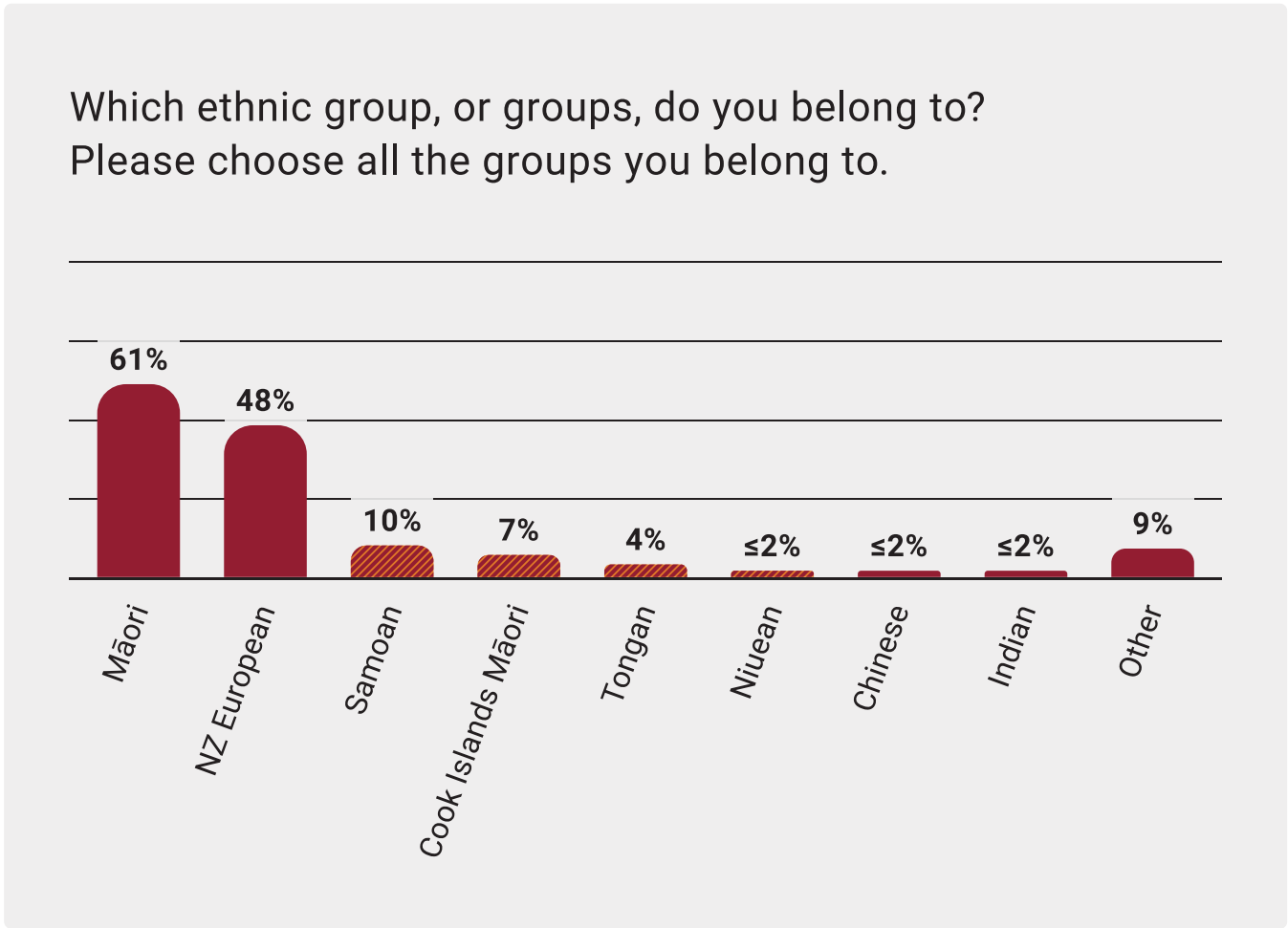


Figure 4. Self-identified ethnicity of tamariki and rangatahi who responded to the question.
Base: 919 responded

Tamariki and rangatahi who selected ‘other’ were given the option to add to their answer. Other ethnicities included Australian, American, Canadian, German, French, Arab, African, Indian, and South African.

Experience questions



The following section shows the results for each of the experience questions, including whether age, gender, or ethnicity subgroups significantly influenced how tamariki and rangatahi responded to each question. For more information about subgroup differences see Section 4.

④ Feeling well looked after

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do the adults you live with now look after you well?’ to assess how well they felt cared for in their current placement (Figure 5).

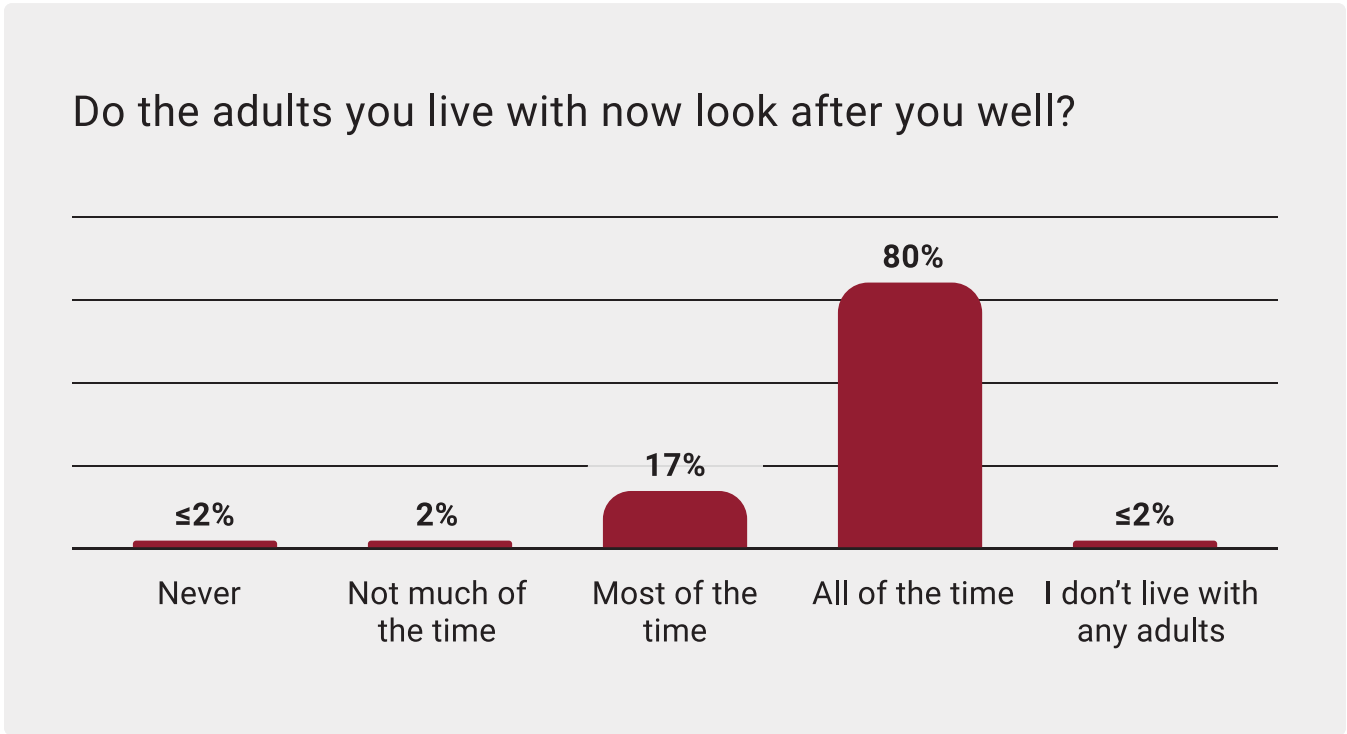


Figure 5. Responses to the question ‘Do the adults you live with now look after you well?’. Base: 899 responded

Most (80%) tamariki and rangatahi said the adults they lived with looked after them well ‘all of the time’ (97% combined said ‘all of the time’ or ‘most of the time’).

⑤ Feeling accepted

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do the adults you live with now accept you for who you are?’ to assess how well they felt the adults they lived with accepted, respected, and believed in them (Figure 6).

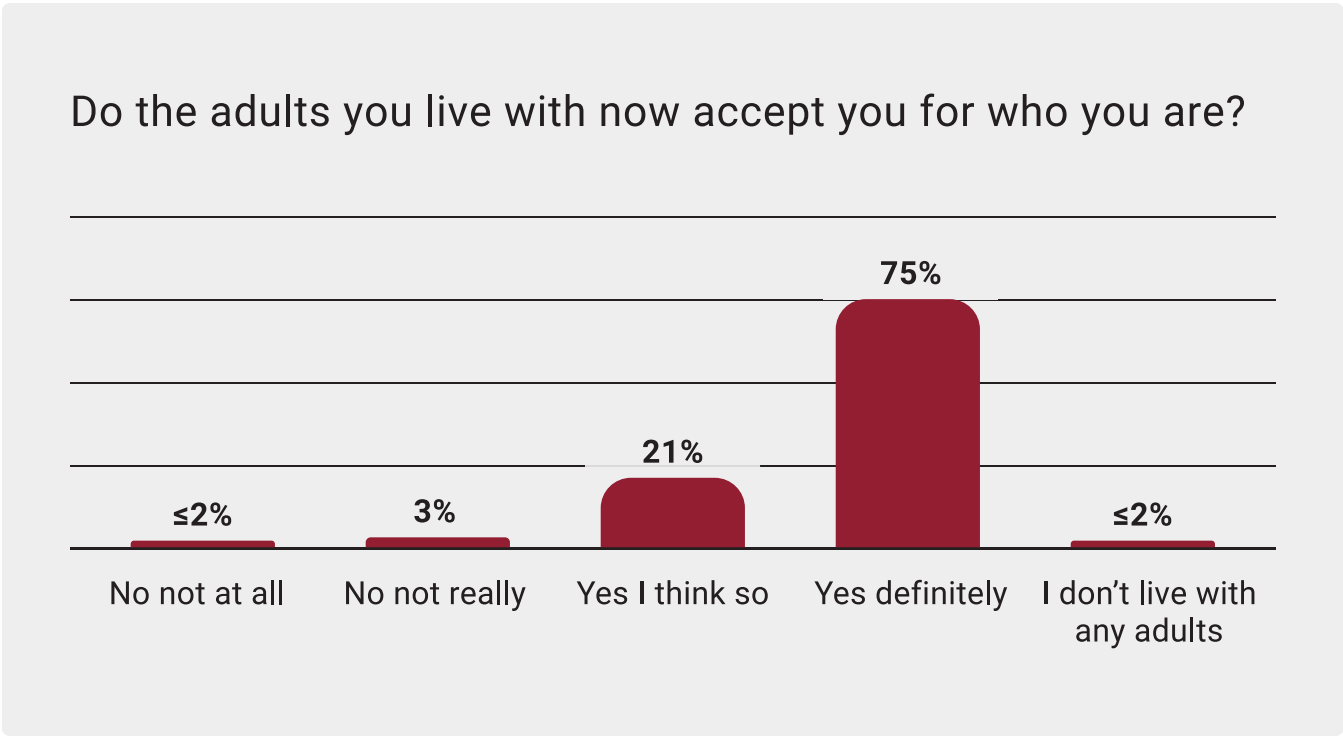


Figure 6. Responses to the question ‘Do the adults you live with now accept you for who you are?’.

Base: 908 responded

Many (75%) tamariki and rangatahi said the adults they lived with now ‘definitely’ accepted them for who they are (96% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

⑥ Keeping in touch with birth family/whānau

During the formative work for the survey, tamariki and rangatahi defined having good relationships with birth family/whānau as: “I know my family and get to see and talk to them”. To assess their views of their relationships with birth family/whānau, tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you get to keep in touch with your birth family/whānau as much as you would like to?’ (Figure 7).

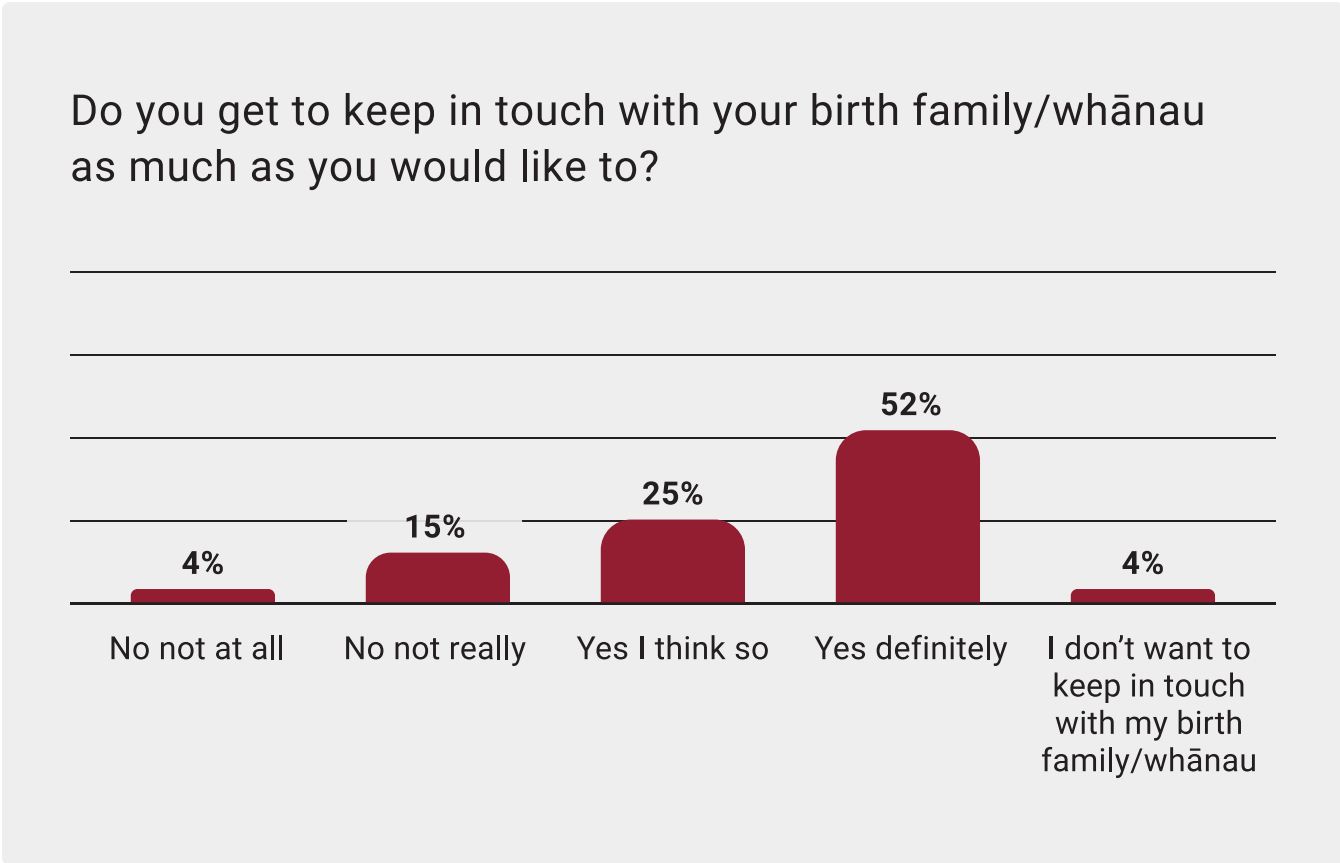


Figure 7. Responses to the question ‘Do you get to keep in touch with your birth family/whānau as much as you would like to?’.
Base: 908 responded

Around half (52%) of tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ got to keep in touch with their birth family/whānau as much as they would like to (77% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).



Significant differences by age group showed that 16- to 18-year-old rangatahi were more likely than 13- to 15-year-old rangatahi and 10- to 12-year-old tamariki to say they got to keep in touch with their birth family/whānau as much as they wanted to. 16- to 18-year-old rangatahi were also more likely than 10- to 12-year-old tamariki to say they didn’t want to keep in touch with their birth family/whānau. 13- to 15-year-old rangatahi were more likely than 10- to 12-year-old tamariki to say they got to keep in touch with their birth family/whānau as much as they wanted to. For a summary of subgroup differences see Section 4.

⑦ Having a say in important decisions

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you get to have a say in important decisions about your life?’ (Figure 8).

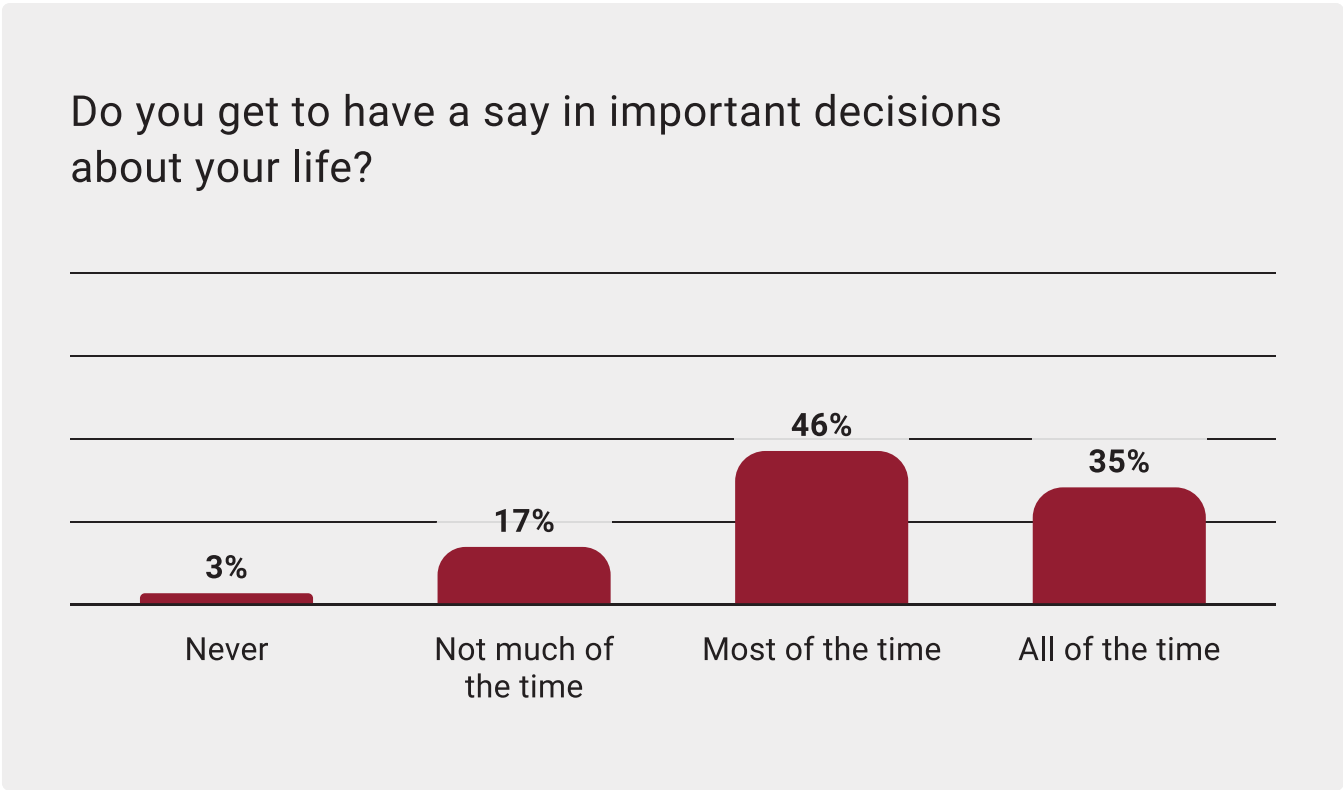


Figure 8. Responses to the question ‘Do you get to have a say in important decisions about your life?’.

Base: 894 responded



Some (35%) tamariki and rangatahi said they got to have a say in important decisions about their life ‘all of the time’ (81% combined said ‘all of the time’ or ‘most of the time’).



Significant differences by age group showed that 16- to 18-year-old rangatahi were more likely to feel that they got to have a say in important decisions about their life than 10- to 12-year-old and 13- to 15-year-old tamariki and rangatahi. For a summary of subgroup differences see Section 4.

⑧ Having a sense of belonging

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you have somewhere you feel you belong?’ to assess their sense of belonging and whether they felt that they have somewhere they could just be themselves (Figure 9).

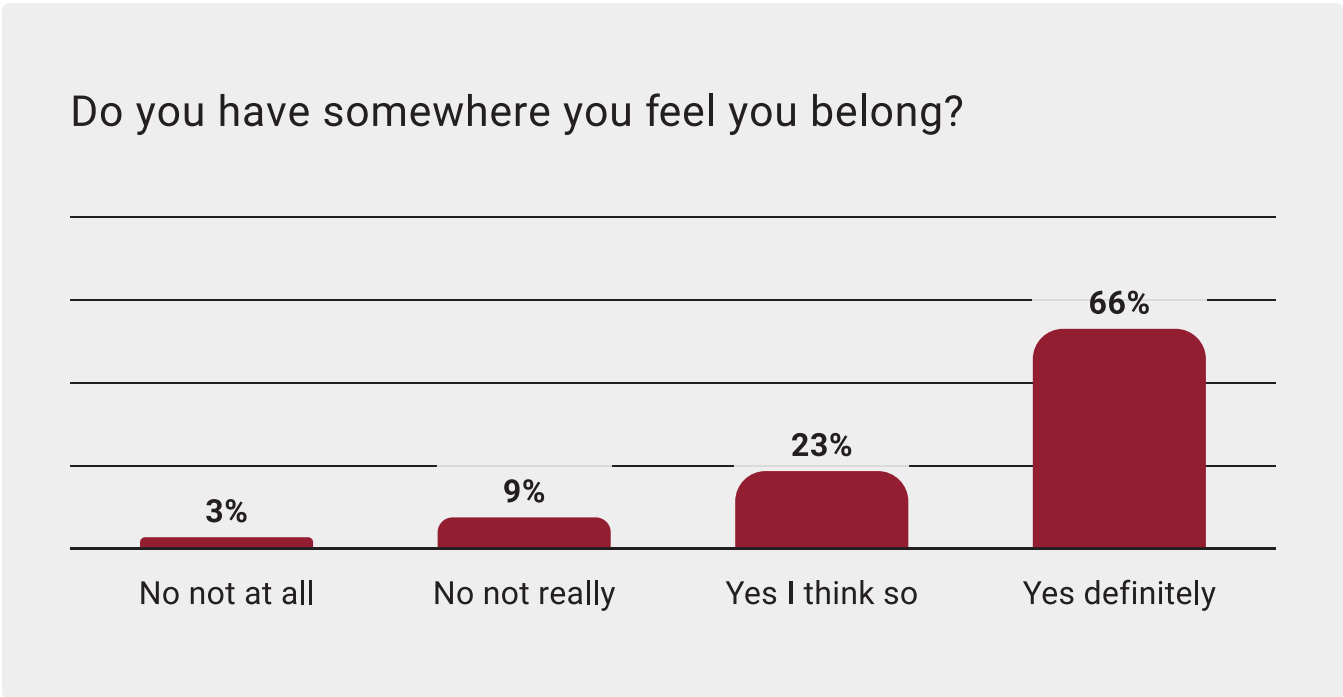


Figure 9. Responses to the question ‘Do you have somewhere you feel you belong?’.
Base: 905 responded

Many (66%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ had somewhere they felt they belonged (89% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

⑨ Expressing identity

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you find it easy to express your identity?’ to assess how comfortable and supported tamariki and rangatahi felt being themselves. This was the first time this question was included in Te Tohu o te Ora (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Responses to the question ‘Do you find it easy to express your identity?’.
Base: 879 responded

Around half (52%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ found it easy to express their identity (85% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

⑩ Feeling settled

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you feel settled where you live now?’ to assess how comfortable and stable they felt in their current care placement (Figure 11).

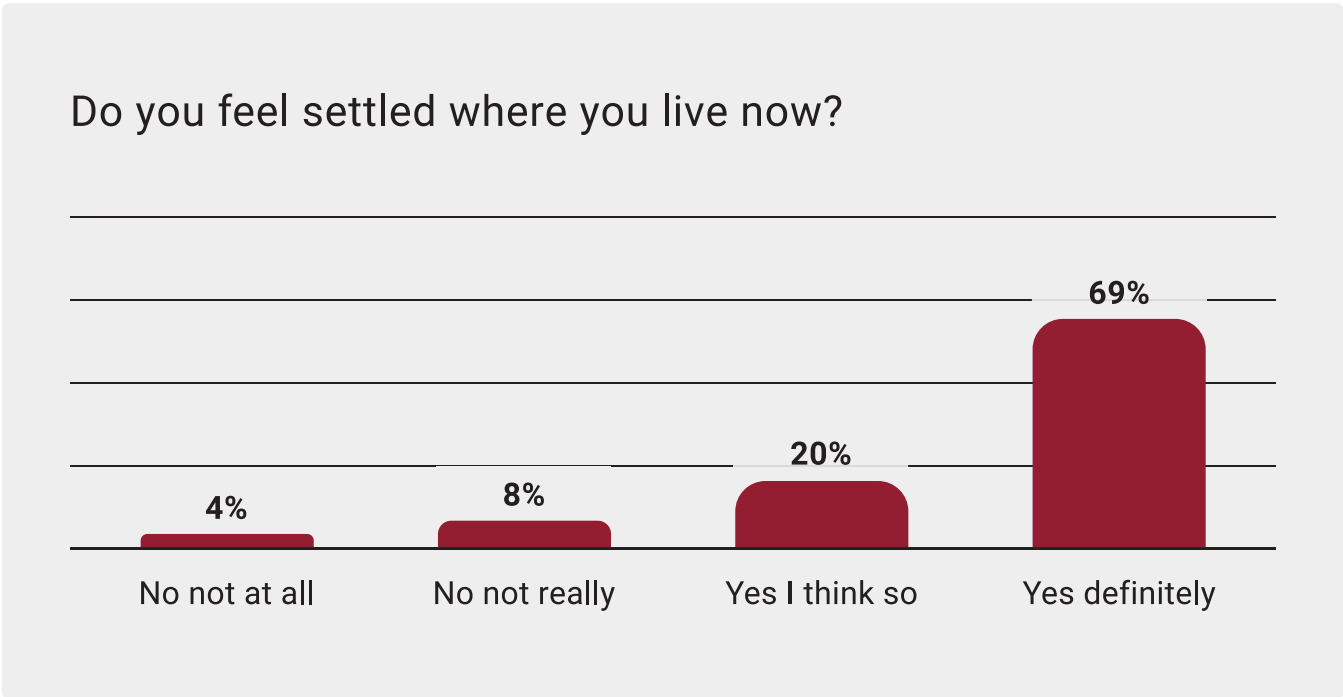


Figure 11. Responses to the question ‘Do you feel settled where you live now?’.
Base: 905 responded

Many (69%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ felt settled where they lived (89% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

⑪ Feeling safe

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you feel safe where you live now?’ to assess their sense of safety in their current living situation (Figure 12). Tamariki and rangatahi could tell us more about their answer, in their own words, by typing into the box provided. A summary of these answers is included in Section 6: Responses to open-ended questions.

This was the first time this question was included in Te Tohu o te Ora. Any responses that caused concern about the safety or wellbeing of an individual tamaiti or rangatahi were followed up through implementation of a Safety Disclosure Protocol.

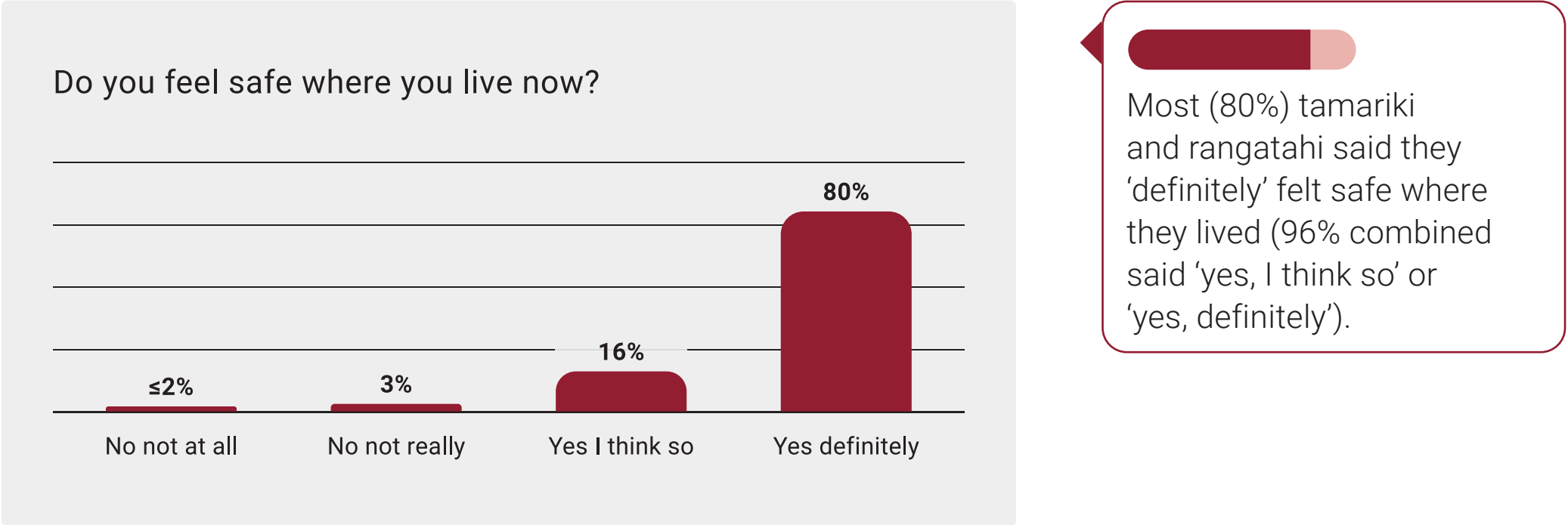


Figure 12. Responses to the question ‘Do you feel safe where you live now?’.

Base: 901 responded

⑫ Knowing whakapapa

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)?’ (Figure 13).

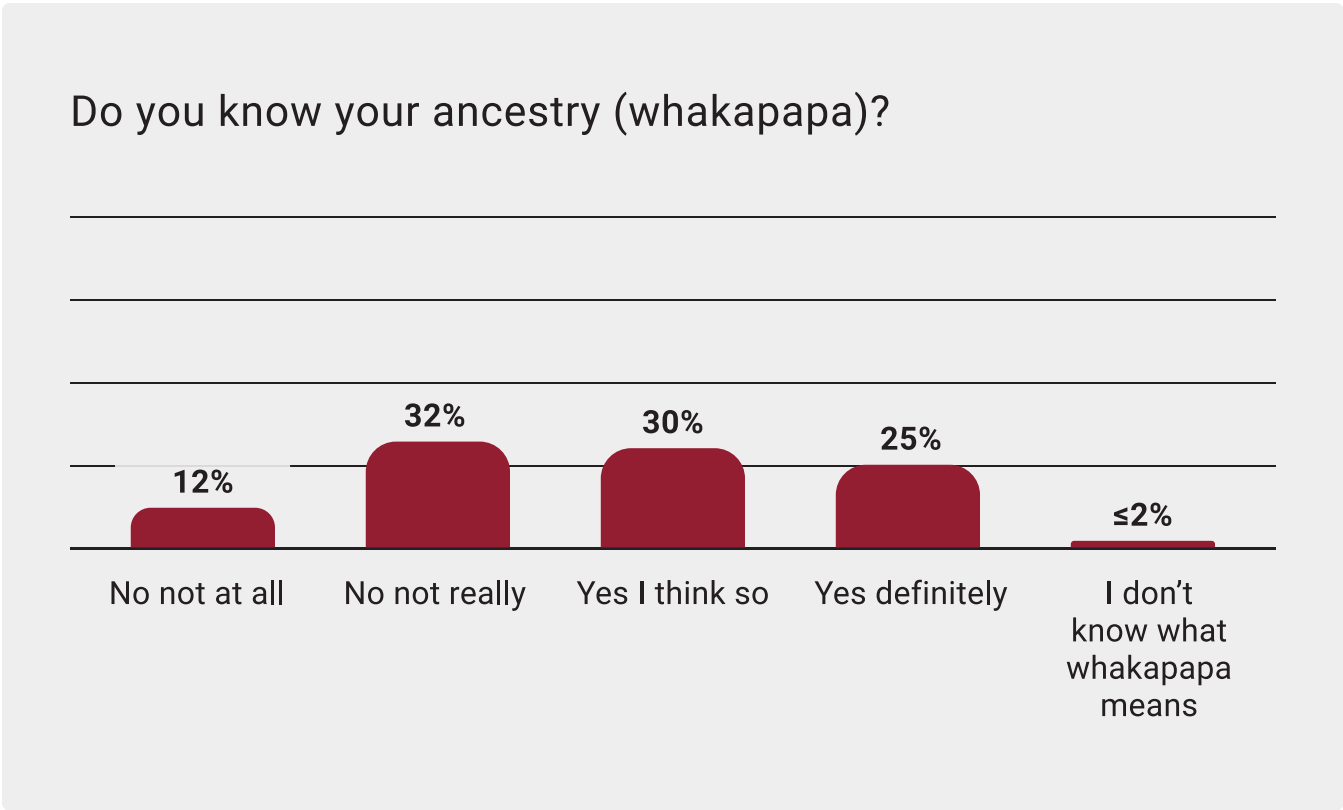


Figure 13. Responses to the question ‘Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)?’.
Base: 880 responded

Some (25%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ knew their ancestry (whakapapa) (54% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

⑬ Feeling loved

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you have people in your life who love you no matter what?’ to assess the extent to which they felt loved unconditionally (Figure 14).

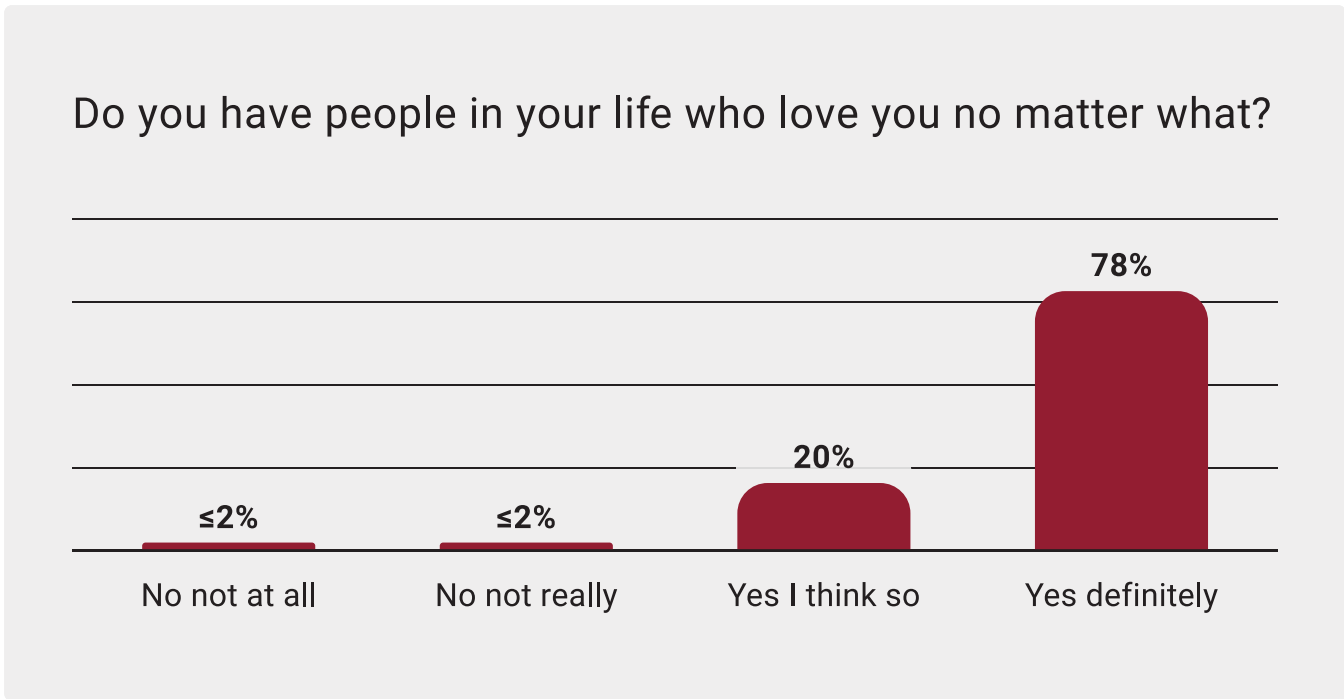


Figure 14. Responses to the question ‘Do you have people in your life who love you no matter what?’.
Base: 899 responded

Many (78%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ had people in their life who loved them no matter what (98% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

⑭ Having friends to talk to

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you have a friend or friends you can talk to about anything?’ to assess friendship relationships (Figure 15).

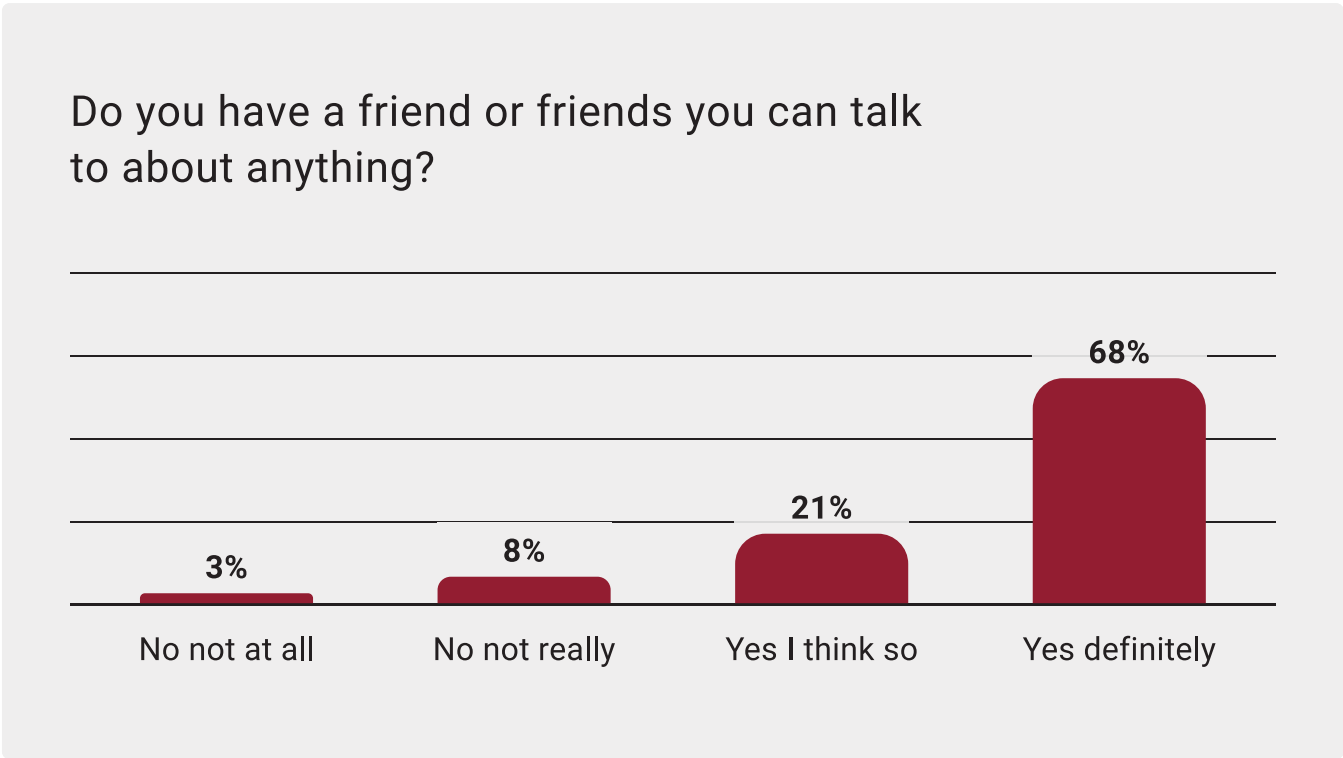


Figure 15. Responses to the question ‘Do you have a friend or friends you can talk to about anything?’.
Base: 903 responded

Many (68%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ had a friend or friends they could talk to about anything (89% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

15 Learning about culture

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you get the chance to learn about your culture?’ to assess the extent to which they had a chance to connect with their culture (Figure 16).



Figure 16. Responses to the question ‘Do you get the chance to learn about your culture?’.

Base: 877 responded



Around half (49%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ got the chance to learn about their culture (77% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).



Significant differences by age group showed that 13- to 15-year-old tamariki and rangatahi were more likely to say they get the chance to learn about their culture than 10- to 12-year-old tamariki.



Significant differences by ethnicity showed that tamariki and rangatahi who were more likely to say that they got the chance to learn about their culture included those who identified as:

- Māori (compared to all others combined)
- one or more Pacific ethnicities (compared to all others combined)
- both Māori and one or more Pacific ethnicities (compared to all others combined).

For a summary of subgroup differences see Section 4.

⑩ Having hope for the future

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you think you will have a good life when you get older?’ to assess their hope for the future (Figure 17).

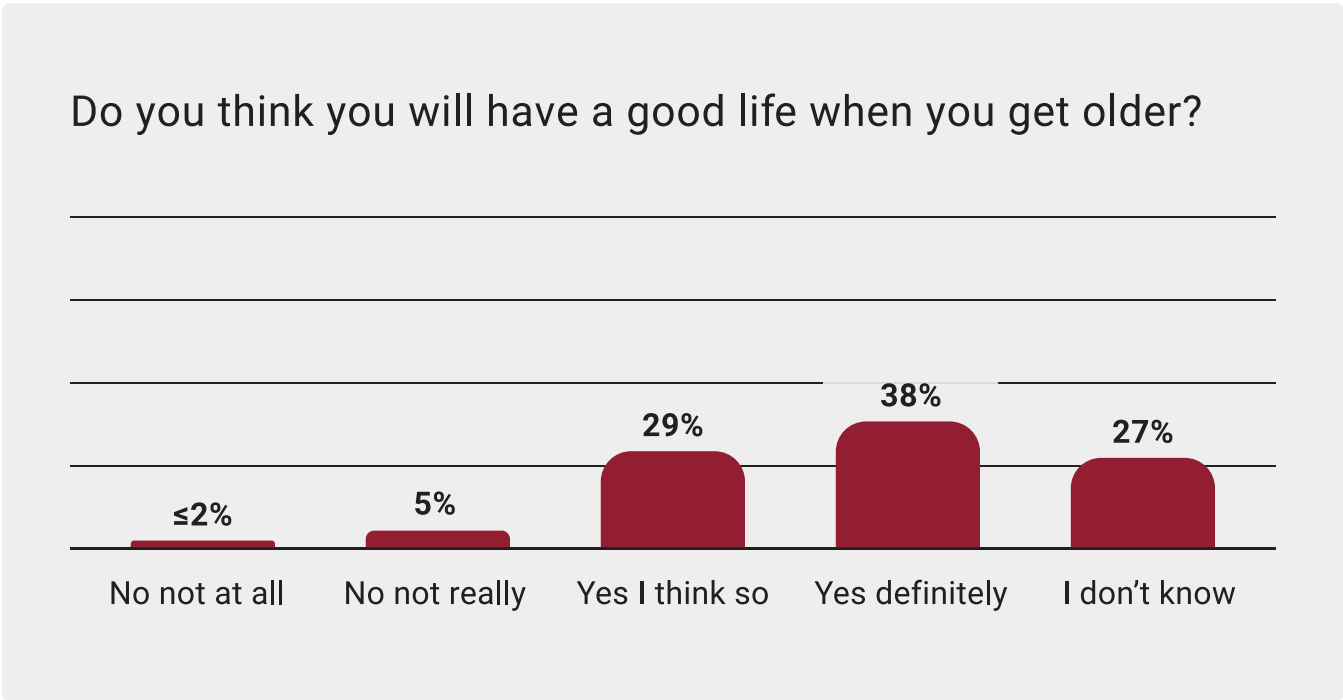


Figure 17. Responses to the question ‘Do you think you will have a good life when you get older?’.

Base: 907 responded

Some (38%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ thought they would have a good life when they got older (67% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’) and some (27%) said they did not know if they would have a good life when they got older.

⑪ Support to achieve goals

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Do you feel supported to achieve your goals?’ to assess sense of support for tamariki and rangatahi achieving their aspirations (Figure 18). This was the first time this question was included in Te Tohu o te Ora.

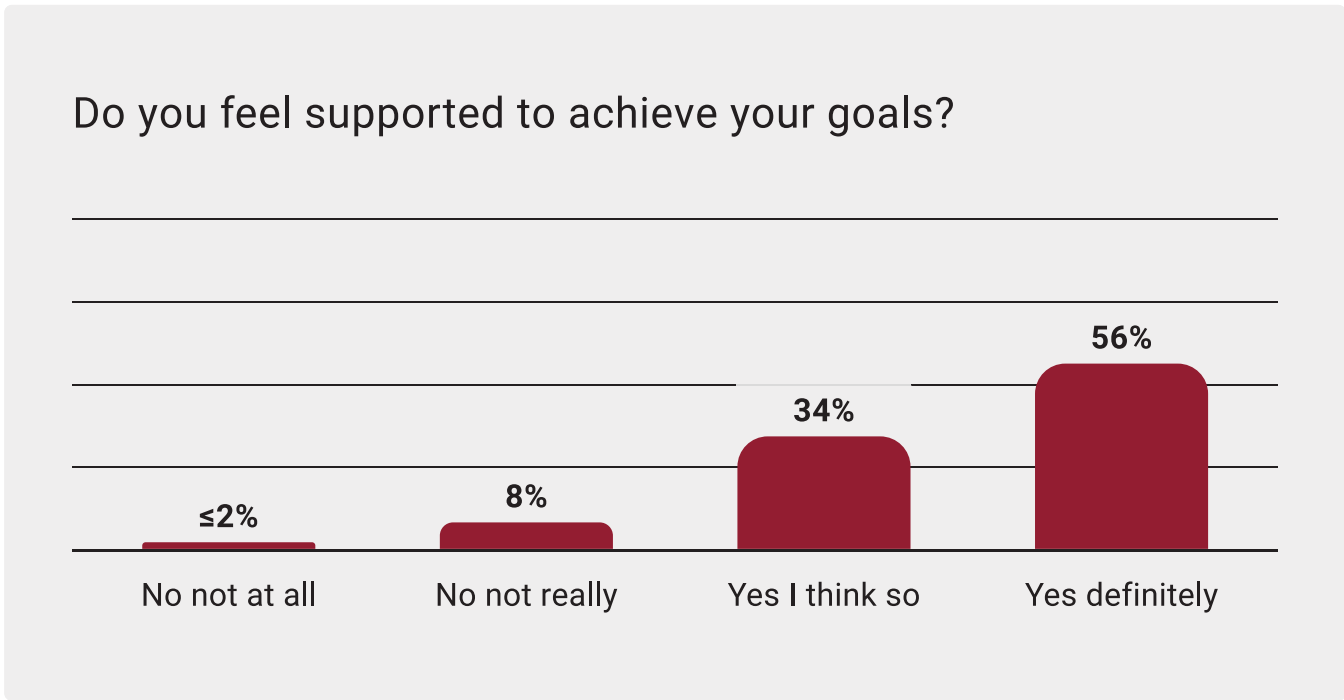


Figure 18. Responses to the question ‘Do you feel supported to achieve your goals?’.

Base: 876 responded

Around half (56%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ felt supported to achieve their goals (91% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

18 Views of Oranga Tamariki

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked, ‘Does Oranga Tamariki help make things better for you?’ to assess their overall satisfaction with the organisation (Figure 19).

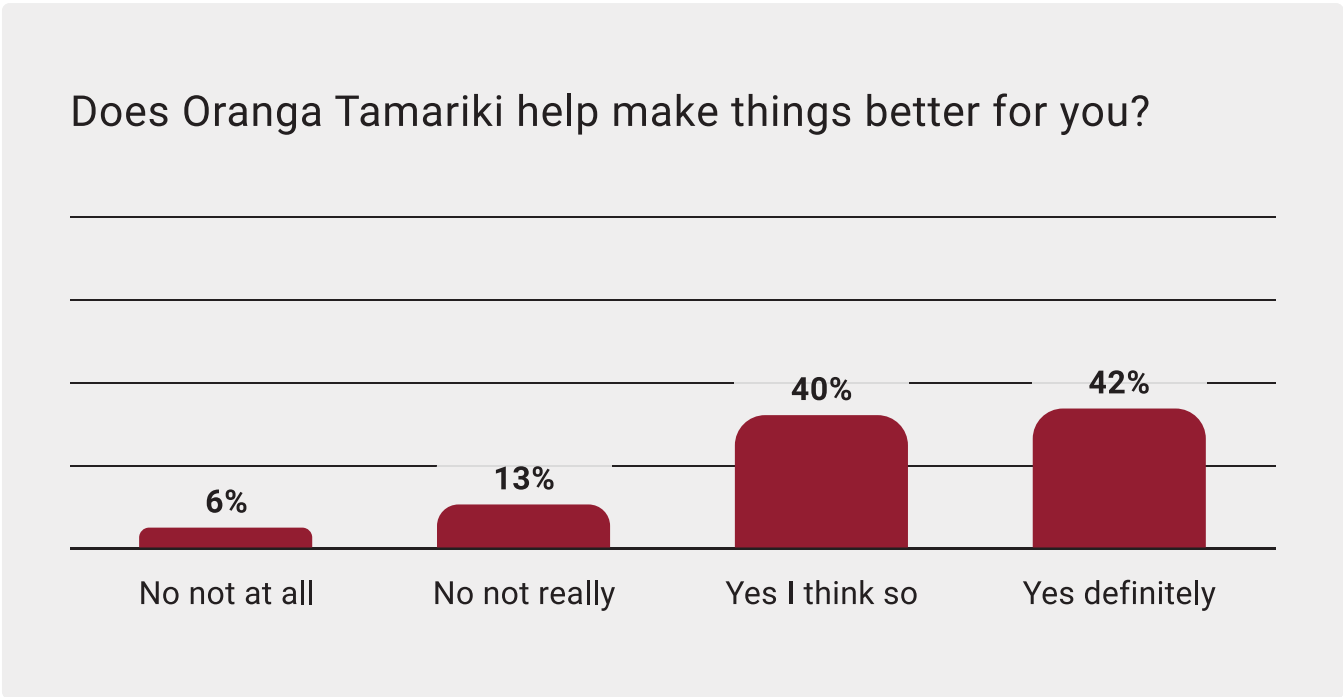


Figure 19. Responses to the question ‘Does Oranga Tamariki help make things better for you?’. Base: 855 responded



Tamariki and rangatahi who were more likely to say that Oranga Tamariki made things better for them included:

- 10- to 12-year-old tamariki (compared to 13- to 15-year-old and 16- to 18-year-old tamariki and rangatahi).
- Tamariki and rangatahi who identified as male (compared to female).
- Tamariki and rangatahi who identified as one or more Pacific ethnicities (compared to all others combined).

For a summary of subgroup differences see Section 4.



Some (42%) tamariki and rangatahi said that Oranga Tamariki ‘definitely’ helped to make things better for them (81% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).

19 20 Social worker relationships

Tamariki and rangatahi were asked two questions to assess their relationship with their social worker: ‘Does your social worker do what they say they will do?’ and ‘Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?’ (Figure 20 and Figure 21).

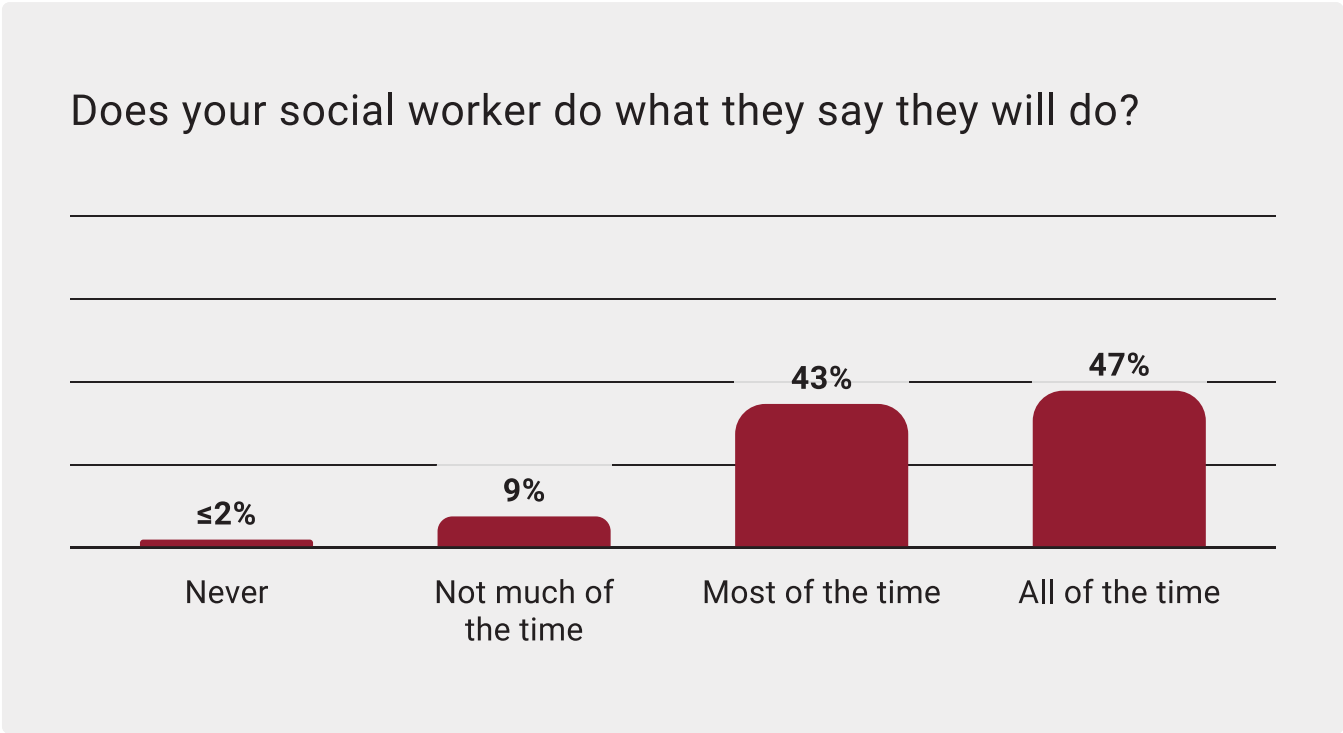


Figure 20. Responses to the question ‘Does your social worker do what they say they will do?’.
Base: 864 responded

Around half (47%) tamariki and rangatahi said their social worker did what they said they would do ‘all of the time’ (89% combined said ‘all of the time’ and ‘most of the time’).

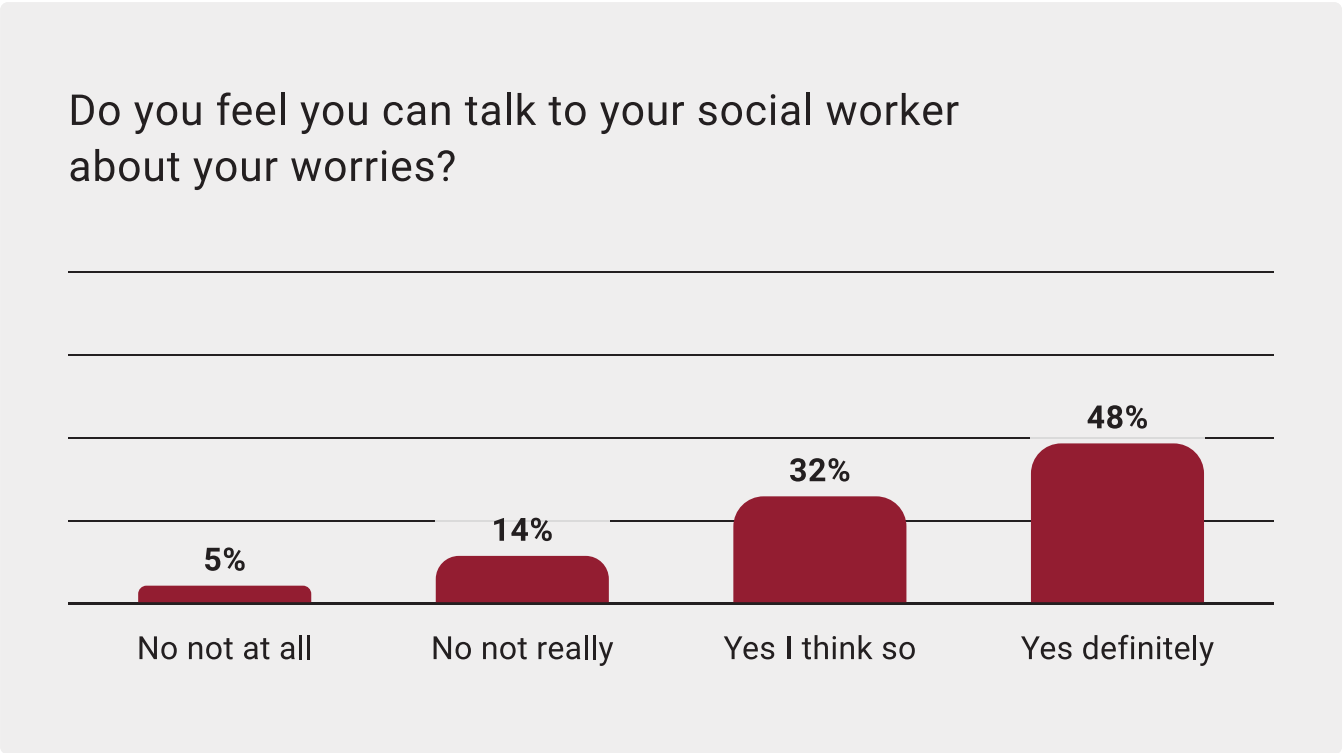


Figure 21. Responses to the question ‘Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?’.
Base: 852 responded

Around half (48%) tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ felt they could talk to their social worker about their worries (81% combined said ‘yes, I think so’ or ‘yes, definitely’).



Section 4

Subgroup differences and changes over time

Subgroup differences and changes over time

The following section summarises subgroup differences and looks at responses over different years of Te Tohu o te Ora. The most notable differences are described below as ‘more likely’ or ‘less likely.’

These differences are where age, gender, and ethnicity give a reasonable explanation of the differences in how tamariki and rangatahi responded to a question.

Table 1 presents the percentage of tamariki and rangatahi who selected ‘yes, definitely’ or ‘all of the time’ for each of the age, gender, and ethnicity subgroups. Differences for ethnicity subgroups are made by comparing question responses from each ethnicity subgroup against question responses from ‘all others’ who were not in that ethnicity group. See Section 5 for summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi Māori.

Table 1. Percentage of tamariki and rangatahi who selected ‘yes, definitely’ or ‘all of the time’ by age, gender, and ethnicity subgroups.*

Survey Questions	Age			Gender			Total ethnicity					
	10 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 18	Male	Female	Another gender†	Māori & Pacific	(all others)	Māori	(all others)	Pacific	(all others)
Do the adults you live with now look after you well?	82%	83%	74%	80%	82%	65%	85%	80%	82%	79%	83%	80%
Do the adults you live with now accept you for who you are?	74%	75%	76%	78%	72%	50%	67%	76%	76%	73%	72%	75%
Do you get to keep in touch with your birth family/whānau as much as you would like to?	44%	55%	57%	55%	49%	44%	53%	52%	55%	46%	51%	52%
Do you get to have a say in important decisions about your life?	28%	30%	50%	36%	32%	35%	32%	35%	36%	33%	35%	34%
Do you have somewhere you feel you belong?	67%	67%	63%	68%	64%	63%	70%	66%	69%	62%	67%	66%
Do you find it easy to express your identity?	45%	53%	59%	53%	51%	29%	49%	52%	51%	52%	58%	50%
Do you feel settled where you live now?	71%	69%	67%	71%	68%	44%	69%	69%	71%	67%	70%	69%
Do you feel safe where you live now?	79%	82%	79%	81%	80%	44%	78%	80%	82%	78%	80%	80%
Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)?	25%	23%	25%	24%	24%	12%	33%	23%	29%	16%	29%	23%

Note: Shading is used as a guide, where darker shading shows higher percentages and lighter shading shows lower percentages.

* These are the percentages used for subgroup analysis and may differ to other totals due to the exclusion of missing data to run statistical tests.

† ‘Another gender’ was not included in subgroup analyses due to small sample sizes.

Survey Questions	Age			Gender			Total ethnicity					
	10 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 18	Male	Female	Another gender [†]	Māori & Pacific	(all others)	Māori	(all others)	Pacific	(all others)
Do you have people in your life who love you no matter what?	81%	80%	71%	77%	80%	63%	79%	78%	79%	77%	82%	77%
Do you have a friend or friends you can talk to about anything?	69%	68%	67%	68%	69%	41%	68%	68%	70%	65%	68%	68%
Do you get the chance to learn about your culture?	44%	53%	50%	48%	52%	31%	61%	48%	58%	36%	59%	47%
Do you think you will have a good life when you get older?	40%	37%	37%	42%	34%	24%	32%	39%	39%	37%	35%	39%
Do you feel supported to achieve your goals?	60%	52%	58%	59%	55%	33%	55%	56%	58%	54%	58%	56%
Does Oranga Tamariki (OT) help to make things better for you?	51%	35%	40%	47%	39%	18%	47%	42%	42%	42%	52%	40%
Does your social worker do what they say they will do?	51%	42%	49%	50%	45%	25%	49%	47%	48%	45%	47%	47%
Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?	53%	45%	48%	52%	45%	41%	44%	49%	48%	49%	49%	48%

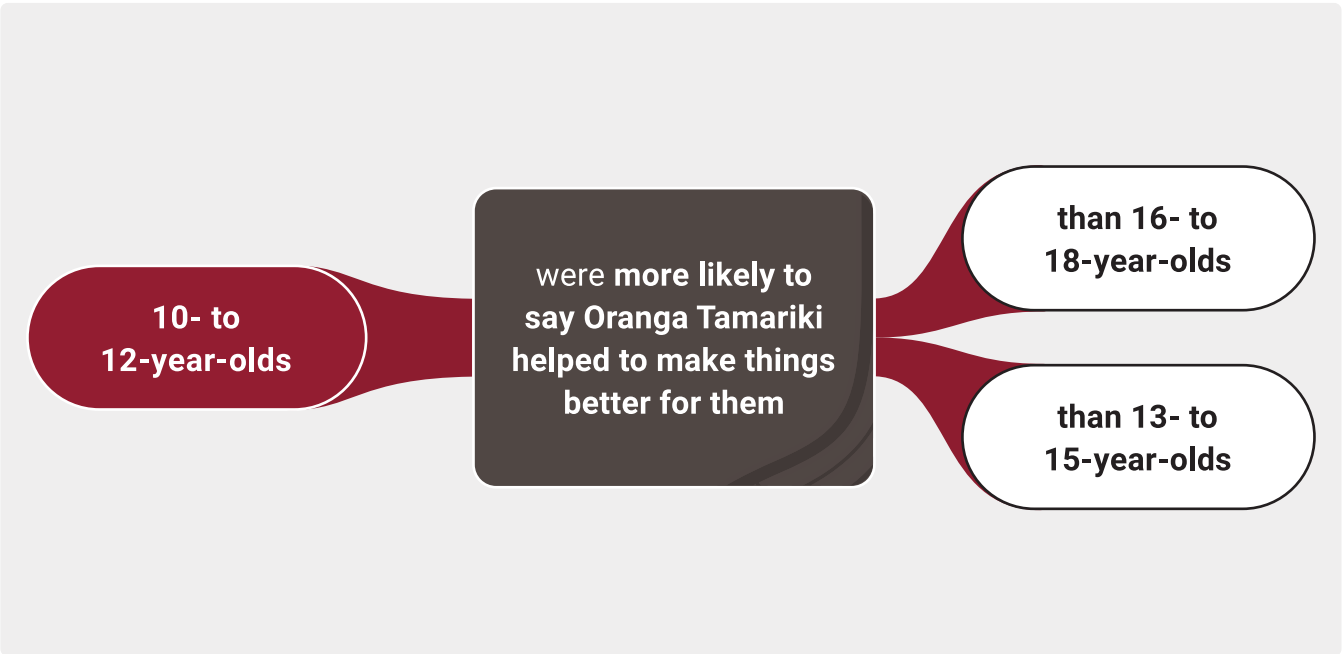
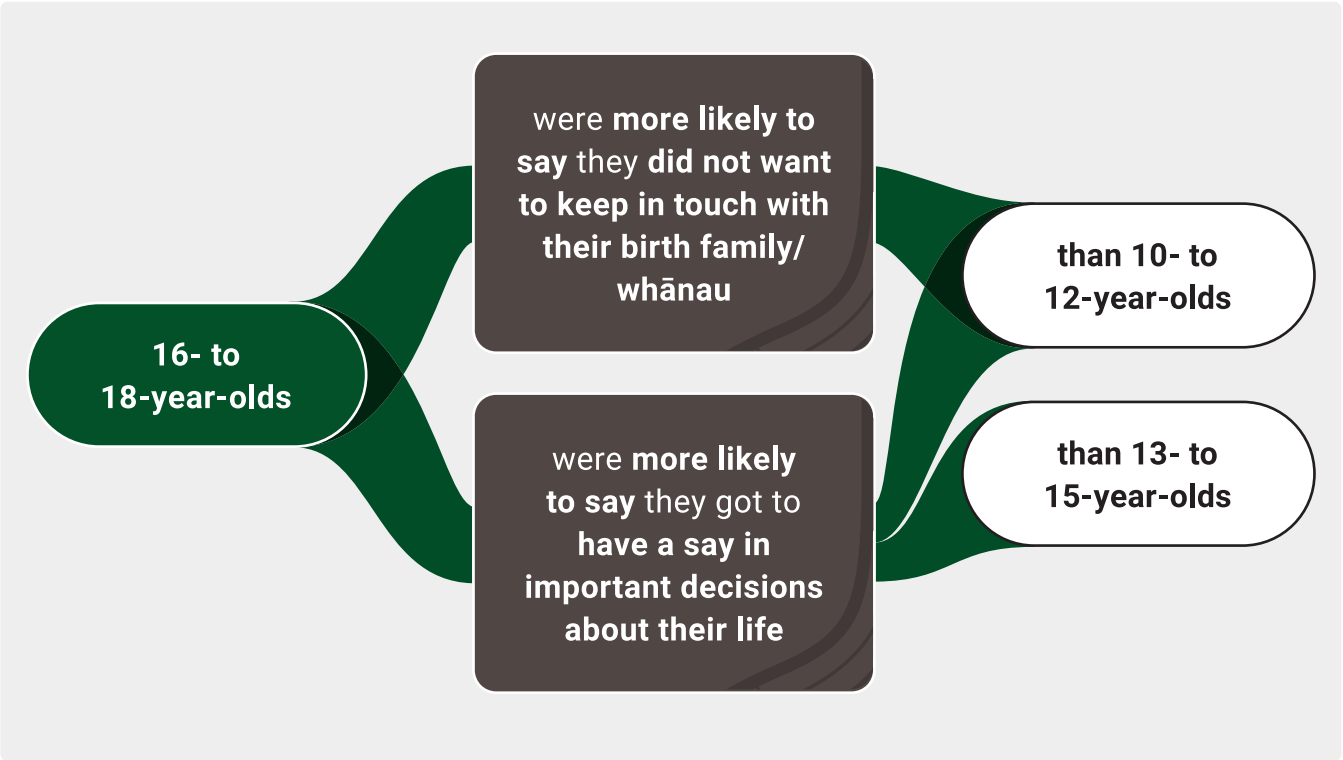
Note: Shading is used as a guide, where darker shading shows higher percentages and lighter shading shows lower percentages.

* These are the percentages used for subgroup analysis and may differ to other totals due to the exclusion of missing data to run statistical tests.

† 'Another gender' was not included in subgroup analyses due to small sample sizes.

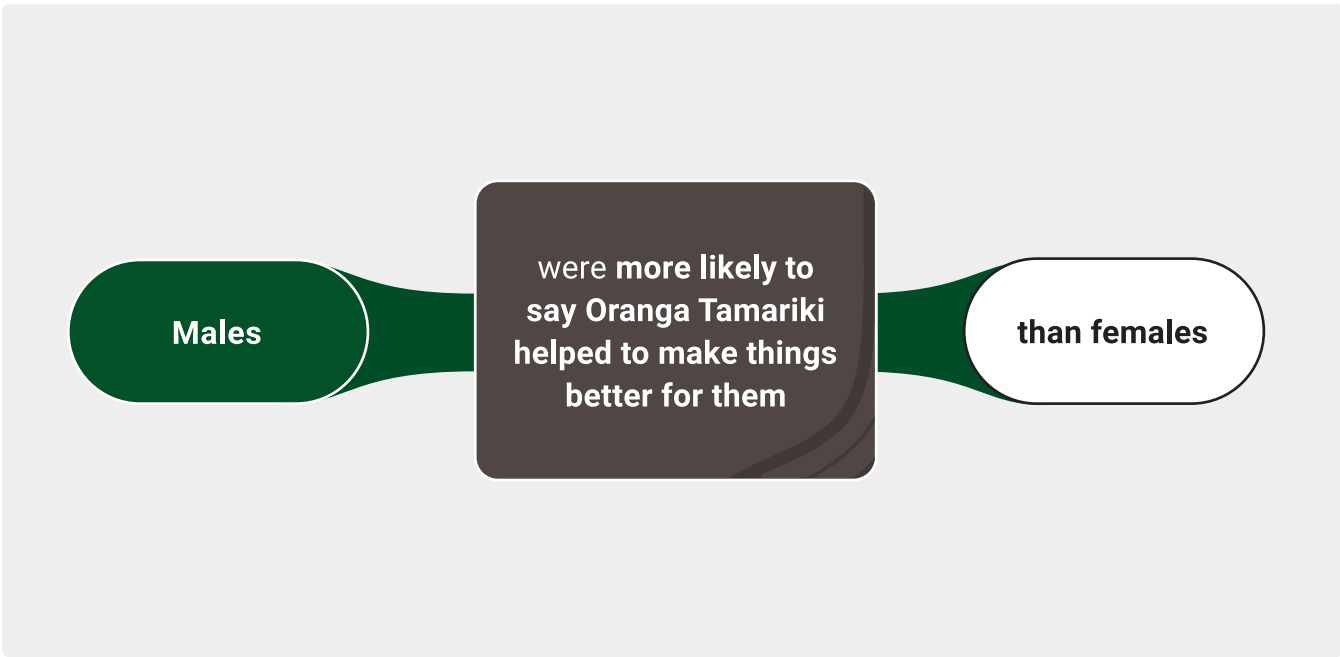
Summary of differences by age group

Significant differences by age groups were tested for tamariki and rangatahi. Generally, older tamariki were more likely to say that they got to keep in touch with birth family/whānau as much as they would like, did not want to keep in touch with their birth family/whānau, got to have a say in important decisions about their life, and got the chance to learn about their culture. However, younger tamariki were more likely to say that Oranga Tamariki helped to make things better for them.



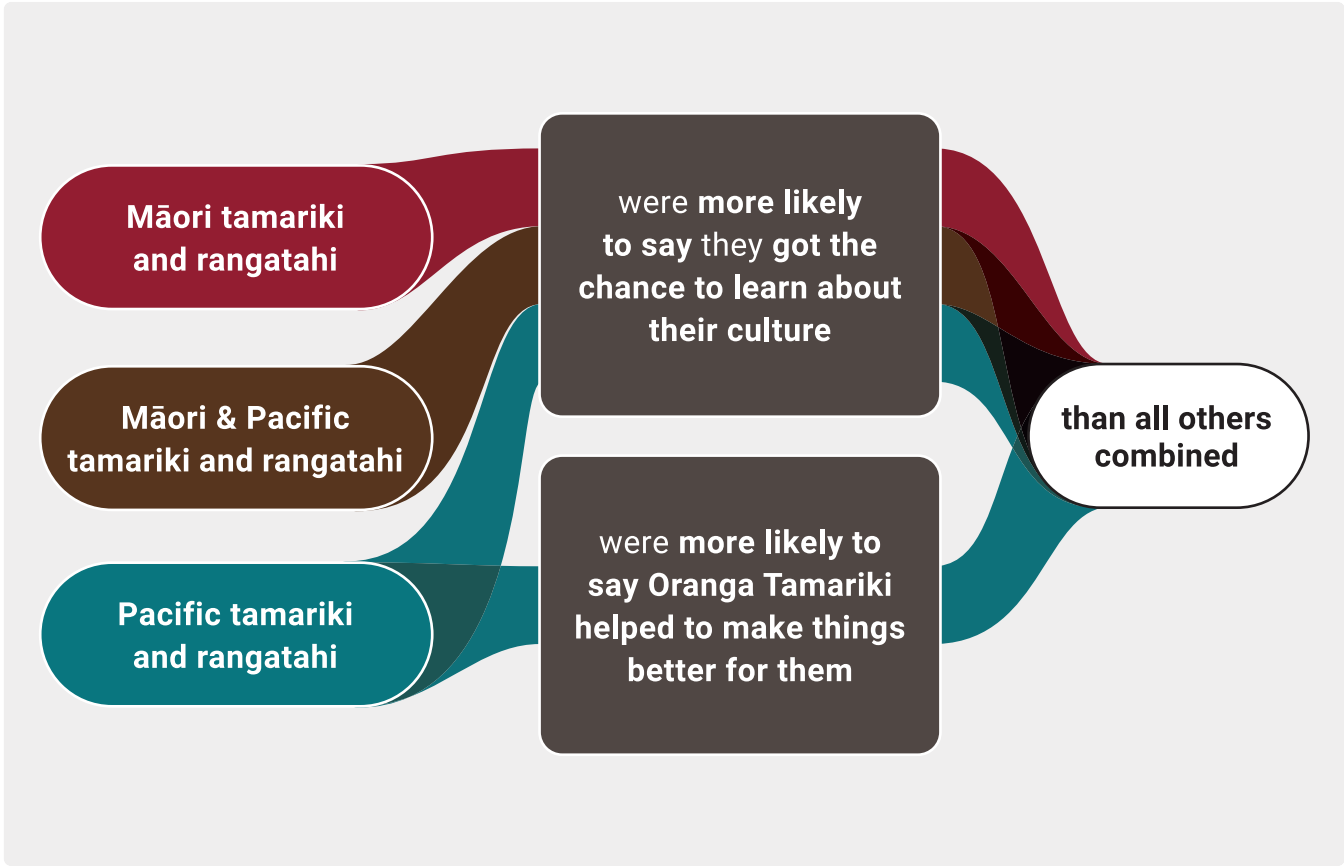
Summary of differences by gender

Significant differences by gender were tested for tamariki and rangatahi who identified as male compared to female. There were very similar findings with only one significant difference. Due to the small number of tamariki and rangatahi who identified as ‘another gender,’ significant differences for this group were unable to be tested. However, there is a clear trend where tamariki and rangatahi who identified as another gender tended to give more negative responses than tamariki and rangatahi who identified as male or female (see Table 1).



Summary of differences by ethnicity

Significant differences by total ethnicity groups were tested for tamariki and rangatahi. See Section 5 for summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi Māori and Table 1 for a summary of all subgroup differences.



Differences over time

Table 2 shows average scores for each experience question between year 1 (2019/2020), year 2 (2021/2022), and year 3 (2024/2025). Average scores are broadly similar across survey years with some questions continuing to have higher scores than others. However, there were some notable shifts between years for some of the questions.

Table 2. Average scores over time for Te Tohu o te Ora scale questions.

Survey Questions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Do the adults you live with now look after you well?	3.8	3.8	3.8
Do the adults you live with now accept you for who you are?	3.6	3.7	3.7
Do you get to keep in touch with your birth family/whānau as much as you would like to?	3.2	3.3	3.3
Do you get to have a say in important decisions about your life?	3.1	3.1	3.1
Do you have somewhere you feel you belong?	3.4	3.5	3.5
Do you find it easy to express your identity?	not asked	not asked	3.3
Do you feel settled where you live now?	3.5	3.6	3.5
Do you feel safe where you live now?	not asked	not asked	3.7
Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)?	2.7	2.6	2.7
Do you have people in your life who love you no matter what?	3.7	3.7	3.8
Do you have a friend or friends you can talk to about anything?	3.4	3.5	3.5

Note: Shading is used as a guide with darker shading for higher average scores and lighter shading for lower average scores.

Survey Questions	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Do you get the chance to learn about your culture?	3.1	3.2	3.2
Do you think you will have a good life when you get older?	3.4	3.4	3.4
Do you feel supported to achieve your goals?	not asked	not asked	3.5
Does Oranga Tamariki (OT) help to make things better for you?	3.2	3.2	3.2
Does your social worker do what they say they will do?	3.3	3.3	3.3
Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?	3.2	3.1	3.2

Note: Shading is used as a guide with darker shading for higher average scores and lighter shading for lower average scores.

Positive shifts

Between year 1 and year 3

- 'Do the adults you live with now accept you for who you are?' (Increase from 3.6 in year 1 to 3.7 in year 3).
- 'Do you get to keep in touch with your birth family/whānau as much as you would like to?' (Increase from 3.2 in year 1 to 3.3 in year 3).
- 'Do you have a friend or friends you can talk to about anything?' (Increase from 3.4 in year 1 to 3.5 in year 3).
- 'Do you get the chance to learn about your culture?' (Increase from 3.1 in year 1 to 3.2 in year 3).

Between year 2 and year 3

- 'Do you know your ancestry whakapapa)?' (Increase from 2.6 in year 2 to 2.7 in year 3).
- 'Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?' (Increase from 3.1 in year 2 to 3.2 in year 3).

Between year 1 and year 2

- 'Do you feel settled where you live now?' (Increase from 3.5 in year 1 to 3.6 in year 2).

Negative shifts

Between year 1 and year 2

- 'Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)?' (Decrease from 2.7 in year 1 to 2.6 in year 2).
- 'Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?' (Decrease from 3.2 in year 1 to 3.1 in year 2).

A stylized graphic of a tree with dark, curved lines representing branches and a trunk, set against a teal background.

Section 5

Summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi Māori

Summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi Māori

We have a responsibility to ensure tamariki, rangatahi and whānau Māori are supported to be heard.

This includes making sure that their views, experiences and perspectives influence decisions. It also means recognising their whakapapa and the whanaungatanga responsibilities of their family, whānau, hapū, iwi and family group (Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, s. 5.).

Table 3 provides a summary of the survey results for the 61% of tamariki and rangatahi who identified as Māori in year 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora.

Table 4 provides a summary of results for tamariki and rangatahi who identified as Māori across years 1, 2, and 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora.

Table 3. Summary of year 3 results for tamariki and rangatahi who identified as Māori.

Survey Questions	Yes, definitely	Yes, I think so	No, not really	No, not at all	Don't know / Other	Combined Yes
Do the adults you live with now accept you for who you are?	76%	20%	3%	0%	1%	96%
Do you get to keep in touch with your birth family/whānau as much as you would like to?	55%	24%	14%	3%	3%	79%
Do you have somewhere you feel you belong?	69%	23%	5%	3%	NA	92%
Do you find it easy to express your identity?	51%	34%	13%	2%	NA	85%
Do you feel settled where you live now?	69%	21%	9%	1%	NA	90%
Do you feel safe where you live now?	82%	15%	2%	1%	NA	96%
Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)?	30%	32%	27%	10%	1%	62%
Do you have people in your life who love you no matter what?	79%	20%	1%	0%	NA	98%
Do you have a friend or friends you can talk to about anything?	70%	20%	7%	3%	NA	91%
Do you get the chance to learn about your culture?	58%	25%	16%	2%	NA	83%
Do you think you will have a good life when you get older?	39%	30%	4%	1%	27%	69%
Do you feel supported to achieve your goals?	58%	33%	8%	1%	NA	91%
Does Oranga Tamariki (OT) help to make things better for you?	42%	39%	12%	6%	NA	82%
Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?	48%	33%	15%	5%	NA	81%
Survey Questions	All of the time	Most of the time	Not much of the time	Never	Don't know / Other	Combined Yes
Do the adults you live with now look after you well?	83%	15%	2%	0%	1%	97%
Do you get to have a say in important decisions about your life?	36%	45%	17%	2%	NA	81%
Does your social worker do what they say they will do?	48%	41%	9%	2%	NA	89%

Table 4. Summary of ‘yes definitely’ or ‘all of the time’ responses over time for tamariki and rangatahi who identified as Māori.

Survey Questions	‘Yes definitely’ responses		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Do the adults you live with now accept you for who you are?	69%	72%	76%
Do you get to keep in touch with your birth family/whānau as much as you would like to?	50%	52%	55%
Do you have somewhere you feel you belong?	61%	63%	69%
Do you find it easy to express your identity?	Not asked	Not asked	51%
Do you feel settled where you live now?	64%	74%	69%
Do you feel safe where you live now?	Not asked	Not asked	82%
Do you know your ancestry (whakapapa)?	30%	24%	30%
Do you have people in your life who love you no matter what?	78%	79%	79%
Do you have a friend or friends you can talk to about anything?	64%	65%	70%
Do you get the chance to learn about your culture?	49%	52%	58%
Do you think you will have a good life when you get older?	42%	38%	39%
Do you feel supported to achieve your goals?	Not asked	Not asked	58%
Does Oranga Tamariki (OT) help to make things better for you?	38%	42%	42%
Do you feel you can talk to your social worker about your worries?	43%	38%	48%
	‘All of the time’ responses		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Do the adults you live with now look after you well?	82%	83%	78%
Do you get to have a say in important decisions about your life?	33%	30%	36%
Does your social worker do what they say they will do?	41%	41%	48%

Section 6

Responses to open-ended questions

Responses to open-ended questions

For the first time, Te Tohu o te Ora included two open-ended questions that tamariki and rangatahi could answer in their own words.

Tamariki and rangatahi could expand on their response to the rating scale question, 'Do you feel safe where you live now?'.
Tamariki and rangatahi could expand on their response to the rating scale question, 'Do you feel safe where you live now?'.

They could also write their response to the question, 'Is there anything else you would like to tell us?'.

Open-ended responses to 'Do you feel safe where you live now?'



Approximately 20% of tamariki and rangatahi chose to expand on how they answered the safety rating scale question. Most responses expanded on what made them feel safe where they lived.

Tamariki and rangatahi told us they felt **safe** when they...



Felt protected, loved, cared for, looked after, supported and helped by their caregivers.



Had a strong connection with whānau.

For example, when they were in whānau placement, lived with their siblings, had positive relationships with whānau caregivers, or saw their birth whānau as much as they wanted to.



Felt stable or settled in their current placement.

For example, they had lived there for a long time, it felt like home, they had a good relationship with their caregiver, felt accepted for who they were, they lived close to and/or had good contact with whānau and friends.



Lived in an environment free from physical, verbal and emotional harm.

For example, they were not exposed to shouting and fighting where they lived.



They felt heard, and their caregivers upheld their right to participate in decision-making.



Were well-fed and warm.

Tamariki and rangatahi told us they felt unsafe when they...



Lived in an area that felt unsafe.



Did not feel stable or settled in their placement.

For example, having experiences of temporary housing, frequent changes to placements and not knowing their care plan.



Experienced mental health and wellbeing challenges that impacted how safe they felt.

For example, missing family, not feeling accepted and had challenging relationships with caregivers or whānau. A small number of tamariki and rangatahi identified significant mental health distress which negatively impacted on their safety.



Were exposed to physical, verbal, and/or emotional harm from people.

For example, experiencing harm from foster or birth whānau siblings, other rangatahi in group homes/residences, or adults such as neighbours or visitors to their placement.

Open-ended responses to
'Is there anything else
you would like to tell us?'



Approximately 20% of tamariki and rangatahi chose to respond. Overall, there was a relatively even mix of positive and negative comments from the responses provided.

Many tamariki and rangatahi talked about experiences with their social workers.

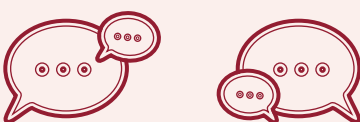
Positive experiences when social workers...



Helped tamariki and rangatahi to have a say in decisions about their lives.



Listened to tamariki and rangatahi.



Were responsive.

Negative experiences when social workers...



Did not let tamariki and rangatahi have a voice.



Made tamariki and rangatahi feel misunderstood.



Seemed too busy.



Had poor communication.

Some responses from tamariki and rangatahi related to upholding their **rights** within the care system.

Contact with whānau...



They wanted to spend more time with their birth whānau, particularly mum, dad and their siblings.



They wanted more connection to their whakapapa.



They wanted to have sleepovers with siblings.



They wanted to make phone calls to whānau.

Right to provide feedback or make a complaint...



They wanted to make a complaint about some aspect of their care experience.

Right to express identity...



They wanted their caregivers to respect all parts of their identity such as their whakapapa or sexual orientation.



They wanted to speak in their native language in their current placement.

Right to feel safe...



They felt unsafe when they experienced transience, a lack of support or physical, verbal or emotional harm in their current placement or residence.



They wanted to feel love, respect, support from caregivers and social workers to feel safe and settled in their current placement.

Other themes tamariki and rangatahi raised in their responses.

Specific requests for things they needed to help them feel more settled and well...



Additional learning support at school.



Their own laptop or mobile phone.



A copy of their care plan.



Their own bank accounts.



Pocket money.

Support with peer relationships...



Making friends in new placements or schools.



Maintaining connections with friends prior to their current placement.



More opportunities to connect with care-experienced young people.

Their experience of Oranga Tamariki processes...



How long it took to find emergency beds and longer-term placements.



How long it took to approve requests for things they needed.

Other themes tamariki and rangatahi raised in their responses.

Their views (both positive and negative) on agencies and organisations within the Children’s System...



VOYCE –
Whakarongo Mai.



New Zealand
Police.



Justice sector.



School.

Sharing more about themselves and the experiences of being in care...



Gratitude to caregivers
or Oranga Tamariki for
supporting their future
aspirations.



Positive experiences
about learning about
or participating in
faith-based activities.



Current hobbies
and interests.



Future goals
and aspirations.

A stylized, dark green graphic of a tree or branch structure is positioned on the left side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. It consists of several curved lines that form a branching pattern.

Section 7

Responding to voices of tamariki and rangatahi

Responding to voices of tamariki and rangatahi

Te Mātātaki 2021 priority areas

Te Tohu o Te Ora has been delivered three times: first in 2019/2020 (year 1), then 2021/2022 (year 2), and now 2024/2025 (year 3).

Te Mātātaki 2021 presented findings from year 1 of Te Tohu o te Ora. Year 1 results found that tamariki and rangatahi had a range of experiences in care, both positive and negative. Six priority areas for action were identified based on areas where tamariki and rangatahi reported poorer experiences. These were:

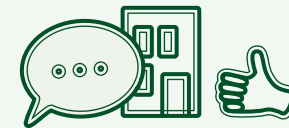
1. Supporting contact with whānau.
2. Enabling participation in decisions.
3. Strengthening relationships with social workers.
4. Providing opportunities to learn about whakapapa and culture.
5. Supporting tamariki and rangatahi to have confidence in the future.
6. Improving experiences for tamariki and rangatahi who identify as both Māori and Pacific.

The report highlighted initiatives and work programmes that were expected to improve tamariki and rangatahi experiences in each of these priority areas. These included the practice change programme for social workers and implementation of the Oranga Tamariki National Care Standards.

The six priority areas from year 1 of Te Tohu o Te Ora



Supporting contact with whānau.



Enabling participation in decisions.



Strengthening relationships with social workers.



Providing opportunities to learn about whakapapa and culture.



Supporting tamariki and rangatahi to have confidence in the future.



Improving experiences for tamariki and rangatahi who identify as both Māori and Pacific.

Te Mātātaki 2023 priority areas

Te Mātātaki 2023 presented findings from year 2 of Te Tohu o te Ora. Year 2 findings showed little overall improvement in tamariki and rangatahi experiences in care, and some declines. As a result, the six priority areas identified in Te Mātātaki 2021 were carried through to Te Mātātaki 2023. This report provided updates on initiatives and work programmes identified in the previous report and again described current and future initiatives that were expected to improve tamariki and rangatahi experiences across the six priority areas. This included individual initiatives, such as resources to support social workers’ engagement with tamariki and rangatahi, as well as initiatives related to the wider organisational direction, including activities under the Future Direction Action Plan.

The six priority areas from year 2 of Te Tohu o Te Ora, carried through from year 1



Supporting contact with whānau.



Enabling participation in decisions.



Strengthening relationships with social workers.



Providing opportunities to learn about whakapapa and culture.



Supporting tamariki and rangatahi to have confidence in the future.



Improving experiences for tamariki and rangatahi who identify as both Māori and Pacific.

Te Mātātaki 2026 priority areas for action

Te Mātātaki 2026 presents findings from year 3 of Te Tohu o te Ora. Overall, survey findings have remained stable over time with indications of positive shifts in three of the six priority areas identified in previous years: contact with birth whānau, relationships with social workers, and opportunities to learn about whakapapa and culture.

No significant change has been seen in relation to participation in decision making and confidence in the future, and there are mixed results on the experiences of tamariki and rangatahi who identify as both Māori and Pacific.

Reflecting these findings and following advice from the Oranga Tamariki Youth Advisory Group, *Te Mātātaki 2026* identifies four priority areas for action. These include areas both where tamariki and rangatahi experiences have not improved over time, as well as findings included in the survey for the first time in year 3.

For *Te Mātātaki 2026*, four priority areas for action have been identified:

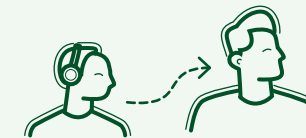
1. Supporting and enabling younger tamariki to participate in decisions about their lives.
2. Increasing awareness of and engagement with Transition Support Services to help tamariki and rangatahi feel more confident as they become adults.
3. Improving tamariki and rangatahi safety.
4. Strengthening and promoting channels for tamariki and rangatahi voice.

The four priority areas from year 3 of Te Tohu o Te Ora



Priority area 1

Supporting and enabling younger tamariki to participate in decisions about their lives.



Priority area 2

Increasing awareness of and engagement with Transition Support Services to help tamariki and rangatahi feel more confident as they become adults.



Priority area 3

Improving tamariki and rangatahi safety.



Priority area 4

Strengthening and promoting channels for tamariki and rangatahi voice.

Priority area 1



Supporting and enabling younger tamariki to participate in decisions about their lives.

This priority area responds to the Te Tohu o te Ora finding that younger tamariki and rangatahi (10- to 15-year-olds) were less likely than older rangatahi (16- to 18-year-olds) to report that they get to have a say in important decisions about their lives.

Do you get to have a say in important decisions about your life?

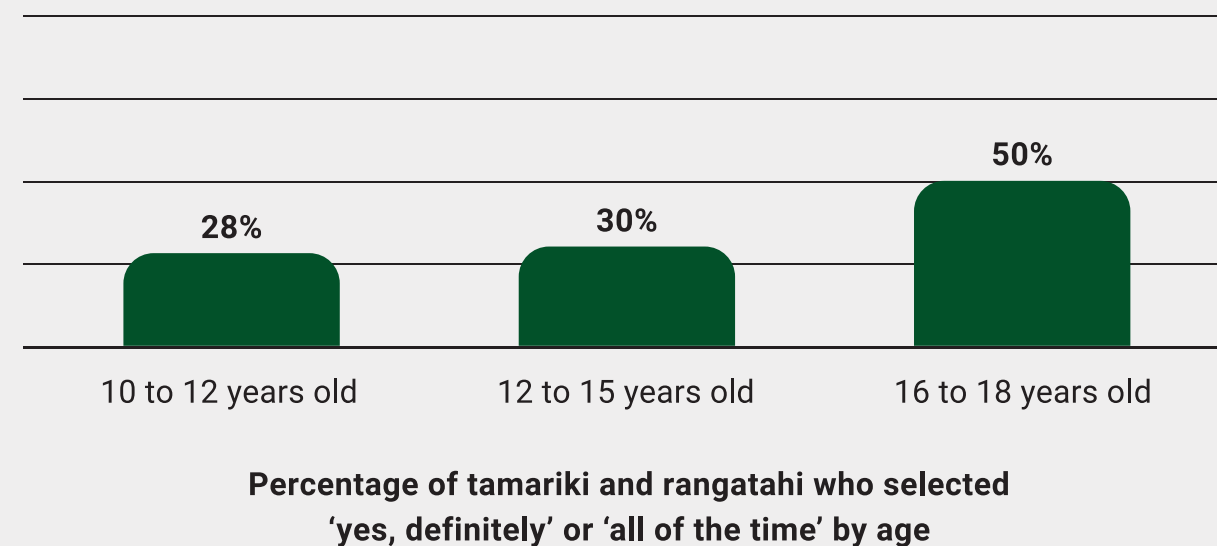
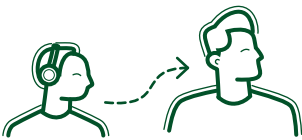


Figure 22. Percentage of tamariki and rangatahi who selected 'yes, definitely' or 'all of the time' by age.

What is Oranga Tamariki doing to improve tamariki and rangatahi experiences in this area?

- Ongoing training and support for social workers to embed the Oranga Tamariki Practice Approach. This approach has a focus on social worker practice that supports tamariki and rangatahi to be involved in decisions about their lives.
- Introducing new planning tools that will improve how we understand and record tamariki and rangatahi care needs, including how they want to be involved in decisions.

Priority area 2



Increasing awareness of and engagement with Transition Support Services to help tamariki and rangatahi feel more confident as they become adults.

This priority area responds to the Te Tohu o te Ora finding that only 38% of tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ think they will have a good life when they get older.

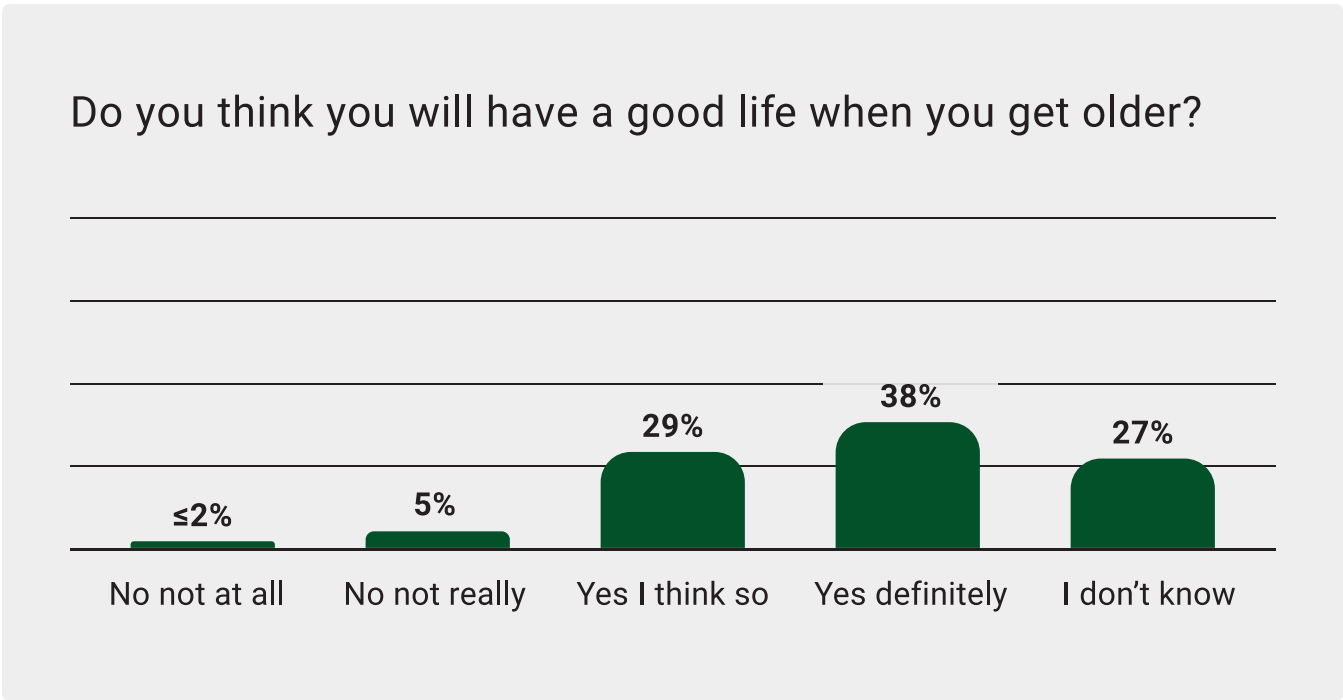


Figure 23. Responses to the question ‘Do you think you will have a good life when you get older?’.

What is Oranga Tamariki doing to improve tamariki and rangatahi experiences in this area?

- Ongoing training and support for social workers to plan for rangatahi transitions to adulthood, including annual practice prompt emails to social workers on their obligations under the Care Standards to ensure rangatahi approaching the end of care are informed of the service.
- Sending letters to eligible rangatahi to inform them of their transition to adulthood support entitlements and how to access support.
- Updating online information about transition support rights and entitlements. This includes making the information and resources about Transition Support Services available in a range of accessible formats.
- Ensuring new planning tools include a specific process for recording rangatahi needs as they exit care and enter adulthood.
- Developing new ways of working with Pacific service providers to improve transition to adulthood planning for Pacific rangatahi.

Priority area 3



Improving tamariki and rangatahi safety.

This priority area responds to the Te Tohu o te Ora finding that not all tamariki and rangatahi said they ‘definitely’ felt safe where they lived.

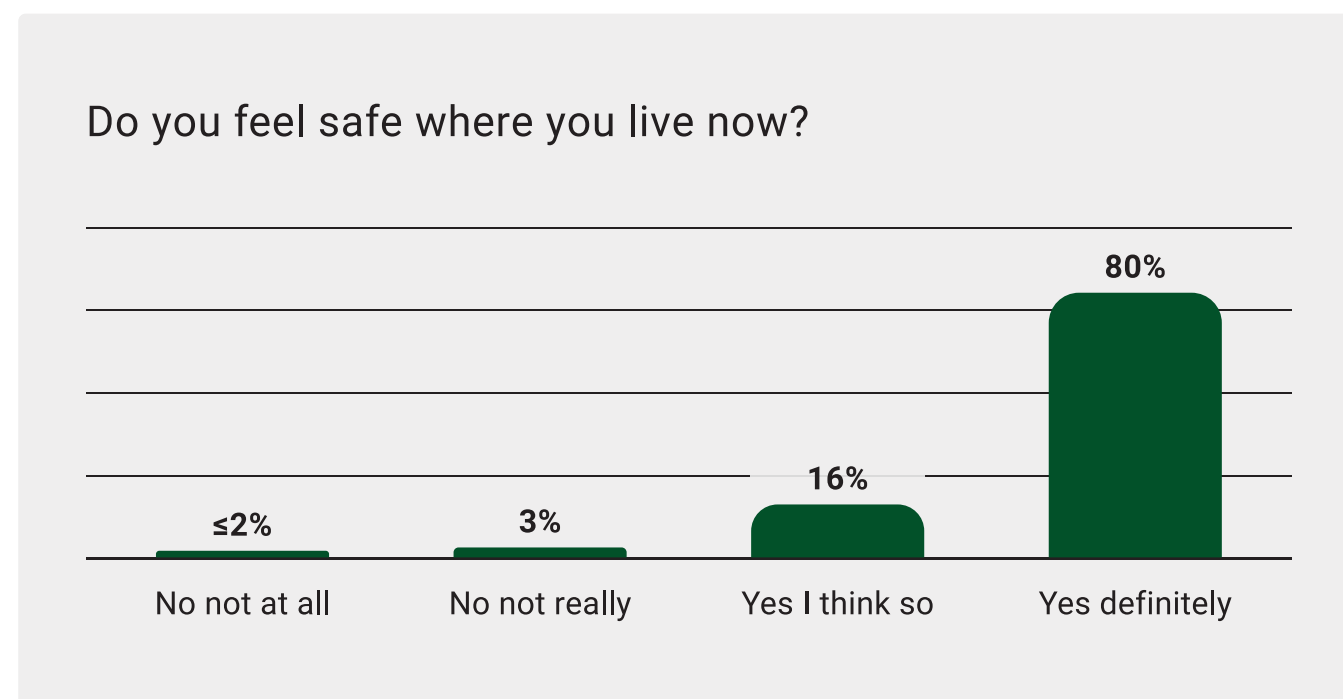


Figure 24. Responses to the question ‘Do you feel safe where you live now?’.

What is Oranga Tamariki doing to improve tamariki and rangatahi experiences in this area?

- Delivering the multi-year Integrated Safe Care Response programme that is focused on ensuring all tamariki and rangatahi will be safe, supported and receive tailored care, no matter where they are in the system. It will deliver training across caregivers and care settings, alongside pilot programmes to test new ways of delivering respite care and support for tamariki and rangatahi to remain at, or return, home safely.
- Introducing a new, in-person multi-agency “Hub” to bring together key agencies across the Children’s System to quickly share information and assess a child’s safety and support needs within the initial 48-hour assessment period after a sole parent or carer is remanded in custody or sentenced to a term of imprisonment.
- Launching a more accessible Report of Concern process for whānau, professionals and members of the public. This enables more efficient and effective response to safety and wellbeing concerns about tamariki and rangatahi.
- Strengthening understanding of disabled tamariki and rangatahi in care so that assessment reports reflect their care and support needs. This ensures that caregivers are informed of their needs and that the right supports are put in place.
- Rolling out mandatory reporting for specified roles, with clear guidance on what, when, and how to report, to improve the accuracy and quality of Reports of Concern about tamariki, rangatahi, and whānau, and enable more effective responses from Oranga Tamariki. This will be supported by mandatory training for five hundred core children’s workers from Oranga Tamariki, Health New Zealand, New Zealand Police, Ministry of Social Development and Department of Corrections, to help those working with children identify and respond to signs of abuse. These changes will be introduced over the next two to three years.

Priority area 4



Strengthening and promoting channels for tamariki and rangatahi voice.

This priority area responds to the observation that some tamariki and rangatahi used Te Tohu o te Ora as a channel to let Oranga Tamariki know they were feeling unsafe, to make specific requests for things they need to help them feel more settled and well, and as an avenue to tell Oranga Tamariki more about themselves. This suggests that tamariki and rangatahi would benefit from additional channels to express their needs and perspectives, and have their voices heard.

What is Oranga Tamariki doing to improve tamariki and rangatahi experiences in this area?

- Increasing frequency of survey opportunities for tamariki and rangatahi to share their perspectives and experiences with Oranga Tamariki, including a dedicated survey for those transitioning out of care.
- Increasing the range of ways that tamariki and rangatahi in residences can raise concerns, give feedback and reach out for advocacy support.
- Exploring different ways for rangatahi to engage with the Transition Assistance Helpline (for example, through SMS, social messaging, and web chat options) to better reflect how young people like to communicate.
- Strengthening system-level technology and tools to improve how tamariki and rangatahi voices are recorded in Oranga Tamariki care planning processes and systems.
- Ongoing training and support for social workers to embed the Oranga Tamariki Practice Approach, recognising social workers are the primary channel through which tamariki and rangatahi let Oranga Tamariki know that they are feeling unsafe, and what they need or want to feel settled and well.
- Increasing promotion of VOYCE–Whakarongo Mai to strengthen awareness of this independent advocacy service among tamariki and rangatahi, as well as those who support them, including whānau, caregivers and kaimahi.

Voices of tamariki and rangatahi

The voices of tamariki and rangatahi are taonga, including those heard through Te Tohu o te Ora.

Oranga Tamariki acknowledges the 938 tamariki and rangatahi who chose to take part in the third Te Tohu o te Ora survey, as well as those who were unable or chose not to participate.

Oranga Tamariki hears these voices and is committed to acting on what we have heard, to improve the experiences that tamariki and rangatahi have with Oranga Tamariki and its services.

Te Tohu o te Ora will continue to be undertaken on a regular basis to enable us to hear directly from tamariki and rangatahi about their experiences in care, to inform the change and improvement that is required, and to monitor and report on what has changed.



References

References

Oranga Tamariki Act 1989, s. 5. <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/24/en/latest/#DLM147088>

Oranga Tamariki Voices of Children and Young People Team. (2021a). *Te Mātātaki 2021*. Wellington, New Zealand: Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children. <https://orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Te-Mātātaki/Te-Mātātaki-Report-2021.pdf>

Oranga Tamariki Voices of Children and Young People Team. (2021b). *Te Tohu o te Ora Methodology Report 2019/2020*. Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children. <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Te-Matataki/Te-Matataki-Methodology-Report-2021.pdf>

Oranga Tamariki Voices of Children and Young People Team. (2023). *Te Mātātaki 2023*. Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children. https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Research/Latest-research/Te-Matataki-2023/Te-Matataki-2023_FINAL.pdf

Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children. (2025). *Annual Report 2024/25 Pūrongo Ā Tau 2024/25*. <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/About-us/Corporate-reports/Annual-Report/Annual-Report-2024-2025.pdf>

For more information

Oranga Tamariki Voices Insights and Engagement team
voices@ot.govt.nz

