WHEN WE VISIT

Who we are | What we do | What happens next
ABOUT US

All children belong in safe, stable and loving families.

At the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki, we want to work with you to help protect, support and care for your children.

Together we can help our children be:

Safe from harm and well cared for

Strong as part of a loving family and whānau

Thrive by helping your child be the best they can be.

Contact the Ministry at
0508 326 459
www.mvcot.govt.nz
WHY ARE WE WORKING WITH YOU?

If we’ve come to see you it is usually because someone has told us they are concerned about your child.

We’ll talk through these worries with you, listen to you and see if there is anything we need to do to support your family.

What happens next?

After we visit you, there may not be anything more the social worker can assist with, and we may not need to talk to you again. If we do work with you further we may:

– talk to other people who know you or your child, to get more information
– put you in touch with groups in the community that can support you
– work further with you to strengthen your family
– take some action to keep your children safe.

Who can you talk to?

If you’ve got questions, feel worried, unsure about what’s happening or want someone else to talk to, please call our 24-hour helpline for parents: 0508 275 293.
WHO WE ARE

Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki is the government agency that helps children and young people in New Zealand be safe and protected from harm.

If someone tells us they are worried about your child, by law we have to follow it up. We may talk to you and other people who know you and your child.
The law tells us that we have to think about what is best for your child. It is almost always best for your child to be with you or your family and whānau. We will work with you so that your child will be safe and strong in your family, and will include you in making decisions about your child whenever possible.

In serious cases, where a child is in danger of harm, they may not be able to stay at home. The length of time a child is away from home depends on how serious the situation is and what changes need to be made to keep them safe.

The law guides us on what needs to happen to keep children safe.

**How we work with families:**

- We put families in touch with community groups that can support them and their children.
- We work with families to help with any concerns and build on their strengths, so that their children can be safe.
- If a child is in danger at home, we’ll see if they have family they can stay with, or we’ll find foster parents for them who can provide a safe place for them to stay.
YOUR SOCIAL WORKER

You’ve probably just had a visit from a social worker. They are trained to help you with family problems, and will work with you to keep your children safe and well cared for.

The social worker will talk to you about:

– why we are visiting you
– any worries you have about your family
– what your family’s strengths are
– how we can help to keep your child safe and well cared for.

The social worker is there to help, so talk to them about any worries, or if you would like some advice.
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If you’ve talked to us for the first time, you might be wondering what is going to happen next.

Your family may not need any further help and we won’t need to talk to you again. If more is needed to make sure your children are safe, here’s what we’ll do:

Gathering information

We will spend time getting more information and talking to you, your children and other people so we can work out your family’s needs, strengths and any support that can help your family.

We’ll talk to people who know your family, such as:

- wider family members
- your child’s school or pre-school
- your family doctor
- your child’s Plunket nurse or Wellchild provider
- other professionals who know your family.

We will keep your information private and only share it with people who need to know, or have a right to know.

The social worker will ask you who you think we should talk to. You can keep in touch with the social worker, talk through any concerns and ask any questions you might have.
Gathering information can take time so we may be involved with your family for some months, depending on how old your child is and how serious the concerns for their safety are.

**Making decisions**

When the social worker has finished gathering information they will either close your case and nothing more needs to be done, or they will keep working with you to help your family be strong.

The social worker might call a meeting to make decisions about what’s best for your child.

The meeting could include you, your child, your family, whānau and other professionals who know you.

We will talk to you about decisions and let you know what’s happening in person or over the phone, or you can ask for a letter.

**How long will a social worker be in my life?**

This depends on how serious the concerns are and what needs to be done to keep your child safe.

It may just take one visit, or they may keep in touch for a longer time.

Remember, the social worker is there to help your child be safe – so do talk to them about any worries you have.
WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US

When we work with you, you can expect that we will:

— help your child be safe and well cared for

— involve you in the planning and decision making about your child

— keep your information private and only share it with people who need to know, or have a right to know

— be polite and professional

— work with your wider family and whānau to help make decisions about your child

— give you information in a way you understand

— respond to you as quickly as we can

— tell you who may be able to help if we can’t, and help you get in touch with them

— always try to answer your questions. If we’re not able to give you the information you want, we will always explain why.
YOUR RIGHTS

— You have the right to clear and accurate information about the concerns the Ministry has.

— You can have support people when we meet with you, as long as this is safe for everyone.

— You can ask for meetings to be away from your home if you wish.

— You can talk to your social worker about any concerns, or you can call the parents’ helpline anytime on 0508 275 293.

— If you’re not happy with how things are going, or you want to talk to someone other than the Ministry, you can call a community agency such as the Citizen’s Advice Bureau on 0800 FOR CAB (0800 367 222), or you can contact a lawyer if you want legal advice.

— You can request a copy of your child’s file at any time by calling 0508 326 459.

The Official Information Act guides us on what can and can’t be released to you. Sometimes that means parts of the file will not be given to you, for example, sometimes the name of the person who contacted us will be withheld.
WHO CAN I TALK TO?

The social worker is there for you to speak to, so please feel free to given them a call.

My social worker:
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________

If you would like to talk to someone else about any questions or worries you have, call our parents’ helpline.
You will be able to talk to trained social workers who can give you advice or put you in touch with people that can help:
0508 275 293