

EVIDENCE CENTRE
TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA

Appendix One:
Understanding children with
disabilities in the Family
Start programme

September 2019



**ORANGA
TAMARIKI**
Ministry for Children

EVIDENCE CENTRE

TE POKAPŪ TAUNAKITANGA

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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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APPENDIX 1: FAMILY START

Family Start is an intensive home-visiting programme for pregnant mothers and families with young children. Family Start workers:

- promote breastfeeding
- reduce home hazards
- connect infants to immunisation and primary health services
- promote children’s participation in early childhood education
- connect families to services that could help address family violence, substance abuse, mental health issues and other challenges they face
- provide at-risk families with direct support in relation to parenting, child-rearing and life skills, to address the difficulties and stresses faced by children from severely disadvantaged home environments and reduce downstream childhood and adolescent problems.

Family Start workers deliver services at varying levels of intensity depending on families’ needs, and visits are weekly or fortnightly. A central component is the delivery of a child development and parent education curriculum that aims to improve parenting capabilities and practice.

Contracted providers deliver the Family Start programme to ensure that services are responsive to each community. Providers include iwi, Pacific, faith-based and other non-government organisations.

Families are referred by a range of individuals and agencies, including midwives, Well Child/Tamariki Ora nurses, Oranga Tamariki and New Zealand Police. Families can also self-refer. Children are generally enrolled either before birth or in their first year and can remain in the programme until their families’ graduate or the children reach school age.

Family Start was introduced at three sites in 1998 and rapidly expanded in 1999 and 2000 to 13 more sites. Between 2005 and 2007 it was enhanced and expanded to encompass 14 new areas.

