



**ORANGA
TAMARIKI**
Ministry for Children

New Zealand Government

Functional Family Therapy

Service Specification

Publication details

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1 About this service specification

1.1 Who is this service specification for?

This service specification is for service delivery partners (partners), partnered with Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), to provide Functional Family Therapy (FFT). This includes all adaptations of the therapy within the wider service delivery context (eg, Services for Children and Families, Youth Justice, Transition Services, Care Services).

1.2 What is the purpose of this service specification?

This service specification forms part of the Outcome Agreement with Oranga Tamariki. It sets out the shared responsibilities and minimum requirements for Functional Family Therapy and each adaptation. In practice, Oranga Tamariki and the partners will work closely together to fulfil their responsibilities.

The ways that partners meet these requirements will depend on their philosophy, their unique approach as a service delivery partner, and the needs of the tamariki, rangatahi, whānau and the families they support.

1.3 Definitions

Definitions for some of the key terms used in this document are as follows.

Underlined phrases are hyperlinked.

Phrase	Definition
accreditation	Te Kāhui Kāhu (previously known as Social Services Accreditation, or SSA) ensures that providers have the capability and capacity to deliver quality social services to communities. This is achieved by ensuring providers meet a consistent set of standards that meet legislative and policy requirements. 'Accreditation' and 'Approval' (as stipulated under the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989) mean the same and may be used interchangeably
Act (the)	The <u>Oranga Tamariki Act 1989</u>
FFT LLC	The Functional Family Therapy (FFT) model's training and dissemination organisation. Formed in 1998, to lead the systematic replication of FFT into community agencies and to assist in ongoing scientific inquiry into the family counselling model
harm	Ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation. This includes, but is not limited to, actions or omissions that cause emotional, physical or sexual harm, or sexual harassment

Oranga Tamariki	Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children
Outcome Agreement	The documentation that defines the contract entered into by the service delivery partner and Oranga Tamariki for these services
partners	Organisations that Oranga Tamariki proposes to contract with or is contracted with to provide the services. They also will be licenced or will become licenced to deliver FFT in New Zealand
rangatahi	Teenager/s or young adult/s (aged 14 or over, usually under 18). Refers to young people of all cultures, unless otherwise specified
referrer	The source of the original referral (eg, Oranga Tamariki, New Zealand Police, Ara Poutama Aotearoa—Department of Corrections, community)
section 7AA	The provision within the Act, introduced on 1st July 2019 and specifically about tamariki Māori, which sets out the duties of Oranga Tamariki in relation to Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi. Our policies and practices must have the objective of reducing disparities by setting measurable outcomes for tamariki Māori, and we report annually and publicly on these measures and their impacts in improving outcomes for tamariki Māori. Our policies, practices and services have regard to mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga. We develop strategic partnerships with iwi and Māori organisations, including iwi authorities
service specifications	The document that defines the services to be provided under the relevant Outcome Agreement, and the respective roles and responsibilities
tamaiti or tamariki	Child or children. Refers to children (under the age of 14) of all cultures, unless otherwise specified. Can also be used to include teenagers up to the age of 18. To refer specifically to an older teenager or young adult, see “rangatahi”
therapist	Qualified FFT worker who delivers interventions and works with tamariki, rangatahi and whānau to achieve the FFT outcomes
whānau or family	Extended family groups. This can include whānau, who are connected to the whānau through legally recognised relationships (eg, partnership relationships), or those with whom tamariki are psychologically attached to, to the point where they are considered to be like family

2 About Functional Family Therapy

2.1 What is Functional Family Therapy?

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) was founded in the 1970s by Dr James F. Alexander, in the United States. The FFT model has received international recognition for its outcomes in supporting tamariki, rangatahi and whānau to build hope and reduce conflict, leading to a reduction in harmful behaviours such as offending, substance abuse and violence.

FFT is a short-term, strength-based model built on acceptance and respect within and for the whānau or family unit. FFT starts with the foundation of a trusting relationship with the therapist who works with the whānau to help them identify how their interactions can affect behaviour, and to improve their communication and conflict management skills. Strategies are also used to help whānau understand and harness their existing strengths, enabling them to be more resilient and successful.

At its core is the focus on assessment and intervention to address risk and protective factors within and outside of the whānau or family, that impact tamariki and rangatahi, and their adaptive development.

2.2 How does Functional Family Therapy work?

FFT focuses on celebrating strengths and successes. Therapists establish firm relationships with the whānau or family, built on trust and respect. FFT is most effective when all members of the household (and significant extended whānau or family members) take part.

There are five overarching elements of FFT:

- Engagement: building a trusting relationship between the whānau or family and therapist
- Motivation: working to reduce conflict and to increase hope and a positive whānau or family environment
- Relational assessments: identifying how whānau or family interactions can affect behaviour
- Behaviour change: working to improve communication and conflict management skills
- Generalisation: extending changes into other areas, such as how the whānau or family engage with their support network (eg, extended whānau, teachers, probation officers and sports coaches)

FFT has short-term goals and milestones based on the above, against which progress is measured. This enables whānau or family to see their own progress, which can have a motivating effect when they feel the added pressures of life.

FFT is delivered by highly trained therapists, at an average rate of 12 to 14 sessions over three to five months. These timeframes account for the added time that can be taken to develop and maintain relationships in Aotearoa, and allow for progress to be fluid. This allows the tamariki and whānau or family to reinforce stages where they may need a bit more time and engagement to achieve successfully.



At the successful completion of FFT, the tamariki and whānau or family may later request additional “top up” sessions, which can be arranged case-by-case with the service delivery partner. FFT can be facilitated in a variety of settings including the whānau or family home or other community venues identified as appropriate by the whānau or family and the FFT therapist.

2.3 Functional Family Therapy and adaptations

FFT and its adaptations are whānau-based interventions where tamariki or rangatahi have been referred with their whānau as a result of behavioural or emotional challenges within the tamariki or rangatahi, rangatahi justice involvement, and/or for those whānau where parental behaviour is causing concern about the care and protection of tamariki or rangatahi.

Standard FFT focuses on addressing tamariki/rangatahi behaviour that may occur in the context of stable parent behaviour. The primary age group for the referred rangatahi for standard FFT is 12 to 18 years.

FFT adaptations

Adaptations of FFT have been developed to address the unique circumstances and complexities associated with whānau or family. There are currently two adaptations of FFT being delivered in New Zealand.

- FFT-Child welfare (FFT-CW): focuses primarily on the behaviour of the caregivers that is causing concern for the wellbeing of tamariki/rangatahi (eg, potential care and protection concerns). The primary age group for the referred rangatahi for this adaptation is 0 to 18 years
- Pae Whakatupuranga – FFT-Cross Generations: brings together standard FFT, FFT-CW, and other FFT approaches for emerging adults (ages 18–24 where rangatahi have more autonomy), to address inter-generational challenging behaviours. The primary age group for the referred rangatahi for this adaptation is 0 to 24 years

Adaptations are not interchangeable. They provide the therapists with unique approaches to delivery and ensure a more targeted set of skills when working with tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family.

In this service specification, mention of FFT includes all adaptations unless otherwise stated. While there are only two adaptations referenced here and delivered in New Zealand at the time of publication, additional adaptations of FFT may be used to address community needs as they evolve and are understood, in agreement with FFT LLC.

2.4 Cultural safety

FFT must be delivered in a way that is evidenced as culturally safe, including being responsive to the uniqueness of Māori.

It is very important to involve the whānau, hapū, iwi and family in supporting all tamariki and rangatahi. Section 7AA requires services for tamariki Māori to have regard to mana tamaiti, whakapapa and whanaungatanga.

With regards to the FFT therapists, “cultural safety” means that those professionals must examine themselves and the potential impact of their own culture on their interactions with the individuals concerned. This is so that they can provide support in a way that is appropriate to the specific identities of each tamaiti, rangatahi, and whānau or family member, and is not based on assumptions.

When considering a person’s “culture”, matters of ethnicity and culture are essential, but also the many other elements that make up identity. Individuals might self-identify with a culture based on any of these, or other aspects of identity: age, language skills, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and expression, health, socio-economic status, any cognitive or physical diversity, migrant experience and religious or spiritual beliefs.

For a therapist to empower people to have positive experiences where they feel safe, the preparation includes actively considering how the support might sit with that individual’s identity and needs, their willingness to participate, any previous experience they might or might not have in this situation, and whether they have enough of the basic skills and knowledge, including language skills, to make positive participation possible. Without this preparation, an unintended negative experience could occur.

Supporting tamariki to express their views clearly throughout this process, and acting on those views, is very important and also iterative – the levels of safety and comfort that individuals feel in any context will change as their experience develops over time.

3 Service Delivery

3.1 Working together

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of Oranga Tamariki and the partner as they work together to ensure that tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family receive the quality interventions they need. Both parties bring valuable expertise to their working relationship. There are relationship principles described in the standard Terms and Conditions of the Outcome Agreement, which include:

- acting honestly and in good faith
- communicating openly and in a timely manner
- working in a collaborative and constructive manner

3.2 Referrals

Tamariki/rangatahi are eligible for consideration for FFT through a variety of pathways. In most cases there will have been involvement with, or tamariki/rangatahi are considered likely to become involved with, Oranga Tamariki.

At the discretion of the partner, a referral for FFT will be accepted if the partner and referrer have agreed that the needs of tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family can be met by FFT, and that the therapy is expected to be able to occur safely in the home environment.

Referral to other agencies

Through the course of therapeutic intervention, the therapist and whānau may identify the need for other specialist/general services to be engaged. The partner must specify to the referrer, which FFT adaptation it provides and where any referral to other specialist services may be required, so that tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family receive appropriate services.

Partners will discuss referrals to other agencies with the whānau or family and referring agency before these are finalised, and have processes in place for making referrals to other agencies, including keeping records of referrals.

3.3 Roles and responsibilities

Referrers to FFT

When Oranga Tamariki is the referrer, it will carry out its roles and responsibilities according to the operational policy and practice guidance, which partners are welcome to view on the [Oranga Tamariki Practice Centre](#). Specifically, Oranga Tamariki will:

- monitor service delivery, financial management and wellbeing outcomes for tamariki/rangatahi and their whānau or family
- make referrals and provide information where the service is specifically contracted for referrals from Oranga Tamariki
- assist with ensuring that relationships and procedures at all levels of Oranga Tamariki are effective and supportive

- address risks and needs for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family where delivery of FFT interventions is not an appropriate approach

Other referrers may include New Zealand Police, Ara Poutama Aotearoa– Department of Corrections, or members of the community. When other organisations are the referrer, they will follow roles and responsibilities according to their organisational practices, which are outside the scope of this service specification. Please contact any other referrers for further details.

Service delivery partners

Partners will:

- have met FFT LLC requirements to deliver FFT programmes, which includes having the appropriate infrastructure and clinical expertise
- liaise with the referrers in relation to progress and attendance achieved by tamariki/rangatahi and their whānau or family
- provide a discharge report to the client and/or referrer at the end of the programme
- be committed to working with Māori in a way that reflects tikanga and matauranga Māori, promotes cultural competence and ensures cultural safety within its workforce
- have a demonstrated ability to work positively with various cultures and strive to match therapists with tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau or family, (in terms of culture, experience and common interests) where possible
- receive appropriate consent from tamariki, rangatahi and their whānau or family
- be approved under section 403 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989
- be required to meet and maintain Level Two accreditation standards with Te Kāhui Kāhu (previously known as Social Services Accreditation, or SSA)
- comply with all other applicable legal requirements including but not limited to Health and Safety legislation, Employment legislation and the Privacy Act
- Report according to the requirements in Section 4 Results and reporting

Referrer and partner – shared responsibilities

Oranga Tamariki and the partner will work together in these areas:

- ensuring that tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family, before they agree to participate and are considered for FFT:
 - are well informed
 - understand the programme
 - understand the importance of the whānau or family involvement and participation
- supporting tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family to express views and be heard. Tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family need to be involved in decisions that affect them and may need support to make sure that their voices are heard. Information and support need to be appropriate to their age, development, language and any disability they may have, for example, in an accessible format if needed. If tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family have specific communication needs, the referrer and the partner should consult with appropriate professionals and seek advice as to whether support can

- come from a whānau or family member, another person, a specialist service provider, or any other service
 - supporting tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family in their right to know about and be supported to access independent services and support, to express their views about:
 - matters important to them relating to their own circumstances
 - general matters relating to processes and services they have experienced under the Oranga Tamariki Act
- Services include but are not limited to the Oranga Tamariki Feedback and Complaints mechanism, the grievance process within residences (Whāia Te Māramatanga), connection and advocacy service VOYCE – Whakarongo Mai, and the Children’s Commissioner’s Child Rights Line
- handling an allegation that te tamaiti has been harmed or handling a critical or serious incident that occurs during the FFT practice – see section 3.4 Reporting concerns

3.4 Handling allegations and incidents that arise during and as a direct result of participation in the FFT programme

If an allegation of harm arises during and as a direct result of participation in the FFT practice, or any critical or serious incident occurs during the FFT practice, it is essential for the partners and the referrer to carry out an urgent and coordinated response to protect tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family, and anyone else at risk of harm.

Harm is defined as: “ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation. This includes, but is not limited to, actions or omissions that cause emotional, physical or sexual harm, or sexual harassment.”

For referrers other than Oranga Tamariki, the partner should also follow the recommended guidelines, policies and procedures of the other organisations, which are outside the scope of this service specification.

Table 1: Handling an allegation that te tamaiti has been harmed during and as a direct result of their participation in the FFT programme

Partner	Oranga Tamariki
Allegation of harm	
– If you receive an allegation of harm of a tamaiti for whom you are providing FFT services, immediately inform the Oranga Tamariki social worker and your contract manager/advisor. Tell the minimum number of people, in	– If an allegation of harm is reported to Oranga Tamariki by the partner, Oranga Tamariki should urgently consult with the Police to determine if the allegation meets the criteria for an investigation under the Child

Partner	Oranga Tamariki
<p>case any future criminal investigation could be prejudiced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If the type of harm manifested as a critical or serious incident, follow Table 2: Critical and serious incidents – categories and process – As soon as possible, work with Oranga Tamariki to create and carry out an urgent and coordinated response to protect those involved – Cooperate fully with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police while they assess and/or investigate the allegation – Cooperate fully with Oranga Tamariki if requested to help inform te tamaiti and their whānau or family, as much as is possible and appropriate, about the progress of the investigation or assessment, the outcome, and any additional processes arising (for example, criminal charges) – If the allegation is about one of your staff, manage this situation in accordance with your organisational policies 	<p>Protection Protocol: Joint Operating Procedures (CPP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If an allegation of harm is reported to Oranga Tamariki by someone other than the partner, Oranga Tamariki should let the partner know that an allegation has been received, enter the information into CYRAS, and also urgently consult with the Police, as above – As soon as possible, work with the partner to create and carry out an urgent and coordinated response to protect those involved – Promptly assess or investigate the allegation within the required timeframes, and support the Police investigation as required – Keep the partner informed of the progress of the investigation or assessment, the outcome, and any additional processes arising (for example, criminal charges) – When taking statements from those involved in the incident, follow the information sharing and disclosure procedures on the Practice Centre. Share your documentation with the partner (when possible) to assist them with their own, post-incident internal reviews and processes, and to minimise those involved being retraumatised by multiple interviews – Inform te tamaiti and their whānau or family, as much as is possible and appropriate, about the progress of the investigation or assessment, the outcome, and any additional processes arising (for example, criminal charges). Update CYRAS each time this occurs – If it is decided to not inform any key person, due to safety concerns, this decision and its reasons must be recorded and reviewed regularly

Partner	Oranga Tamariki
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Make sure that te tamaiti understands that they can have whoever they choose as a support person/people present whenever they are being updated on this topic – Consider that, depending on the circumstances of the incident, it may be a useful support to te tamaiti to involve the partner in all meetings and discussions

Handling a critical or serious incident that occurs during the FFT practice

This table details the process for partners to respond to and report a critical or serious incident. The NZ Police have confirmed the aspects below regarding criminal matters.

To maintain tamariki privacy and confidentiality in emailed communications, refer to tamariki by their first initial and age, eg John aged 4 is referred to as J4.

When contacting the Oranga Tamariki national contact centre in the first instance, make a phone call and speak to someone – do not leave a message or rely on email only. It is open 24 hours on 0508 FAMILY/0508 326 459.

Table 2: Critical and serious incidents – categories and process

Type of incident	Who the partner must contact	Contact method and timing
Critical incidents: Category A		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Death, including by suicide, of any tamaiti – Any assault (physical violence and/or sexual assault), or any other offence, committed against or alleged to have been committed against te tamaiti 	<p>To trigger the urgent case management response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Police – Oranga Tamariki Contact Centre <p>To trigger the necessary incident reporting mechanisms and additional management supports:</p> <p>The Oranga Tamariki:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contract manager/advisor – The Oranga Tamariki social worker for te tamaiti 	<p>By phone, and as soon as possible but no later than one hour after the incident occurred</p> <p>Fill out and email the incident report form</p> <p>As soon as possible, ideally within 12 hours</p>

Type of incident	Who the partner must contact	Contact method and timing
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Critical incidents: Category B

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Attempted suicide by te tamaiti (of any level of attempt) – Any assault (physical violence and/or sexual assault), or any other offence, committed by or alleged to have been committed by te tamaiti – Te tamaiti is hospitalised – Any use of force or restraint against te tamaiti by the partner’s staff – Emotional abuse or neglect of te tamaiti by the partner’s staff – Serious wilful damage to property by te tamaiti – Inappropriate sexual behaviour by or to te tamaiti 	<p>As per Category A, but do not include the Police in the urgent response unless required for help. The Police may be notified or brought in later, as circumstances require</p>	<p>As per Category A</p>
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Serious incidents

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Suicide ideation or self-harm not requiring hospitalisation – Occasions that involve calling on emergency services for assistance, eg needing the Fire Service to gain access to a rooftop or a locked room 	<p>To trigger the case management response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Oranga Tamariki social worker for te tamaiti <p>To trigger the necessary incident reporting mechanisms and additional management supports:</p> <p>The Oranga Tamariki:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contract manager/advisor 	<p>By phone, within 24 hours. If this is not successful, call the Contact Centre instead</p> <p>By the incident reporting process</p>
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4 Results and reporting

4.1 Measurements and results

To confirm that FFT is making a difference for tamariki, rangatahi and whānau or family, the partner needs to collect data that describes:

- **is anyone better off:**
 - Tamariki/rangatahi: average Client Outcome Measures-Youth (COM-Y)
 - Whānau: average Client Outcome Measure-Caregiver (COM-C)
 - Tamariki/rangatahi (rating self) comparison pre and post Youth Outcome Questionnaire (YOQ)-Self Report
 - Whānau member (aged 18 or older) (rating self) comparison pre and post YOQ
 - Whānau/caregiver (whānau rating tamariki/rangatahi) comparison pre and post YOQ

- **how well did we do it:**
 - Cultural satisfaction feedback
 - Client/whānau satisfaction feedback
 - Therapist Outcome Measures (TOM)

- **‘what works’ evidence for the sector**
 - Narrative
 - How well is the model working?
 - What improvements have you made, or would like make?

- **how much did we do** – contextual ‘through-put data’ about tamariki/rangatahi who enter the FFT programme
 - total number of referrals
 - number of tamariki/rangatahi and whānau allocated to therapists
 - number of tamariki/rangatahi and whānau successful completion
 - number of tamariki/rangatahi and whānau dropped out:
 - number of tamariki/rangatahi and whānau who dropped out as treatment failure
 - number of tamariki/rangatahi and whānau who dropped out as non-treatment failure

4.2 Reporting

Partners will work with Oranga Tamariki in the design of an easy-to-use format for reporting the above measurements and results. Partners with established case management systems may use their own systems for reporting, if the minimum data set is provided. All reporting must comply with privacy and security requirements (eg, Privacy Act 2020).

Document ends