

Te ao o te pēpi

Babies' world



Your guide to
getting whānau ready,
baby blues, crying, sleeping,
feeding, and more...

tākai

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Pēpi on the way

A new baby brings big changes... often ones you can't control.

Even if it's not your first baby, new things may come up that you didn't expect or have forgotten how to handle since last time.

Here are some things you can do to prepare:

- Think back to how you were raised. Will you do things the same, or differently?
- Kōrero with whānau before pēpi arrives so you have time to think things through. Where will they sleep? How will we manage the crying and the tiredness?
- Find out what you're entitled to – parental leave, family benefits or allowances.
- Try not to stress – babies don't need lots of stuff – and you can borrow or get most of it second-hand.

Hapūtanga or pregnancy is about care and awhi for māmā and the unborn pēpi. Some whānau and iwi provide māmā with special kai and relieve her from stressful or hard mahi to safeguard her health and the development of pēpi at this time.



Getting whānau ready

Your children might find it hard when a new baby arrives. With all the focus on the baby they might feel left out or ignored. You might see changes in their behaviour. They may be more clingy or grizzly, or test the boundaries more.

Younger children

- Start talking about 'our' baby when your pregnancy is starting to show – nine months is a long wait for little kids.
- Show them their baby photos and talk about their birth, where it was and some of the special details you remember.
- Make any changes to their lives well before your baby comes. Things like moving from cot to bed, or car seat to booster.

Whānau say

"It's important for all our tamariki to feel part of everything. By sharing whakapapa, you connect each family member in a wider story about who they are."



Older children

- Read books on babies together and answer questions honestly.
- Involve them in choosing things for pēpi.
- Talk about how they will be able to help out and welcome pēpi to the family.

When pēpi is born

- Focus on the other kids when they first visit – keep your arms free for hugging.
- Help them to hold the new baby as soon as possible.
- Ask them to help, for example getting things ready for bath time or singing to pēpi to help calm them. Don't worry if they're not interested.
- Plan things for them to do while your focus is on pēpi.
- Make time each day to be together. If they're upset or angry, talk about their feelings.

Talk to tamariki about their maunga, awa and marae. Singing waiata Māori, reciting karakia and adhering to tikanga within the whare can help everyone feel connected to their whakapapa. Have fun, make the stories sing in the heart and mind of your tamariki.



Parenting can be hard work sometimes

If you're stressed, down or just need advice, think about talking to a friend you trust, your doctor, or try a helpline.

PlunketLine 0800 933 922

Free call or text 1737

If you feel like you or your partner aren't coping, talk to someone you trust, a friend, child health nurse or your doctor.

For more information check out:
depression.org.nz or try the
helpline **0800 111 757**.



Whānau say

“Don't expect to get much done in those first weeks. Anything besides looking after pēpi is a bonus!”

Baby blues?

It's normal to feel a bit down or stressed at times with a new baby. Here are some ways others have coped:

- Keep talking about what's going on. It can be a struggle for everyone to get used to less sleep and money.
- Accept that your baby's needs come first at this early stage. Meals will be late, washing will pile up, and your baby will want a feed even when you've got visitors.
- Let the housework wait if pēpi needs you now.
- Don't try to go it alone. Accept any offers of help – meals, odd jobs, watching baby while you take a shower.
- Get sleep when you can. Sleep when your baby sleeps.
- Try to get some fresh air – a short walk or a change of scene can give you more energy.





Every baby is different

Like adults, every baby is different. They may be easygoing and calm, or wakeful and active. They may settle quickly into a regular routine or be more unpredictable.

If they are fussy and unsettled, it doesn't mean they're being naughty or annoying you on purpose. Crying is their way of communicating – page 10 has more on this.

Here are some ideas to help you all get off to a great start:

- Give them lots of attention. You can never spoil a baby with too much aroha.
- Respond quickly to their crying so they feel safe and secure.
- Sing, talk and cuddle them to help their brain to grow and to build a strong bond with you.
- Smile at them lots – eventually they'll smile back!

Whānau say

“Just talking to pēpi so they get familiar and feel safe with our voices helps build a safe and secure world for them. Even if we can't hold a waiata note just sing because your voice is the voice pēpi loves and trusts.”



Crying

**All babies cry, some more than others.
It's their way of telling you what they need.**

It can be really hard to cope with your baby crying, especially when you're tired too. At times they'll cry more than usual and be harder to calm. This could be because they're teething or having a growth spurt.

Try to remember that this stage won't last forever – things will settle down. Try:

- checking their needs. Are they hungry? Tired? Too hot or cold? Or just too much going on?
- taking them somewhere quiet
- holding, rocking, and talking or singing softly
- giving them a warm bath
- moving – a ride in a buggy, a sling or front pack.

If you're losing it, put the baby somewhere safe where you can still hear them and walk away. Breathe slowly until you feel calmer.

Whānau say

"If you start stressing out and no one can take over, it can help to phone a friend."



Sleeping



Sleeping like a baby? It's a misleading term – sometimes you may feel that your baby never sleeps.

To help them settle and sleep longer:

- Watch for 'sleepy' signs – yawning, jerky movements, or clenched fists. If babies get overtired they can be harder to settle and they wake more often
- Try and put baby to bed when they are relaxed and sleepy, but not quite asleep
- Soothe them with gentle stroking, singing, or rocking. Soft music might also help.

Learning a waiata at **tākai.nz/waiata** is always good to help with pēpi and your own sleeping.

Whānau say

“What works to settle one baby might not for another. Try different things until you find what works for your baby.”

On the move



Babies soon learn how to get around.

First rolling, then pulling themselves along the floor, crawling, cruising around furniture and walking.

Making sure they're always safe can be tiring – but they're worth it! And remember exploring is how they learn.

- Making your house 'baby safe' can save you a lot of time and worry. Check out the Whare Kahikā Home Safety App from Safekids safekidshomesafetyapp.co.nz
- Crawl around your house yourself and do a safety check – it's amazing what you'll find down there!
- Sometimes a change of scene can be good for everyone. Try to get out of the house when you can.

Whānau say

“Think of this first couple of years as a short time in their lives when they need you a lot.”

Te hinengaro mīharo

By six months your baby's brain has grown to half the size of an adult's. Everything you've done since they were born – talking, listening, singing, cuddling, playing – has helped their brain connections to grow.





Feeding

Pēpi might be ready to try solids around six months. Just like everything they've learned so far, it takes time. So be patient.

- Babies may not want to sit still for long.
- They may not like a new food at first but keep offering it.
- Make food time calm and stress free – food battles are no fun for anyone.
- They will be really messy when they start feeding themselves. Put some newspaper or a plastic mat down for easier clean up.
- Try and keep your sense of humour.
- Finger food is great but be prepared to mop the ceiling!

6 things babies need

There are 6 things that promote a strong relationship between parents, whānau and their tamariki. For a baby they might look like this:

Love and warmth

- Cuddling.
- Rocking and singing.
- Kanohi ki te kanohi attention.

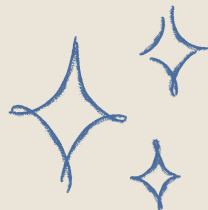


Talking and listening

- Learn to read their cues.
- Chat to them.
- Copy the sounds they make.

Guidance and understanding

- Meet their needs. They are dependent on you for everything.
- Help them to explore and learn with their eyes, ears, mouth, nose and hands.



Whānau say

“Don’t get in the habit of offering other food if they refuse what’s on their plate. Calmly remove it and consider dinner over.”



Limits and boundaries

- Help them to rest when they're tired or overstimulated.
- Notice how they respond to people and places.
- Know your own limits and look after yourself.

Consistency and consequences

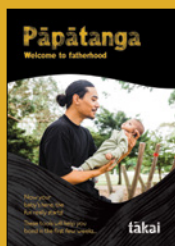
- Do things the same way each time, so they know what's next, for example bedtime routines.
- Build routines that support their needs.
- Help them trust and love the key people in their lives.



A structured secure world

- Build a strong loving bond with them.
- Keep them safe from angry feelings and harmful situations.
- Give them safe places to sleep and play.

**Know someone
else that could use
this booklet? Pass it on!**



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