

# Tamaiti wāwāhi tahā

The tricky bits



**Your guide to**  
tantrums, supermarket  
survival, jealousy and fighting,  
toileting, and more...

tākai





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## **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**

**Are you OK? 0800 456 450**

**Free call or text 1737**

**Parenting has changed in recent years. We now know more about different parenting styles and their effect on pēpi and brain development.**

Being very strict can lead to children being scared of their parents. Harsh punishments like smacking often lead to more aggressive and challenging behaviour.







All kids behave in challenging ways at times, guiding and supporting children through these times with love and understanding helps them grow into happy, confident adults.

## Te hinengaro mīharo



Yelling triggers cortisol – a stress hormone that shuts down part of the brain – making it much harder for a child to listen and learn.

They're more likely to run away, clam up or get really angry.

# Tantrums



**Most children have tantrums, usually when they're frustrated and can't tell you how they are feeling.**

Tantrums can be triggered by children being tired, hungry, uncomfortable, bored or over-stimulated. They also happen when children feel jealous, frightened or unhappy.

## Preventing tantrums



**Sometimes you can stop tantrums from getting started by:**

- slowing things down
- giving limited choices – for example, apple or orange?
- letting your child know what's happening next
- thinking ahead – for example, take snacks when you go out, snuggle when they're tired
- avoid saying “no”, instead try saying “as soon as we're home” or “when you've had your sleep”
- giving them some attention, even when you're busy
- telling them “it's time to go soon”.





## Dealing with tantrums

It's hard to stop a tantrum that's already happening (sometimes distraction can work if they're about to have a tantrum).

Help your child calm down faster by:

1. **Giving them space.** If they are in danger of hurting themselves or there's too much going on, take them somewhere safer and calmer.
2. **Standing by calmly.** Even if you're feeling angry, try not to show it. Taking a few deep breaths helps.
3. **Ignoring the tantrum.** Paying attention will often prolong the tantrum. Don't try to reason or discipline them during a tantrum.

When they've calmed down, comfort them and praise them for calming down. Don't give in to any demands they were making and give yourself a pat on the back for keeping your cool.

### Whānau say

**“Don't feel like you've failed when your child has a tantrum – it's normal and okay. It's how you handle it that counts.”**



# Surviving the supermarket

The supermarket is a really exciting place, but sometimes it can all get too much for young children.

## Plan

Ask your children to help you write the shopping list. Talk about what you need to buy.



If you can, try to shop in the morning when everyone's fresh. Avoid going in a hurry or when your child is hungry, tired or sick.

If you've got more than one child, can you ask someone else to come along or look after one of the children at home? Maybe you could offer to do a kid swap with a friend.

Take a couple of small toys and snacks for distraction.





## Once you're there



- Involve children by giving them choices  
– “strawberry or apricot yoghurt?”
- Keep your trolley away from stuff that your child might want but you don't want to buy.
- Give them a job, for example, looking for something on the list.
- Keep them in the trolley so you can talk to them and involve them. Older children can hold onto the trolley as you go round.

## At the checkout



- Play games such as I Spy while you wait.  
Use colours – “I spy something red.”
- Give your child some groceries to put on the checkout counter.
- Let them push the button on the eftpos machine.
- Thank them for being helpful.

## When things go wrong



- **Don't give in to demands.** Try distracting your child by asking them to find something, or give them something to eat or drink.
- **Stop the trolley.** Explain quietly that you need their help and that when you get home they can choose something you can all do together.
- **Keep calm.** Try not to show your anger. Count to 10. Breathe.

## When you've finished



- Tell them they were really good at choosing or sitting still, or playing I Spy. Try to remember something positive you can talk about.
- If things went wrong, think about what triggered the problem. You might be able to avoid it next time.
- Don't worry about the other shoppers. Many of them will have had children and know what you're going through.

Whānau say

**"Be prepared to do half a shop, or even abandon the trolley if things aren't going well. Got milk and bread? Sweet, head to the checkout."**







## Hitting

Young children sometimes hit as a way to communicate. If you smack or hit them they will learn it's ok to use force to get what they want.



### Try:

- watching out for frustration. Offer help or distract them
- asking them for ideas on how to sort things out
- praising them when they're co-operating
- having a no hitting rule that the whole family agrees to.

# Jealousy and fighting



All siblings fight, some more than others. Fights happen when children are tired, hungry or bored, want attention, or think someone is trying to take their things.

When children don't have the skills to solve these problems, they can lash out. You can help them learn how to work things out by setting limits, and encouraging communication and problem solving.

Whānau say




**“Give your kids as much one-on-one attention as you can. They’ll feel less like competing with each other.”**







## Seven ideas for resolving fights

1. If your children are arguing, go to another room to give them space to sort it out. If things settle, tell them they did well, and give them some attention. 
2. If they keep fighting, don't investigate who started it. Ask them if they can think of a way of solving the problem.
3. Help them find solutions. For example, if they're fighting over crayons, suggest they can choose three each.
4. Separate without punishment. For example, one child plays in one room while the other helps you with something else.
5. Think about whether they are bored, tired or hungry. Give them something else to do. 
6. Sort out some toys that are special to each child and that they don't have to share.
7. Try not to compare your children in front of them. Be even with positive comments and attention. 

# Biting

If your child is going through a biting phase:



be specific when it happens. "Stop biting. It hurts!"



watch out for early signs of frustration and try distracting them



don't bite back, it teaches that biting is okay



focus first on the bitten child, not the biter.





# Learning to use the toilet

Helping your child learn to use the toilet is one of the trickiest stages you'll have to deal with. Your child might be ready any time between 18 months and four years.

## Before you start:

- Your child has to be ready. They have to know when they need to go and how to hold on. Some kids reach this important stage in their development later than others – it's like learning to walk and talk.
- It can take time and there will be accidents. Getting angry can make your child upset, scared and unwilling to cooperate.

## Te hinengaro mīharo



Before a child is able to learn to use the toilet, brain connections for bladder and bowel control must be made. Sometimes this doesn't happen until three years or older.



# Signs your child is ready for toilet learning



- They start being dry for an hour or two at a time.
- They are interested in watching other people go to the toilet. Let them, so they see that it's something normal that everyone does.
- They start talking about toilet stuff.

## Getting started



- Start when life is settled, not when you've got visitors, you're moving or about to have a new baby.
- Dress them in clothes that are easy to take on and off. Summer can be a good time to try, with fewer clothes to remove.
- Let them practise sitting on the toilet or potty with their clothes on. If they want to, let them sit their toys on the potty too.
- When they become interested in their own body, give them words for each body part and talk about what they do.
- Watch out for signs they need to go – jiggles, clutching, farting, hiding behind the curtain. Be direct, say "I think you need to go for a wee in the toilet/potty."
- Take them to the toilet regularly but don't leave them there for ages until they do something. If they do go, give them lots of praise.
- If the toilet is cold and uncomfortable try a potty in a warm place, with interesting things to look at (posters, books).



## Keeping it going

**Sometimes the whole process can take weeks, or even months. If it's getting too hard, stop for a bit and try again later.**



### Tips

- Stay positive, try not to make toilet learning a big deal.
- Give them lots of praise, for sitting on the potty, telling you when they want to go, or for doing something.
- Remind them regularly that they might need to go.
- If you're going out, think ahead. If there's going to be a crowd and not many toilets, you might need to use training pants.
- It's common for children to go back to having accidents. Be patient, wait for things to settle down, then try again.



## Night time

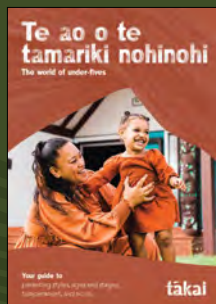
**Dry nights can take a lot longer.  
Some children need to wear  
night nappies until they are at  
least five or six.**

Bedwetting isn't caused by  
drinking before bedtime.  
Instead of cutting out drinks,  
check they've been to the toilet  
before they go to bed.





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



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[resources.takai.nz](https://resources.takai.nz)

**tākai.nz**