

case study

Building Awesome Whānau delivered in-house



All Young Parent Payment clients have an obligation to complete a parenting programme that meets minimum standards.

The case study below shows how one Youth Service provider delivers Building Awesome Whānau, a programme for parents created by The Parenting Place in-house.

about the Youth Service provider

EmployNZ has offices in Taupō and Tauranga, and works with 300 youth payment clients, young parents, and NEET clients. They have over 80 Young Parent Payment clients enrolled in their service, so decided that running their parenting programme in-house made the most sense for them.

Two members of their team have undertaken training by The Parenting Place to lead their Building Awesome Whānau parenting programme.

“We had our first client complete the online programme and feedback was it was good for her as it was at night-time when her baby was asleep and she also had the support of her family who had returned home from work” - Pia Kakau, Social Services Division Manager, EmployNZ

The Building Awesome Whānau parenting programme consists of six modules. They run two sessions a week over three weeks and get great participation over this time. They recently trialled delivering their parenting programme online with one of their clients who needed options to fit in with her schedule and ability to travel.

about Building Awesome Whānau

Building Awesome Whānau draws on the wisdom of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge). It was designed by The Parenting Place, a charity that offers resources, courses, and coaching so New Zealand parents have all they need to comfortably tackle even the trickiest situations. This programme is for whānau raising children aged 0-12. This course can be delivered over a few weeks, or as a wānanga. [Parenting Place | Building Awesome Whānau](#)

The programme modules cover:

- Laying the foundations: Building a family of love
- Parents are the roof: Protecting the whanau
- The walls of the whare: Boundaries
- Keeping it sweet: Atmosphere
- Cool kōrero: Communication
- Outside the whare: Living in the world.

Although The Parenting Place delivers a range of programmes themselves, they also provide training and certification to people who want to deliver Building Awesome Whānau themselves.

best practice in youth-focussed parenting programmes

EmployNZ has paid attention to what works for taiohi (young person) when making decisions about their parenting programme. As well as choosing a programme that is well established and meets the requirements of the Youth Service guidelines, they've made choices about when, where, and how they delivery their programmes.

reducing non-attendance

Non-attendance is always an issue for providers running programmes and working with young people. Personal life factors can have an impact on programme outcomes. These factors may be structural (for example, inconvenient timing, location or distance from home, childcare availability, other commitments) or perceptual (feelings that the programme won't be beneficial, it'll be intrusive, or too demanding). Research has found that Māori and Pacific parents want parenting courses that are tailored for them, and taiohi have concerns about stigma due to their age and fear of being seen as a bad parent.

EmployNZ has identified tactics that have been effective in reducing non-attendance. They recommend identifying the barriers facing young people and addressing them.

Tips for increasing attendance include:

- convenient locations and timings for the taiohi (including a trail of offering them online)
- transport, free parking, picking up, or providing petrol vouchers
- clear messaging about the purpose of the programmes
- promoting the relevance to the taiohi, especially for Māori and Pacific taiohi.

“In the past we delivered our programme in six sessions over six weeks, but after trialling holding it over a three-week period running two sessions per week we found that attendance and participation is better during a shorter course” - Pia Kakau, Social Services Division Manager, EmployNZ

building relationships and networks

“We quickly realised that our programmes expand parents' social networks and they're an opportunity to refer taiohi to other services in our community”, says Pia.

By running the programme regularly over several weeks clients can build a support network with others outside of their normal circles.

“It was important that our programme promotes peer learning and is led by great facilitators. This allows parents to have a sense of control over their parenting role. By sharing experiences, parents who may be anxious about whether they are ‘doing it right’ can feel more confident because they hear from others facing similar situations”.

Programmes that focus on building the social capital of the participants:

1. help socially isolated families meet people and make friends
2. tend to build a sense of cohesiveness among members of group
3. provide opportunities for individuals to share their views with others and learn from others in their age group
4. build empathy.

EmployNZ suggest reinforcing the learning from the parenting programme through ongoing one-on-one contact, role modelling, and coaching provided by the youth coach through their regular parenting discussions. It’s good for all coaches to know the content of the parenting programmes so they can reinforce the key messages.

inclusion of the wider whānau and meeting different cultural needs

Often programmes respond by default to the needs of mothers, as the main attendees. Sometimes this can lead to family conflict if mothers take home ideas that contradict existing views held by partners or other family members.

Some tips for making parenting programmes more inclusive

- course materials are relevant to the lives of the taiohi
- consider how the programme supports diverse cultural and religious needs
- understand and affirm important Māori cultural values in relation to parenting, particularly whakapapa (lineage), the concept of tuakana–teina (the relationship between an older (tuakana) person and a younger (teina) person) and whakawhanaungatanga (process of establishing relationships)
- consider key issues for Pasifika parents, including how extended family are involved in child rearing, ethnically mixed marriages, and intergenerational living arrangements.

tips for others considering delivering a parenting programme in-house

- find the right course or programme for you and your clients. Take time reviewing options, and think about how appropriate the content for our taiohi
- make sure you have trained and experienced facilitators. This is especially important for topics that are more controversial and complex. They should be good at leading group work and providing a supportive learning environment, and have strategies for handling sensitive issues and managing conflict
- good quality strengths-based parenting programmes acknowledge and respect diverse family patterns, cultural diversity, and are consistent with the human rights of all family members. Think about including activities relevant to fathers, men, and boys; mothers, women, and girls; and gender-diverse (including intersex) taiohi and pēpē (baby).