



Proactive Release

Submissions on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

August 2019

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has released the following submission received during its public consultation on the child and youth wellbeing strategy.

Some of the information contained within this release is considered to not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

- Where this is the case, the information has been withheld, and the relevant section of the Act that would apply, has been identified.
- Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Key to redaction codes and their reference to sections of the Act:

- **9(2)a** – Section 9(2)(a): to protect the privacy of natural persons, including deceased people.

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Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy – Submission Template

This document is intended for individuals or groups who wish to make a formal submission on the child and youth wellbeing strategy.

Please complete this template and email it to: childandyouthwellbeing@dpmc.govt.nz

A guide to making a submission is available on the DPMC website <https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/child-and-youth-wellbeing-strategy>

Submissions will close on **Wednesday 5 December**.

Please provide details for a contact person in case we have some follow up questions.

Contact Name:	Dave Owens
Email Address:	9(2)□(a)
Phone Number:	
Organisation Name:	
Organisation description: (tell us about your organisation – i.e. who do you represent? How many members do you have? Are you a local or national organisation?)	Great Fathers' kaupapa is encourage new fathers to get engaged and involved with their infant. This is child-centred father-focused national initiative that works through existing service providers and agencies to influence these to improve their child well-being strategies by guiding them towards informing and encouraging the fathers of young children to understand and take an active, nurturing role in their children's lives.
Executive Summary: (Please provide a short summary of the key points of your Submission - 200 words)	<p>While government policy is commonly written with gender neutrality, the result is that contracted service providers currently focus (almost entirely) on the mother. This one-eyed view of service delivery is contrary to the evidence that a child who has a father who is engaged and nurturing is both safer but also advantages the child's cognitive and emotional development. Children who do not have enough of a nurturing father in their life is more likely suffer a variety of social deficits.</p> <p>There is unconscious bias towards fathers that accompanies services for infants and toddlers. This bias may be expressed through a lack of expectation or invitation that fathers attend or interested. This unnoticed exclusion distances fathers from taking a role with their children, places increased responsibility on mothers and can weaken the child/father bond.</p> <p>If the father isn't well bonded to his child, he is less likely to have an emotional imperative to stay connected to the child. All of these can contribute to the father feeling unimportant to the child,</p>

	<p>him backing-off from physically and emotional caring for his child and makes it easier for him to leave the family.</p> <p>Creating better awareness among service providers to the value fathers bring to their children - as well as providing training on how to engage and/or work with fathers - will improve well-being for children.</p>
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Submission Content

What government can do:

See that Government contracts identify which caregiver(s) they are delivered to.

1) Pregnancy and Parenting Education and Information (PPEI). Insure that the contracts require service providers to provide services that are relevant and targeted to both parents. In particular, we need to see that:

a) the child/father relationship is addressed *specifically* at the curriculum level and at a contractual level.

b) antenatal education shifted from the current medical focus to a focus on the couple's relationship, infant awareness and how to parent.

c) PPEI services should cover the entire perinatal period, not end prior the birth.

2) Review the contracts it lets to service providers (Well Child Tamariki Ora and others) so that they address both parents as individuals.

3) Developing a paid paternal leave programme would indicate that the Government values and expects fathers to be there and participating with their newborn – which sets the tone for fathers to be active and well-informed in caring for their children.

4) In schools – provide learning units on healthy couple relationships at the intermediate level. We need to provide an evidenced balance to what children may perceive, from media about what couple relationships are, so that they can approach relationships with some direction and perspective.

5) “Normalise” men working in parenting support service roles by creating incentives for men to take up such roles or for service providers to enlist them.

6) Create contractual obligations for wrap around services for high needs families that engage with fathers and see that staff are trained and capable of effectively working with fathers.

Please note that your submission will become official information. This means that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may be required to release all or part of the information contained in your submission in response to a request under the Official Information Act 1982.

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet may withhold all or parts of your submission if it is necessary to protect your privacy or if it has been supplied subject to an obligation of confidence.

Please tell us if you don't want all or specific parts of your submission released, and the reasons why. Your views will be taken into account in deciding whether to withhold or release any information requested under the Official Information Act and in deciding if, and how, to refer to your submission in any possible subsequent paper prepared by the Department.