

TŪPUNA – NGĀ KAITIAKI MOKOPUNA

A resource for Māori grandparents



The Families Commission was established under the Families Commission Act 2003 and commenced operations on 1 July 2004. Under the Crown Entities Act 2004, the Commission is designated as an autonomous Crown entity.

Our main role is to act as an advocate for the interests of families generally (rather than individual families).

Our specific functions under the Families Commission Act 2003 are to:

- › encourage and facilitate informed debate about families
- › increase public awareness and promote better understanding of matters affecting families
- › encourage and facilitate the development and provision of government policies that promote and serve the interests of families
- › consider any matter relating to the interests of families referred to us by any Minister of the Crown
- › stimulate and promote research into families; for example, by funding and undertaking research
- › consult with, or refer matters to, other official bodies or statutory agencies.

Our specific functions under the Whānau Strategic Framework (2009–2012, p. 5) are to develop an operating environment which is regarded by whānau, Māori, iwi and key stakeholders as representative of an organisation that:

- › listens to the voice of whānau
- › has regard to the needs, values and beliefs of Māori as tangata whenua, as required under Section 11(a) of the Families Commission Act 2003
- › promotes and maintains whānau strength and resiliency
- › promotes whānau ora through the activities of advocacy, engagement, policy development and research.

Acknowledgements

The Families Commission appreciates the time and contributions offered by the many grandparents and their whānau who took part in our grandparenting research and so willingly shared their experiences.

The qualitative research was undertaken by a research team consisting of Dr Roberta Hill and Ken Wilson (WEB Research), Dr Cheryl Smith, Bobby Newson, Karen Stewart, Hong-Jae Park, Liz Tanielu, Rosetta lupeli and Anne Kerslake Hendricks.

The quantitative research (telephone survey and associated report) was undertaken by UMR Research, under the direction of Gavin White.

During the development of this resource and the complementary full report on which it was based, the research team was grateful to receive support, information and advice from the Knowledge Services Enterprise Content Unit, staff in the Older People's Policy team and the Office for Senior Citizens (Ministry of Social Development); Dr Kathie Irwin, Margaret Retter, Francis Luketina, Carla Guy, Janine Moss, Nita Zodgekar, Deborah Malcolm, Hohepa Patea (Families Commission); Jill Worrall, Keri Lawson-Te Aho, Sarah Maclean, Rereata Makiha, Kim Workman, Karen Wong and Dr Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop. The Commission is also grateful to the members of a project advisory group who provided input during the initial phases of the project.

The content of this report and the opinions expressed by the author/s should not be assumed to reflect the views, opinions or policies of the Families Commission.

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ISSN 1177-3545 (Print)
ISSN 1178-1289 (Online)

ISBN 978-0-478-36920-5 (Print)
ISBN 978-0-478-36921-2 (Online)

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A RESOURCE FOR MĀORI GRANDPARENTS

A FAMILIES COMMISSION RESEARCH REPORT

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He mihi whakataki

Hutia te rito o te harakeke, kei hea te komako e kō?

Whakatairangitia, rere ki uta, rere ki tai

Kī mai ki ā au – he aha te mea nui o tēnei ao?

Māku e kī atu, he tangata, he tangata he tangata

Korōria ki te atua te runga rawa. Maungarongo ki te whenua, whakaaro pai ki ngā tangata katoa

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, e ngā waka tēnā koutou katoa

Ki ngā tini mate, rātou kua mene ki te pō, ngā aitua maha o te motu o te ao – Haere, haere, haere

E tangi ana te ngākau i te aroha ki ā rātou. Haere koutou, te mano, te tini

Ki ā tātou te hunga ora, ngā whānau e pīkau nei i ngā kaupapa o te ora, o te mate, kia kaha kia manawanui

Kia hoki te whakaaro ki te tīmatatanga o te whakatauki nei...

He aha te mea nui o tēnei ao? Mākū e kī atu, he tangata, he tangata, he Tangata

Me whakanuia e tātou tēnei whakatauki kia whai urungā te whānau – kia mau ai ki te wairua, ki te hinengaro, me te tinana o te tangata ki te whānau.

He aha te mea nui o tēnei ao?

Mākū e kī atu – he tangata, he tangata, he WHĀNAU.

He pūrongo tēnei kua kōkiritia, kua rangahaua, i roto i ngā tirohanga o ngā mātua, arā ngā karani, ngā mātua tupuna, e tiaki nei i ngā mokopuna. He mahi tino rangatira te tiaki mokopuna, engari kei konā ano ngā hurihanga, me ngā taimahatanga. Nō reira koia nei te mihi kia koutou e tiaki ana i ngā mokopuna – kia kaha ki te tiaki i te whānau.

E tautoko atu ana i ngā mahi katoa kua oti nei i roto i tēnei pūrongo me te tautoko hoki i ngā mahi rangatira e mahia mai nei i ngā wā kāinga e tiaki nei, e manaaki nei, i ngā mokopuna. Ko tēnei te mahi tino rangatira rawa atu, me te wawata, ā tona wā ka puta ona hua.

Noho ora mai



Bobby Newson
Families Commission Kaihono (2006–11)
Whānau Reference Group member

Te whakarā, popototanga matua

Ko tōku whānau tōku oranga. He mātāpuna tuku iho tērā, kia manaakitia aku mokopuna. (Tupuna whaea: Te Rangahau Ipurangi (Couch poll)¹).

Ko tēnei rauemi e anga nui ana ki te ao i tupu ake o tātou tūpuna Māori i roto o Aotearoa. Kua rārangihia mai i te pūrongo rangahau *Changing Roles: The pleasures and pressures of being a grandparent in New Zealand* (Kōmihana ā Whānau, 2010). Kua tōpuhia ki te rauemi nei te ao o ngā tūpuna Māori i whakaae kia uru mai ki tēnei rangahau, ana, he tākohā tēnei ki te aronganui a te Komihana ā Whānau kia whai reo te iwi Māori i roto i tēnei rangahau.

Ko tō mātou tumanako kia tū tēnei rauemi hei āwhina i ngā kaipānui. Tuatahi, kia whakamahia tēnei rauemi i roto i ngā wānanga, ngā wharekura, ngā marae me ērā o ngā rōpū e mahi ana mō te iwi Māori, hei whitinga kōrero, hei whakaraupeka mahara mō te tū o tātou tūpuna i roto i te ao Māori.

Me tō mātou tino hiahia ka tū tēnei rauemi hei āwhina i ngā rōpu Māori, ngā kaimahi Māori i roto i ngā hāpori, ngā kaiako, me ērā atu o ngā rōpu e mahi ana mō ngā whānau Māori. Me tā mātou wawata ko tēnei rangahau hei arataki i ngā mahi o ngā tari, ngā kaituhi kaupapa, me ērā atu, kia mōhio rātou ki ngā take nui e pā mai ana ki ngā tūpuna Māori, mei kore rātou e whai reo i roto i ngā whakataunga nui.

He nui noa atu ngā mahi āwhina o ngā tūpuna ki ngā whakatupuranga whānau, pērā i te tiaki mokopuna, te āwhina rānei i ngā utu. I ētahi wā ka raruraru kē ko tō rātou ake mahi, me tō rātou ake oranga. Ko ngā tūpuna Māori tonu ngā puna mātauranga, ngā pūkenga whakaaronui. Ko ngā mahi a ngā kaumātua he arataki nei i ngā rōpu ā-iwi, he ōrite ērā kawenga ki ngā kawenga o ngā tūpuna i roto i ngā whānau. Ko ēnei taumata me tautokohia me whakanuitia.

Mō te nuinga o ngā tūpuna, he nui noa atu ngā mea whakahari i a rātou ki ngā mea whakataimaha. I kī mai ana ngā tūpuna Māori ki te rōpū rangahau ka nui tō rātou nei hiahia ki te tuku i tō rātou mātauranga o rātou pūkenga me ngā tikanga ki tō rātou whānau. Heoi anō tērā pea me āta tuku āwhina, tautoko rānei kia taea ai e ngā tūpuna Māori te awhi tonu i ngā mokopuna ahakoa ngā tini pēhinga o te wā. Ko aua pēhinga, ko te momotutanga o ngā herenga ā-whānau i te nekenga mai ki ngā taone noho ai, me te māwehe atu o ētahi ki whenua kē.

Ka pā mai ētahi uauatanga ki ngā tūpuna mehemea ko rātou tonu ngā kaitiaki mokopuna. Ko ngā tūpuna e tiaki ana i ngā mokopuna he nui ngā āwhinatanga ki ngā mātua. Ko ngā tamariki i manaakitia e te whānau whānui e hangai ana ki te tikanga Māori ahakoa, he whawhai tērā i te tikanga Māori ki te tikanga ture Pākehā. Me kī pēnei, e kore ki ētahi atu o ngā tūpuna e rapu ana te kaitiakitanga i roto ake i te tikanga ture Pākehā.

Ko ētahi atu o ngā tūpuna e pēhia nei i te iti o ngā pūtea i tō rātou mahi āwhina i ngā mokopuna me ngā tamariki.

Ko te rangahau *Changing Roles* e whakaatu mai ana ko ngā āwhinatanga a ngā tūpuna Māori ki tō rātou whānau me āta whakanuitia i roto i te whānau, ngā hāpori, ngā tari kāwanatanga me te ao whānui. Me whai reo kaha ngā tūpuna Māori i roto i ngā tuhinga kaupapa me ngā tohanga āwhina e pā ana ki a rātou. Ko ngā kaupapa ka waihangatia me hāngai tonu ki te aronganui o ngā tūpuna Māori i roto i ngā whānau, ngā take oranga ake, ngā whakatupuranga, tae rawa ki ngā uri whakatupu.

Ko te hiahia a te komihana kia whakanuitia ngā taha tuatini o ngā mahi a ngā tūpuna Māori, me te āta tiro ki ngā mahi āwhina mō rātou e noho tūturu ai hei pūkenga mō tō rātou whānau. Ko te tumanako ka whai wāhi tēnei rauemi ki roto i ngā whakawhitinga kōrero hei manu taki kawē i te māramatanga mō ēnei tāpuinga mahi ki te marea.

¹ The Couch was an online 'panel' administered by the Families Commission allowing people to have their say about issues affecting New Zealand families, by answering occasional polls and questionnaires. <http://www.thecouch.org.nz/member/faq>



Kua rerekē te ao o ngā tūpuna Māori

He maha ngā āhuatanga o ēnei wā e tīhaehae ana i te korowai āwhina o te whānau me te āhua o te noho o ngā tūpuna i roto i ngā whānau.

Ina ka tirohia ngā whakaaro e pā ana ki ngā tūpuna, ka kitea te rerekētanga o te noho o ngā tūpuna Māori. He hira nei ōna painga, he mātaratara ōna whiwhinga ki ngā tūpuna Māori. He hono mauroa ngā tikanga paihere i te whānau Māori roto i te ao hurihuri. He tokomaha tonu ngā tūpuna Māori e piri tata ana ki ā rātou mokopuna tamariki hoki.

He tokomaha ngā wāhine e hoki ana ki te mahi i te wā e kōhungahunga tonu ana ā rātou tamariki. Nā tēnei āhuatanga ka kitea ake te kaha tupu mai o ngā wāhi tiaki pēpi e hāngai ana ki tēnā, ki tēnā momo iwi. He mahi nui mō ngā tūpuna ki te tiki i ngā mokopuna i te kura, te tiaki mokopuna e māuiui ana, i ētahi wā ko ngā tūpuna tonu ngā kaiwhāngai i te mokopuna.

Haunga anō te marea tauiwi e kaumātua haere nei me tōna whāinga kia piri tonu ngā whakatupuranga, ko te āhua o te whakatupuranga Māori, he taitama maha kei tona keokeo, he tokoiti ngā kaumātua. Ahakoa taua tū tapatoru nei, kei te whānui rawa atu tōna pūtaketanga. Kua kore iāianeī e kitea te tokomaha o ngā pēpi e whānautia mai ana i te wahine kōtahi, mai i te ono tamariki i ngā tau e ono tekau. Tae rawa mai ki te tau rua mano mā iwa kua taka iho taua tatauranga whānau tamariki ki te 2.80 mō ia wahine Māori. Ka whānau wawe mai ka tōmuri mai rānei te mahi whānau pēpi.

Mō te orangatōnutanga o te tangata, e waru tau te hipatanga o te Māori ki tā te pākehā, ahakoa anō, kei te tōroa atu te nohonga ki te ao nei, ā, kua maha atu te noho ā-whānau nei. He puna rua, he puna toru rānei ētahi o ngā hononga, te pūtahitanga, te tamaiti pōriro, ētahi o ngā whakapōreareatanga mō te whānau. Tua atu i tēnā kua tokomaha rawa ngā wāhine Māori kua hoki ki te mahi, ka tokoiti haere ngā wāhine ka noho ki te tiaki tamariki. Ka tau ki runga i ngā tūpuna tē mahi tiaki mokopuna he aronganui mā te whānau.

Neke atu i te tekau o rau o ngā Māori e noho ana i Ahitereria me te mea hoki he nui atu te oreore o te iwi Māori ki tāwāhi. Ka hūnuku ki te rapu mahi, te whai mātauranga, te rapu rānei i ngā whanaunga (Pool, Dharmalingam, & Sceats, 2007). Ka marara tonu te whānau ki ngā tōpito o te ao.

Te rangahau a Smith (2010) i kōrero ki te 40 tūpuna Māori, i kitea ko te nuinga o ngā tūpuna Māori kei ngā tau 50 atu ki te 60 ngā tau. He tokomaha tonu ka tae ki ngā tau 60 me te 70 ngā tau kua whiwhi mokopuna tuarua. Ko ngā tūpuna e tiaki ana i ngā mokopuna, kei te mahi tonu, kei te whakaitia ā rātou haora mahi, kei te mutu rānei te mahi, ki te tiaki mokopuna. Kāhore te katoa o ngā tūpuna kei te mārena tonu kei te noho kainga rua rānei. Nā Sarfati rāua ko Scott (2001) i āta tiro ki te hauora o ngā 721 wāhine e noho takitahi ana, ko te pūmaha he Māori. He tokoiti noa iho (7.5 paihēneti) o ngā wāhine e noho takitahi ana kei ngā tau 65 ki runga ake hoki (Heoi ano kāre i tohua ko ēhea mātāwaka ēnei). E whakapae ana a Sarfati rāua ko Scott ko ēnei ruruhi kua noho mai hei kaiwhakaruruhau mō te whānau.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whānau is everything to me. I have a cultural and moral responsibility to be involved in my mokos' lives. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

This resource focuses on the experiences of Māori grandparents in New Zealand. It has been compiled from the research report *Changing Roles: The pleasures and pressures of being a grandparent in New Zealand* (Families Commission, 2010). The resource draws on the experiences of the Māori grandparents who took part in our research project, and it contributes towards the Families Commission's commitment to including the voices of Māori in our research.

A total of 187 Māori participated in the two main components of this research project:

- › the telephone survey – 162 participants
- › three focus groups – 25 participants. Focus group participants were largely self-selected, and many more grandmothers took part than grandfathers.

The three focus groups held with Māori grandparents were co-facilitated by Māori members of the research team. Data from the telephone survey and focus groups were supplemented by information shared by Māori grandparents who took part in the Families Commission online 'Couch Polls', an omnibus telephone survey, and a facilitated forum for older people.²

We hope that this resource will assist readers in a number of ways. Firstly, this resource can be shared within wanānga, wharekura, marae and other organisations that work with and for Māori, to trigger discussions and reflections about the roles and responsibilities of Māori grandparents. We also hope it provides useful information to support Māori providers, Māori community workers, teachers and the many people who work with whānau. Lastly, we hope that this research can inform agencies, policy-makers and others about the particular issues faced by Māori grandparents and the need to include their voices in decision-making.

Grandparents play a significant role in the lives of many families, providing support through the provision of childcare and financial contributions. Sometimes this can lead to their own work-life balance and finances being stretched.

Māori grandparents are repositories of cultural knowledge and wisdom; the kaumātua leadership role in iwi and whānau has responsibilities compatible with those of the grandparenting role and both roles should continue to be honoured and valued.

For most grandparents the pleasures of grandparenting outweigh any pressures. Almost half of the Māori grandparents who took part in the telephone survey reported that they did not face any particular pressures being grandparents.

Māori grandparents told the research team about the responsibility and desire they feel to share skills, whakapapa, knowledge, wisdom, cultural practices and beliefs. Support may be needed, however, to ensure that Māori grandparents can continue to share their knowledge with their mokopuna, given increasing pressures on the traditional methods of teaching roles and responsibilities. Pressures include the erosion of traditional whānau supports through urbanisation and emigration.

Grandparents were sometimes critical of the way their mokopuna were parented. When there were significant concerns, some had taken over care of their mokopuna. Grandparents who raise grandchildren provide vital support to these children and to their parents. Amongst Māori, responsibility for children is traditionally widely shared, but cultural practices can conflict with legal and policy approaches. Māori grandparents who take over the care of their mokopuna, for example, may not want to seek formal custody of their mokopuna through the court system.

Financial pressures can be faced by grandparents who raise their mokopuna as primary caregivers, as well as by other grandparents who support their children and mokopuna.

Families Commission (2010) research shows that the contribution of Māori grandparents to New Zealand families needs to be recognised and valued by families, as well as by communities, government and society. Grandparents need a stronger voice in the development of policies and

² The Couch was an online 'panel' administered by the Families Commission allowing people to have their say about issues affecting New Zealand families, by answering occasional polls and questionnaires. <http://www.thecouch.org.nz/member/faq>



services that affect them. Policies and service provision must respond to the diverse nature of grandparents' roles, family structures, lifestyles, ages, relationships and demographic characteristics.

The Commission would like to see more recognition of the multiple roles that Māori grandparents have and an acknowledgment of the support they may need in order to fulfil these roles. We hope that this resource will provide information and form a basis for informed debate that will lead to better public awareness of these roles.

Changes in Māori grandparenting

There have been significant and far-reaching changes over past generations, not only in the way that whānau work, but also in the ways that grandparents carry out their roles in whānau.

When looking at general population considerations, the Māori picture differs in a number of ways that create both advantages and challenges for Māori grandparents. Māori have strong cultural intergenerational connections, which can provide a valuable support system for whānau in changing times. A number of Māori grandparents still maintain intergenerational living in their homes or in close proximity to their children and mokopuna.

Unlike the non-Māori population of baby boomers going into old age with concerns about a replacement population, the Māori demographic picture is one of a triangle with a high youth population and a smaller older population. The base of the triangle, however, is becoming narrower. The average birth rate for Māori women has declined from a high in the 1960s of six children per woman, to 2.8 births per woman in 2009.³

Although still eight years behind that of non-Māori, life expectancy has increased and so extended families have increased. Second and third marriages, blended whānau and children born extramaritally can make whānau relationships complicated. Māori women's participation in the workforce has also increased, so the availability of women as full-time caregivers has changed. The availability of grandparents as caregivers for working parents is therefore critical for supporting whānau. Many women are returning to work when children are young; this trend over recent decades has seen the demand for high-quality and culturally appropriate early childcare services continue to increase. These services can be costly for whānau, however. Grandparents are assuming important childcare roles, from dropping children off and picking them up after school, to caring for sick mokopuna and in some cases assuming full care.

Over 10 percent of Māori live in Australia, and Māori are more mobile than non-Māori, moving for employment, education and kinship reasons (Pool et al., 2007). Whānau can therefore be widely spread geographically.

Smith (2010), speaking with 40 Māori grandparents, found that most of the Māori grandparents were in their 50s and 60s, with many becoming great-grandparents in their 60s and 70s. Grandparents looking after grandchildren are more likely to be in the workforce and be reducing hours or finishing work to do so. Not all grandparents are married or in relationships. Sarfati and Scott (2001), who studied the health of 721 lone mothers in New Zealand, found that they were over twice as likely to be Māori. A significant minority (7.5 percent) of lone mothers were aged over 65 (although the ethnicity of these older mothers was not identified). Sarfati and Scott suggest that these older mothers were likely to be family members who had taken responsibility for dependent children.

3 The Social Report, 2010 (Ministry of Social Development) <http://www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz/people/fertility.html>



Findings

Key findings

There are many pleasures associated with being a grandparent. A strong and recurring theme mentioned by people taking part in the research was the aroha that Māori grandparents feel and express towards their mokopuna, and the joy of nurturing and observing their development.

Most grandparents (95 percent) enjoy looking after their grandchildren.

Three out of four grandparents are satisfied with the balance between time spent with their mokopuna and time for their own interests and activities.

Māori grandparents have unique and particular roles within whānau. They:

- › maintain oversight of whānau, whakapapa and whānau knowledge
- › are key whānau knowledge-holders
- › are key whānau decision-makers and leaders.

Further important findings are listed below. Many of these will be of interest to whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori organisations as well as to policy-makers, employers and others in the community working with whānau.

Although there are many pleasures in being a grandparent, some pressures and challenges were also mentioned. Some of the pressures experienced by grandparents could be alleviated through the provision of information and support tailored to their needs.

Māori grandparents:

- › are often providing care to both mokopuna and elderly whānau
- › are often in the workforce and providing financial support to other whānau
- › commonly put the needs of other generations ahead of their own.

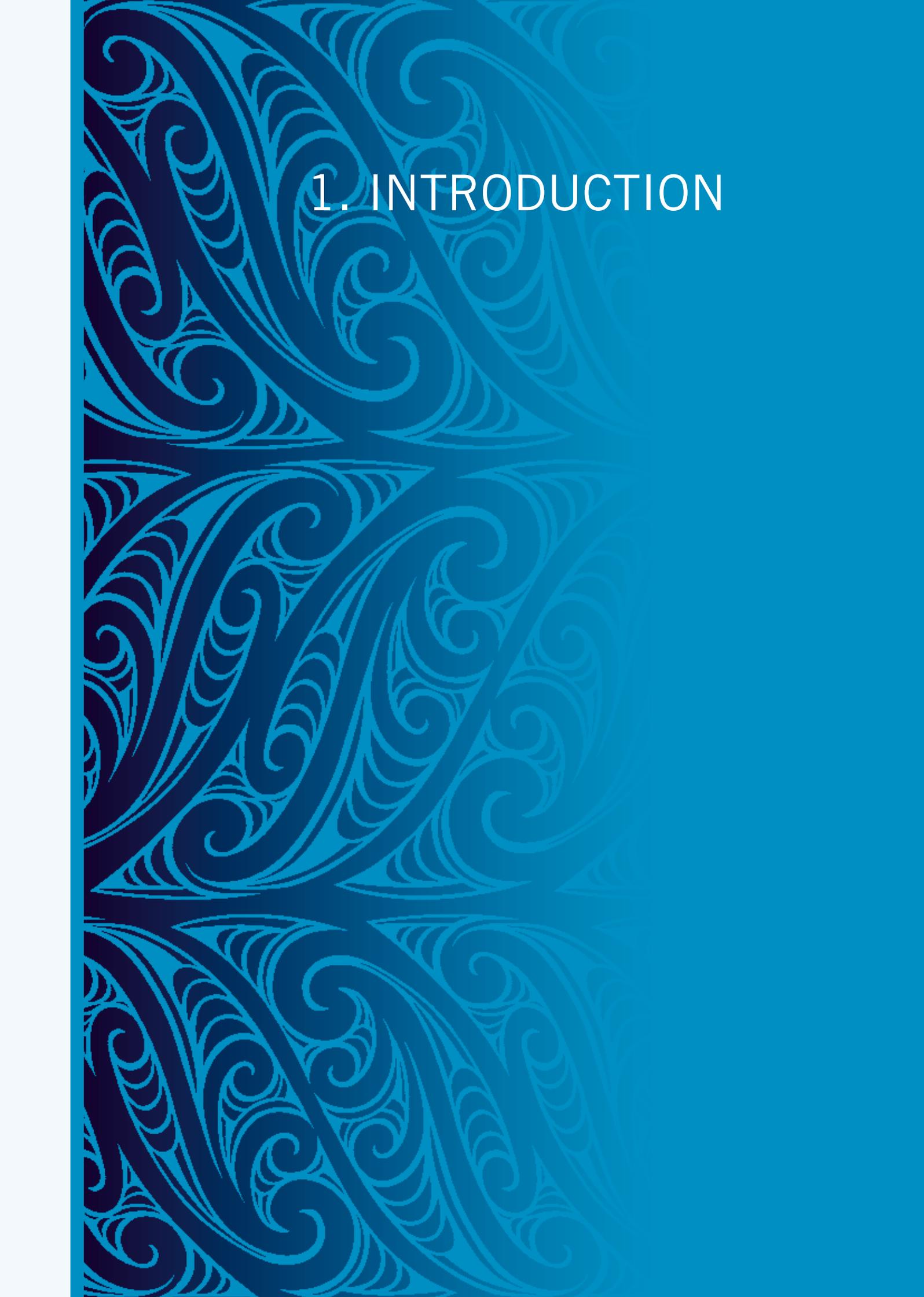
Māori grandparents can be overlooked, yet:

- › they need to be heard
- › their role within whānau needs to be understood
- › they need support and information.

Information and support for grandparents should be channelled to places where they will be able to access it easily, and tailored to the specific characteristics of Māori grandparents, including:

- › grandparents who are juggling paid work and grandparenting responsibilities
- › grandparents raising mokopuna
- › grandparents with other childcare commitments
- › grandparents who are under financial pressure because of the contributions they are making to their grandchildren and their families
- › young grandparents.





1. INTRODUCTION

The Families Commission recognises the contributions that grandparents provide to families. The research for *Changing Roles: The pleasures and pressures of being a grandparent in New Zealand* was undertaken to learn more about the grandparenting role and how grandparents balance their own needs and interests (including paid and voluntary work, and social and leisure activities) with childcare and other family responsibilities. This resource focuses on the role of Māori grandparents, with mention also being made of great-grandparents.

Context

Grandparents play a key role in many families, providing practical, emotional and financial support, with benefits to all generations. Their roles can include adviser, teacher, caregiver, mentor, friend and historian. Usually a person becomes a grandparent when their adult son or daughter has a child. The traditional practice of whāngai, where children are raised by kin members other than their parents (McRae & Nikora, 2006) provides opportunities for grandparents to raise mokopuna. We also acknowledge the roles played by step-grandparents, foster grandparents and relatives and others who assume a grandparenting role by providing support to families who do not have grandparents living nearby.

Grandparents' involvement in grandchildren's lives ranges from those who have no contact at all with their mokopuna, to those who raise mokopuna full-time. It is estimated that in New Zealand over 10,000 children are in kin or whānau care (Worrall, 2009), many of whom are Māori being parented by their grandparents. The exact numbers are not known because large numbers of kin carers have informal arrangements not captured by government statistics.

Grandparents may step into the parenting role when parents are unable or unwilling to, or have been found by the court not to be suitable as primary caregivers. For grandparents raising mokopuna in these circumstances, life can be very challenging in terms of emotional and financial demands. Some move back into the paid workforce to meet costs associated with food, housing and education.

Many grandparents make significant changes to their own lives, including moving to another area to support their adult children and care for their mokopuna. These lifestyle changes may affect grandparents' living conditions, social and support networks and employment prospects. Many, however, make these changes willingly so that they can support the whānau and spend time with their grandchildren:

I spend all the time I get with all my grandchildren because they are living close to me and we have a very good relationship and time when we are together. I work most of the week but from Friday afternoon onwards until Sunday they spend most of their time with us.
(Māori grandfather, online Couch poll)

The research

A multi-method approach was used for the research. The Families Commission engaged with grandparents through focus groups and a nationwide telephone survey. The findings were supplemented by information shared by Māori grandparents who participated in the Commission's

online Couch polls, an omnibus telephone survey and a guided discussion session during an older people's forum.⁴ A literature scan provided additional information.

For further information about the research aims and methodology, please read the introduction in *Changing Roles: The pleasures and pressures of being a grandparent in New Zealand* and *Changing Roles of Grandparents – A quantitative study*. Both reports are on the Families Commission website.

The participants

A total of 187 Māori participated in the two main components of this research project:

- › the telephone survey – 162 participants
- › three focus groups – 25 participants. Focus group participants were largely self-selected and many more grandmothers took part than grandfathers.

The three focus groups held with Māori grandparents were co-facilitated by Māori members of the research team. The composition of each focus group is summarised below.

Group 1: Urban Māori – older grandparents

Ten grandparents participated in this predominantly Māori focus group, including three grandfathers. Two participants attended to support their mother or father in their roles as a grandparent and great-grandparent and one of these was herself a grandmother. The participants' ages ranged from mid-40s to late 70s. The group was located in a North Island city.

Group 2: Urban Māori – younger grandparents

Seven people attended this focus group held on a marae, five women and two men. They were predominantly younger grandparents living in a low-decile neighbourhood. Most of them were living away from a traditional whānau setting. Their ages ranged from early 30s to mid-50s. Among the grandparents there were 27 grandchildren. Two of the focus group participants were not grandparents themselves: one woman attended to support her father (a grandparent) and a young man who attended was a community youth worker at a local high school. This group was located in a North Island suburb.

Group 3: Provincial Māori – older grandparents

This focus group of seven older grandmothers and one older grandfather – ranging in age from 60 to one who was over 80 – included grandparents and great-grandparents. Amongst them they had 127 grandchildren. The participants introduced themselves in Māori, but the focus group was conducted in English. All were very active in maintaining oversight of their whānau, and were involved in kaupapa Māori activities and organisations. This group was located in a North Island provincial city.

⁴ Additionally, a grandmother who was unable to participate in a focus group wrote a letter to the project team to share her experiences as a grandparent raising grandchildren.

The background of the page is a solid blue color. On the left side, there is a vertical strip of a traditional Maori decorative pattern, known as a koru. This pattern consists of intricate, swirling, and spiraling lines that resemble stylized fern fronds or waves, rendered in a slightly darker shade of blue. The text is centered in the upper half of the page.

2. ROLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MĀORI GRANDPARENTS

I enjoy my grandchildren as I did my own children but without constant responsibility.
(Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Discussions in the focus groups explored the grandparent role; pleasures, pressures and corresponding obligations and rights. For Māori, the role of whānau – including grandparents – is particularly significant for the wellbeing and sustainability of hapū and iwi, in terms of providing support, sharing resources and nurturing children:

With the state of the current world, I believe the more positive influences in my grandchildren's lives that I am able to give them, provides them with more tools to deal with the many challenges that they will encounter in their current and later lives. (Māori grandfather, online Couch poll)

I have had wonderful bonding time with my grandchildren and they are as happy to stay with me as they are to be with their parents. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Māori grandparents can face challenges related to variations between traditional and contemporary roles; these roles are described in the following section. They recognise that times are changing and adapting to changes can provide opportunities for personal growth:

It has reminded me that I need to keep learning about how to get along with my grandchildren. What worked with my own children when they were 16 does not necessarily work with a 16-year-old today. It has all been good – I am still growing. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Some Couch poll members described how their culture influences and affects their relationships with their grandchildren:

Cultural beliefs are very important in my grandchildren's lives and I ensure that they learn as much as possible: waiata, kōrero, karakia, tikanga, kawa, pūrākau etc. (Māori/Samoan grandmother, online Couch poll)

My cultural beliefs play a very big role in my life and that of my children and grandchildren. I like to teach my children and mokos to appreciate the simple things in life and how to live off the land, nurture and respect the land. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Within the telephone survey sample, Māori grandparents were more likely than grandparents as a whole to be living with one or more grandchildren. Māori grandparents also had more grandchildren than other grandparents and saw them more often.

Māori grandparents told us that:

- almost all of them (95 percent) found it enjoyable and satisfying to look after their mokopuna, and 75 percent of them were satisfied with the balance between the time spent with mokopuna and time spent on their own interests and activities
- many of them had a lot of control over how much time they spent with mokopuna (65 percent). Some would like to change the amount of time they spent with mokopuna (56 percent), and some said they were not always able to cope with the expectations of the parents of their mokopuna (22 percent)
- approximately one third of them were concerned about the financial pressures they faced as a grandparent and said their finances had been stretched by the contributions they were making to their whānau (32 percent)
- many of them had put their own needs and interests on hold to look after mokopuna (62 percent) or said they had changed their lifestyle (44 percent). Those who had changed their lifestyle were more likely to say this gave them less time for other things
- a third would like to get information on grandparenting from other whānau members (34 percent).

Grandparents' ages

Not all grandparents are 'older people'. Some of the youngest grandparents in New Zealand are in their early 30s, including a Māori grandmother who took part in one of our focus groups. Among Māori respondents in an omnibus telephone survey carried out for this project, 53 percent had become grandparents before the age of 45 years.

The age diversity of Māori grandparents must be taken into account by those working with and for grandparents, particularly when considering appropriate channels for disseminating information and support. Māori women tend to have children at a younger age than women who are not Māori.⁵ This can mean that Māori grandparents have both dependent children and grandchildren, which may result in multiple demands upon their time. A grandmother in one focus group told us that she had two pre-schoolers of her own, as well as a grandson, the child of her teenage daughter. A youthful online poll grandparent described juggling multiple responsibilities and the associated joy of being a grandparent:

I had just turned 40 when my first grandchild came into this world, I still work full-time and juggle myself as a parent and a wife, and it is the most best time to appreciate life when your mokos enter into this world. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

The effects of becoming a grandfather prematurely were described by one focus group participant:

Before you know it you're a grandparent... I know that my father experienced that really early, and he went into shock. He didn't expect to be a grandfather that young in his life. He still wanted to ... live his life as the parent, but all of a sudden he was thrown into this role and it was a huge learning curve for him and [there were many] challenges. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Some grandparents talked about the fact that some young people were becoming parents at much earlier ages, and the challenges that this caused:

The parents of our kids now are a lot younger, the majority are a lot younger than we were ... they haven't grown up. When they're having children at 13, 15 and 16 they're still kids themselves. And they think they know it all – 'Look at me, I've got a child. You can't tell me what to do because I've got a baby. I know what I'm doing.' This is how they carry on. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Grandfathers

Grandfathers as well as grandmothers participated in our focus groups, although more women than men chose to take part. With the increase in blended families, divorce and remarriage, grandfathers and grandmothers can be grandparenting their own mokopuna and mokopuna from their partners' earlier relationships.

A focus group grandfather reflected on how it was easier for him to express his love for his grandchildren than his adult children:

I do find it easier to say 'I love you' to my mokopuna than to my own kids. I do find it much easier. I'm teaching my mokopuna to say ... 'I love you Poppa.' And it is a natural thing, but I never did it with my own. Maybe when they were small I said it, but then they grew up. You don't say 'I love you' to men! (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

Analysis of the telephone survey data indicates that grandmothers are likely to outnumber grandfathers. One of the reasons for this is that women in New Zealand tend to live longer than men. Life expectancy at birth for Māori females in New Zealand exceeds that of males.⁶ Another reason is that Māori women can be single grandmothers.

⁵ <http://www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz/people/fertility.html>

⁶ The 2005–07 life tables indicate that a newborn Māori boy can expect to live 70.4 years and a newborn Māori girl 75.1 years. This is an increase of 1.4 years for males and 1.9 years for females over the 2000–02 figures of 69.0 years for males and 73.2 years for females. See www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/life_expectancy



Traditional and contemporary grandparent roles

This section describes the traditional and contemporary roles of Māori grandparents, drawing on information shared during the focus groups and from research literature, supplemented by comments from online Couch poll participants. Data from Māori grandparents who participated in the telephone survey are presented in Tables 2–12.

Whānau roles

Durie (1997) describes the capacity to care (manaakitia) as a critical role for whānau. Among Māori, the image of harakeke (the flax bush) is commonly used to portray whānau relationships and the role that grandparents play in the lives of grandchildren. The inner shoot (te rito) is nurtured by outer leaves – parents are one layer of protection, with grandparents being the second layer of protection for the fragile new growth. Durie describes caring for children as encompassing emotional and spiritual responsibilities, involving “the transmission of culture, the fostering of lifestyle and the development of an identity” (p. 9). In the following table, he summarises the five key functions of families and whānau relating to healthy development.⁷

Table 1: Ngā take o te whānau: Family and whānau capacities for healthy development

Function	Tasks	Qualities	Applications
Manaakitia The capacity to care	Responsiveness to individuals Responsibility for less abled	Love Compassion Protection	Care of elderly Care of children Care of sick
Tohatohatia The capacity to share	Meet others' needs Fair distribution of goods Interdependence	Generosity Selflessness Fairness	Support when financially distressed Distribution of goods (fish, crops)
Pupuri taonga The capacity for guardianship	Protection and wise management of cultural, intellectual and physical properties	Trusteeship Management Communication	Language and cultural development Whānau economic base Utilisation of whānau land
Whakamana The capacity to empower	Access to resources Development of resources Assisted entry into wider society	Effective leadership Advocacy Liaison	Marae role for whānau Participation in hapū and iwi Health, education, housing
Whakatakoto tikanga The capacity to plan ahead	Readiness for change Needs of future generations	Vision Responsibility Organisation	Retirement planning Education for mokopuna Economic investment

Source: Durie (1997, p. 10)

⁷ This is based on a similar model developed by Durie (1994), in an address to the Public Health Association, Palmerston North.



The strength and positive outcomes resulting from strong whānau networks are evident in the following comment:

On my father's side we have a very close whānau and we try to get together often to celebrate whānau events. My closest friends are some of the members of my whānau, including some of my father's sisters. My husband's whānau are also very close, and we also spend a lot of time with them. My mother-in-law still regularly cares for her grandchildren; my sisters-in-law have very young children and she still babysits. Much of our emotional and cultural and spiritual support comes from people from our parents' generation. Through their example we have learned independence and self-reliance: that whānau looks after whānau, and how to give to and receive service from others. (Māori mother, online Couch poll)

Traditional grandparenting

One meaning of mokopuna is someone who is a reflection of their ancestors. Traditionally, Māori children were raised within the kāinga (village) among a wide network of uncles, aunties, cousins and grandparents. Grandparents had a special bond with mokopuna, and grandfathers had a strong role in the lives of children alongside grandmothers. The grandparents' role was one of guidance, mentoring and passing on traditional knowledge (including whakapapa knowledge) and of having a highly respected place among whānau. Respect for the knowledge held by grandparents was a given, and grandparents had authority. Parents and mokopuna would value the wisdom of grandparents and assume care of ageing grandparents.

Mokopuna-grandparent relationships were those of unconditional love and indulgence. Grandparents were teachers, guides and preservers of traditions, customs and relationships. It was common for grandparents to be the primary caregivers of grandchildren, particularly the firstborn. These particular children were held in high regard and could be identified by the fact that they were given access to knowledge well ahead of their chronological years (Ka'ai, 2005). Mokopuna also had a role to play in caring for other members of the whānau and in particular the elderly, younger siblings and debilitated members (Walker, 1979).

Contemporary grandparenting

Māori can be deeply changed by the experience of becoming grandparents, as this Ngāti Porou grandfather describes:

Becoming of the tipuna (grandparent) generation, Te Ao Māori conferred on me, an inescapable obligation ... to be the first and prime transmitter of cultural templates of identity, values, knowledge and interpretations to my mokopuna... I am kai-pupuri (holder) of elements crucial to their wellbeing just as my tipuna were in their time. This gives a deep, personal purpose and source of revitalising energy to maintain the rigour needed for this life-long commitment. (Pohatu, 2003, p. 5)

This illustrates the way that grandparents continue to have an important role in nurturing, caring for and protecting their grandchildren in contemporary Māori society. They are involved in passing on knowledge of whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori identity.

The strength of the traditional grandparent-mokopuna relationship is seen in Māori communities. It has been affected by a number of factors, however. In particular, the effects of urbanisation and the impact of colonisation on traditional whāngai practices have put pressure on kinship relationships.

Several online poll members expressed an interest in living according to traditional ways:

There should be a return to the concept whereby the grandparents brought up the grandchildren, allowing the parents to do what they need to provide for their family. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

I would like my grandchildren and my children [to] all live in the same house like a marae or a papakāinga. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Whāngai

The term 'whāngai' means to feed or to nurture, and is commonly used for the customary Māori practice of children being raised by kin members other than their parents. These kin members provided instruction, cultural knowledge, affection and food, so that the child "is being nurtured in the fullest sense" (Bradley, 1997, in McRae & Nikora, 2006 p. 1). Whāngai arrangements are "cognisant of the interests of the child, but ... weighted more towards establishing, nurturing and cementing relationships between individuals, families and broader relational networks".

The traditional practice of grandparents raising their grandchildren was greatly affected during colonisation. The Native Land Act 1909 prohibited the practice of whāngai in its customary form. Māori were forced to legally adopt through the Native Land Court or whāngai would not be able to legally succeed to land. The introduction of closed adoptions left Māori children at risk of losing their identity and today a number have lost touch with hapū and iwi.

Urbanisation

From the 1930s onwards, large numbers of Māori moved to cities for work and education. This shift away from the traditional extended whānau support, and away from traditional papakāinga (home bases), had a big impact. Because they were no longer able to gather around hapū and papakāinga, it became increasingly difficult to maintain connections to whānau and hapū (Walker, 1979). Many whānau could not organise themselves around urban whānau or their iwi structures. Others maintained existing ties and developed new ones through urban marae such as Ngāti Pōneke in Wellington.

The breakdown in intergenerational living was considerable by the 1960s. Walker (1979) describes a 1969 survey of 100 Māori households and the impact of single-family housing on the traditional extended family construct:

[The survey findings] revealed that 90 were single-family units. Small houses and confined space made it difficult to continue the extended family, except in a modified form such as the mini-marae described earlier. So the norm was a single-family unit to a single dwelling, with each family responsible for its own economic wellbeing. (p. 37)

By the 1990s, single-family households became proportionately more common amongst Māori than in the total population (Durie, 1994). This erosion of whānau support and intergenerational nurturing saw a growing concern for whānau wellbeing. In the following comment, a focus group grandparent talks about the continuing pressure of urbanisation today:

...the pressure of actually living in an urban environment removed from your own haukāinga and away from your marae or your kaumātua and kuia and whānau. So you have to either have good connections to the haukāinga or you establish networks or almost like another surrogate whānau in the urban setting ... and I kind of relate to [name] in terms of your mokopuna not living in [the same area] and I think some of that is about some of the economic pressures of going home. We don't think about it in terms of pressures, because we're wanting our mokopuna to have that same connection with their tūrangawaewae and the marae – the whakapapa, te reo, the tikanga that relates you back to your whānau, hapū, iwi... I think probably that the urban kind of disassociation from haukāinga is, well for me, is actually a big pressure. The other thing is when there is tangihanga or these things back home: how do we organise the whānau group to go back to the haukāinga? Because when we are at home we automatically go to the marae and it takes a little bit more organising in terms of logistics. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Where the grandparents live

It was commonly reported by Māori grandparents taking part in the phone survey that they were living near their mokopuna, and one in four lived with them.

	N=162 %
I live in the same town or city as one or more of my grandchildren, although I do not live with them	59
All of my grandchildren live in New Zealand	59
None of my grandchildren live in the same town as me	30
I live with one or more of my grandchildren	25
Some of my grandchildren live overseas	23
All of my grandchildren live overseas	3

Base: all respondents; multiple responses possible

Multiple roles

Māori grandparents frequently have other whānau, hapū or iwi responsibilities in addition to their grandparenting roles. They can also face unique challenges to maintaining traditional grandparent-mokopuna relationships, particularly if they are isolated from whānau support networks. For Māori who do not live near whānau, kaupapa-based whānau groups, such as kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa and sports groups, can play an important role.

As well as being grandparents, kaumātua can have other roles that require large time commitments. Grandparents and great-grandparents have played an important role in the vast number of Māori initiatives that have evolved in areas such as Māori language revival, marae restoration, whānau strengthening and hapū initiatives, as well as working alongside organisations dealing with health, justice and education.⁸ Grandparents and great-grandparents are an extremely valuable source of knowledge of Māori language, history and tikanga.

Durie (1999) writes that in contemporary Māori communities:

...there are particular roles that are enhanced if they are filled by kaumātua. Those roles include speaking on behalf of the tribe, or family; resolving disputes and conflicts between families and between tribes; **carrying the culture; protecting and nurturing younger adults and children; and recognising and encouraging the potential of younger members.** [Emphasis added] (p. 102)

Durie also notes that for kaumātua, adjustments to the role can include:

...reduced privacy, less time with family (and for the immediate family a need to share their grandparent with the wider community), longer 'working hours' and relative loss of independence ... for some kaumātua the new roles may be seen as burdensome ... [although simultaneously satisfying]. (p. 103)

⁸ From the 1980s onwards, the impact of language loss and whānau support began to be more consciously addressed. For example, the kōhanga reo movement, which began in 1981, was in response to Māori concern about ensuring the continuing survival of the Māori language.

Agencies who work with Māori need to:

- recognise the important role that grandparents play in iwi: teaching, role-modelling and supporting younger whānau members, as well as their role of speaking on behalf of iwi
- respect the cultural knowledge and wisdom that Māori grandparents hold and the challenges they face in transmitting it
- acknowledge Māori grandparents who undertake multiple roles within iwi and whānau.

Not all kaumātua are grandparents and not all grandparents have ongoing contact with their grandchildren. Some older people without mokopuna appreciate opportunities to act in a grandparenting role by contributing their skills and knowledge in a voluntary capacity. This brings benefits to both generations (and to communities) as older people share their practical knowledge and skills, and mentor families who would otherwise miss out.

One focus group grandparent talked about the pressures of time 'running out' and his perceived failure to meet the expectations of him as a grandparent:

I'm fearing now that I'm running out of time, and time is not age, time is that life has just passed me by and when am I going to have time to teach my moko because by the time I turn around they are too old or they are gone. Have I missed the boat here somewhere? So as a grandparent I think I have somehow failed to be doing what I should be doing in my culture. I'd love to teach my mokopuna mihimihi, but I see them coming through now ... I'm saying, 'I should have done this, I should have done that, but where the hell was I?' Playing rugby, drinking, doing everything else... (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Another urged consideration of the need for grandparents to re-examine their roles within the whānau:

I say that because being directly involved in my own tribal structure, our strategies don't take into account this kind of kōrero... [Speaker reflects on a high-profile case involving family violence] What could my whānau do to prevent that from happening? Because it could be my own whānau, my own immediate whānau that could have this happen and it really starts with the kōrero. It really starts putting it out there, not being fearful that this is an okay subject, it's safe to talk about the role of grandparents. Dare I say it ... sometimes we take those roles for granted. And so we need to put it out there ... because we are very comfortable about talking about the role of pakeke, the role of kuia, the role of kaumātua, in terms of our formal roles on a marae – but they play a much more critical role and that is their role in the whānau structure, and how do we as whānau support that? (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Information and communication technology (ICT)

The introduction of new technologies over the last three decades has seen dramatic changes in communication. Some grandparents are familiar with these changes and use email, video calling, social networking and texting, but others have not yet learnt how to use any of these communication methods. Māori grandparents had varying experiences of technology and opinions about it. One grandparent in the Couch poll said:

I think that being a grandparent in New Zealand today is vital [to] the future health and wellbeing of our grandchildren. If we cannot teach or pass on our effective knowledge and skills, how will our mokos survive in New Zealand 10 to 20 years from now? A lot of these skills have been lost from one generation to another, and/or replaced by 'quick fixes' such as that which technology can provide at the push of a button ... could it be that we are just so hung up on technology (the easy way) we no longer see the effectiveness of doing things one-to-one (that is, human to human), not human to technology? (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

A number of older grandparents mentioned the ways that technology created a divide between them and their mokopuna because grandparents can lack knowledge of its usage. Grandparents also commented on how technology could create distractions, meaning that mokopuna could be present in body, but also absent:

Today the kids think we are old fuddy-duddies – we know nothing, and I say ‘Sorry, I don’t know what you are on about – computers – I don’t know anything about that... I’m quite happy to sit here and talk to you.’ I said, ‘...you sit there and you’re like this – your friend is sitting right beside you and you’re clicking back and forward [texting]. I said what kind of communication is that? I said that doesn’t really go down with me. You kids gotta get a life.’ (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

But other grandparents in our consultations mentioned the value of acquiring technological skills so that they could keep in touch with grandchildren and other family members. Technologies such as email and texting make it easier to keep in touch with family who do not live nearby, although the costs of cellphone top-ups and call charges were taken into account. Skype calls via internet, which allow conversation and pictures to be shared, can ease the distance between some grandparents and their mokopuna. Telephone calls also bring great joy:

I love my family even though only one of them is back here and the rest are across the Tasman. It makes my world when I hear them cackling on the phone there – sometimes you can just about smell that stuff, you know, coming over the phone! [laughter] (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Intervening to ensure children’s safety

The focus group findings reaffirmed the powerlessness grandparents feel when they want to intervene and take over the care of vulnerable mokopuna. In particular, there is the perception that the authorities will not support them when they are trying to ensure the safety of their mokopuna. Grandparents spoke of the lack of good information for grandparents about the Care of Children Act, and grandparents’ rights to intervene if they are concerned about the safety of their mokopuna. Project team member Dr Cheryl Waerea-i-te-rangi Smith co-facilitated two focus groups with Māori grandparents.⁹ She observed:

The focus groups made me think a lot about how, as Māori, we need to overtly teach the intergenerational roles. We have tended to take it for granted that young Māori are learning to respect their elders ... that grandparents love their mokopuna and will cherish and look after them through selfless devotion. While these roles are still clearly there among Māori we can’t take it for granted that these important relationships will survive as special relationships.

Grandparenting is taught or socialised and if your grandparents died before you knew them, or you lived in other towns, and if you have been socialised to believe that your peer group is more important, then you may not learn. If you don’t attend kōhanga, kura or have a lot to do with other whānau, then the roles may not be widely reinforced. Also if your own economic survival is at risk as a grandparent, or you already have nieces and nephews in your care, or you have 30 moko, or most of your moko are in Australia, how do you have the time and the resources to nurture those important whānau relationships?

Smith concludes that if discussions in the Māori focus groups are indicative of Māori more generally, this suggests that Māori are struggling to maintain the traditional grandparent-mokopuna roles because of three primary pressures:

- economic pressures, including the need for traditional caregivers to be in the workplace and people still working after age 65. Māori die younger, so the over-65 population is small in comparison to a large rangatahi (youth) population
- the erosion of traditional whānau supports (such as the constant presence of helpful others) through urbanisation and emigration, particularly to Australia
- the increasing pressures on the traditional ways of teaching people their roles and responsibilities.

⁹ Dr Smith, Co-Director of Te Atawhai o te Ao, is conducting her own research project, *He Mokopuna, He Taonga*, focusing on the health and wellbeing of Māori grandparents raising mokopuna.



Separation

Separation affects many New Zealand families. Grandparents described some of the challenges they and their families faced maintaining relationships with grandchildren (and extended families) following adult children's separation from their partners. Some grandparents expressed concern about losing contact with their grandchildren post-separation:

We have got one grandchild we don't get to see because the parents won't let us. They split up when she was 18 months old and now she is nearly four. (45–49-year-old Māori grandmother with four grandchildren, telephone survey respondent)

Grandparents may be eligible to apply for a parenting order. This is 'an order made by the Family Court that says who is responsible for day-to-day care of a child, and when and how someone else important in the child's life can have contact with them'. Further information about this can be found on the Ministry of Justice website.¹⁵ The Ministry has also developed a fact sheet (see Appendix) providing suggestions for grandparents and other adults in the whānau regarding how they might support children whose parents have separated.

Disability

The most recent study of disability in New Zealand estimates that 17 percent of New Zealanders have a disability (Statistics New Zealand's Disability Survey, 2006).¹⁰ Disability increases with age, with 45 percent of adults aged 65 years and over having a disability. Māori have a higher disability rate than other ethnic groups in every age group.

Grandparents may themselves be disabled, or be supporting family members with disabilities. Through our consultations, we heard about ways that disability affects grandparents' lives. We also heard from families about the ways in which they assist disabled grandparents, although financial barriers sometimes limit the help provided:

If money was not an issue, we could afford to have my grandmother living with us with a nurse aide to help. The only reason she is in a home is because she is immobile and she needs to use a hoist to move. We don't have one so could not care for her. Money would also allow us to live in a house that was big enough for us all to have our own space. (Māori mother, online Couch poll)

Grandparents who are themselves disabled may also be providing support to others, in both older and younger generations:

My mum also has chronic arthritis and yet she cares for my grandmother who is in her 90s and has age-related disabilities. (Māori mother, online Couch poll)

Vulnerable grandparents

Families Commission (2008a) Elder Abuse and Neglect research describes abuse to grandparents' personal property and general disrespect. This was echoed in our findings. Two grandparents at a focus group discussed the potential harm that grandchildren can cause and their reactions:

They can wreck your houses, grandchildren. You are supposed to accept it and carry on. Yes. It's cost me a fortune. The less I see of them the better! And you feel the same too, don't you?

No, with all my grandchildren, if they don't break my heart they are allowed to break anything that's in it that's mine. (Grandparents, Māori focus group)

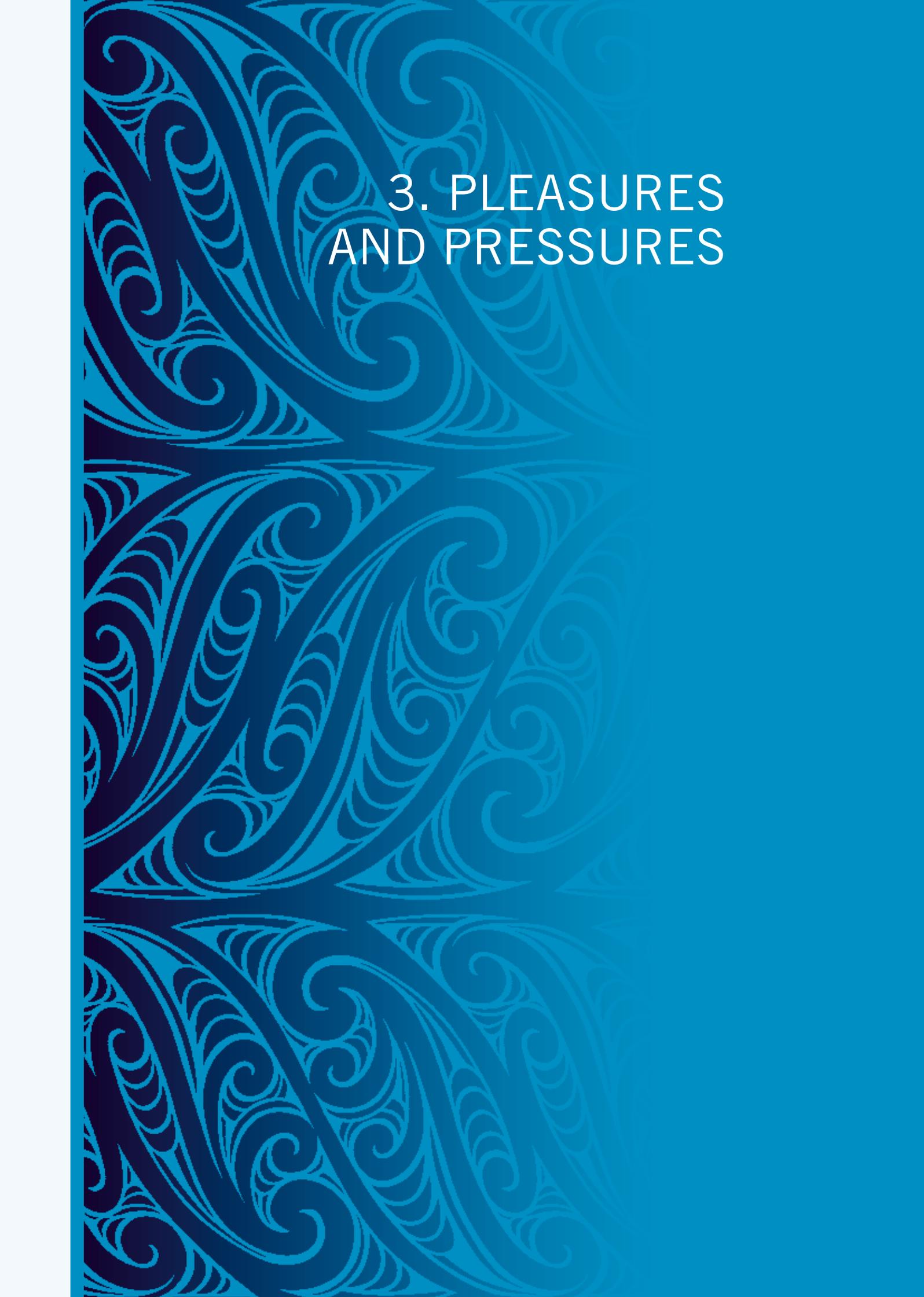
Māori participants in the Families Commission (2008a) study said that control over older people's access to mokopuna was common, describing how mokopuna were used as a form of coercion: "If you don't look after them [the grandchildren] then we won't bring them to see you" (Auckland, Māori key informant; Families Commission, 2008a, p. 53).

10 http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/disabilities/disabilitysurvey2006_hotp06.aspx

Families Commission (2008a) notes that lack of consideration for older people's emotional, physical and social needs causes loneliness and feelings of helplessness and can lead to depression and suicide. Grandparents sometimes feel pulled in different directions, with little time for themselves:

For me as a grandparent, I have my ups and downs. Being a grandmother, yeah, you know, it's fun, I love them dearly, but the downfall, sometimes it gets on top of you ... you've looked after your children and it's like you end up with the kids again. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Older people are most likely to be valued and respected in a society where there is strong social contact and many ties between the different generations. This reinforces the value of fostering positive ongoing relationships between grandparents and grandchildren.



3. PLEASURES AND PRESSURES

There are both pleasures and pressures associated with being a grandparent. Nearly half of the Māori grandparents in the telephone survey reported that they did not face any particular pressures being a grandparent; the others mentioned a range of pressures. This section first focuses on the multiple pleasures of being a grandparent. Next, the pressures and challenges of grandparenting are outlined. Details are provided about the most frequently mentioned pressures to help those who work with and for grandparents to respond more effectively so that they can improve the lives of grandparents who are facing challenges.

Pleasures

A strong and recurring theme among the focus groups was the aroha that Māori grandparents feel and express towards their mokopuna, and the joy of nurturing and observing their development. This included the opportunity to offer time and resources to their mokopuna that were unavailable to their own children when they were growing up.

As Table 3 shows, most of the respondents in the telephone survey wanted to spend more time with their mokopuna.

Table 3: Time spent with mokopuna

How would you like to change the amount of time that you spend with your grandchildren? Would you like to:	N=91 %
Spend more time in general with your grandchildren	82
Arrange to look after (grandchildren) on a regular, predictable basis	23
Spend less time in general with your grandchildren and free up time for your other interests	10
Spend less time looking after grandchildren, in general	7

Base: Those who wanted to change the amount of time they spend with their grandchildren: multiple responses possible

Another theme evident throughout the Māori focus group discussions was that participants who experienced a strong nurturing relationship with their own grandparents when they were young looked forward to the grandparenting role. They felt a special relationship with their own grandchildren. For some, memories of their own positive relationships with their grandparents were a vital influence.

The main pleasures that grandparents described were:

- aroha and appreciation
- teaching the mokopuna and learning from them
- hope for te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.

Aroha and appreciation

I think there are a lot of pleasures. One of the pleasures that I've had are a series of letters I've got from different moko telling me what they are doing and how they are really, you know, one of them wrote to say 'You are always there Nan if we need you', which I think was a nice thing to say. And I've got a letter that was written by the mother of one of them, the verbatim stuff that the two-year-old said about me and they were really nice things so I've kept those. Those are some of the pleasures. And the pleasures are when they come back and bring you a plant or a flower or something like that. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Pleasure – it is understanding where they are at. Like, grandchildren to us are a lot closer to us than our own siblings. We find that quite a bit, and then finding that balancing act between the difference that you can make with that child's life and looking at the pressures that are happening in this society from this day to how it was compared to us. How our grandparents brought us up also, and how we try and instil the rights upon our own grandchildren, you know. Those are the sort of pleasures I get out of raising our grandchildren. And to hear from them, 'I love you' – you know that to me means more than words can express and how close they are to you. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Thirty-four percent of Māori grandparents in the telephone survey reported seeing one or more of their grandchildren at least once a day, with another 25 percent seeing them several times a week. Regular contact benefits both generations.

Grandparents in our survey described their pleasure and pride in their mokopuna:

Most of my grandchildren come from stable homes. Looking at them in the weekend, they are happy kids, they are happy kids. I've got a lot in Australia – they've made a life for themselves in Australia and they all came home for my birthday. I've got a good relationship with my grandchildren, an excellent relationship with my grandchildren. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Teaching the mokopuna and learning from them

As iwi, as parents, there is no book to teach you how to be Mum and Dad, and when you reflect, you start being part of your grandchildren's lives, you realise you can do things better. So I've taken every opportunity to spend quality time, more constructive time to teach them things I didn't have the time or the patience to give my own [children]. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Grandparents not only enjoy being with their mokopuna, they enjoy learning from them:

...he learned from his mokopunas ... not only about his tolerance, about himself, not necessarily about his mokopunas, but about his levels of tolerance and about his interpersonal skills. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Another grandparent commented on the way she learnt from her mokopuna even as they learnt from her:

I don't speak Māori [well], but they speak it [well] and they are teaching me ... you learn from them really but then you're learning different meanings, especially when you come from different [tribal areas] and when I say these are different they say ... Nannie ... because they're taught different[ly]. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Hope for te reo Māori me ōna tikanga

Hope for the future inspired many of the grandparents, especially in relation to te reo Māori me ōna tikanga:

I have always had a passion of being Māori and ... I went to whakatau my son (my son is a teacher at the kura at the moment) and also the new entrants for the school. So when they call, if possible I like to be part of that and part of kōhanga reo as Nannie – we grew up and helped and planted it and watched it grow and weeded it here and there and it's wonderful to see that our culture, that Māoritanga has a chance of surviving and you see it in our mokopuna. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

...the important thing is getting our kids to the marae to do tangihanga manually because that is where you see the best of tikanga Māori and the teachings are there. When you've got the opportunity. But just family gatherings, the way we get together, your tikanga's working then. It's getting your kids to help each other and do their thing. Like the kids always start clearing the dishes and washing the dishes and then they get promoted to peeling the potatoes and helping with cooking the kai and get to do the laying out the marae or tidying up outside and picking up the rubbish. And then there are different stratas of progress until you sit out the front... I think we are all aware that we make sure that our children go through those different stages, and it is lovely when we see our older kids who can stand up, and ... karanga ... and that sort of thing, but to me it is the basics, eh, learning to wash the dishes, learning to clear the dishes, it's all part of our tikanga. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Ngā Wero: Pressures and challenges

Participants in the telephone survey, focus groups and forum were asked to describe any pressures that they faced as a grandparent. As noted above, however, almost half of the Māori grandparents in the telephone survey reported that they did not face any particular pressures being grandparents. Others mentioned a range of pressures, including financial pressures, distance from grandchildren and behavioural issues. Focus group grandparents also described a range of challenges and pressures in caring for, and supporting, their grandchildren and their families.

In the following sections we outline the pressures described by the grandparents. We do this to help those who work with and for grandparents to:

- › respond to grandparents more effectively
- › improve the lives of grandparents who are facing difficulties
- › enhance the lives of grandparents and their whānau.

Key pressures and challenges

Grandparents who felt under pressure were often living with one or more grandchildren, looking after one or more of them on a regular basis or seeing one or more grandchildren every day. There was no clear relationship between feeling under pressure and the age of the grandparent or the number of grandchildren.

The main issues were:

- › negotiating boundaries around their time and contributions
- › concerns about the risks to grandchildren living in unstable or difficult family environments
- › powerlessness in the decision-making process around their grandchildren's welfare
- › difficulties in maintaining their own time, space and relationships
- › intergenerational differences
- › isolation arising from physical or emotional distances
- › financial pressures.

Negotiating boundaries

Some grandparents felt the need for boundaries around their time and the contributions they made to their families, especially concerning the provision of childcare. At times grandparents talked about how providing childcare could be a pressure for them because of their lack of time and resources. Added to this was the pressure of being expected to be the child's carer despite their own needs:

As grandparents we get taken advantage of a lot ... 'You're my mother – it's what you should be doing.' (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Grandparents in one focus group described how their grandchildren were dropped off at their homes with minimal supplies, with expectations that the grandparents would provide what was needed:

Before my daughter moved in, she dropped the mokos off with three nappies and they were there for the weekend. Nannie get the rest, sort of thing.

And two changes of clothes. That's all, but that's alright – Nana will take them to the shop and buy them something to wear. And I do...

And I do – but that's me because I suppose I can afford it, but there's a lot of nannies out there who can't afford to do that ... they can't afford to. Like buying a pack of nappies for a baby ... sometimes it's cheap when you get specials, but for some families that's like two days worth of bread... (Grandmothers, Māori focus group)

Concerns about risks to grandchildren

Grandparents with mokopuna living in unstable family environments expressed concerns in the focus groups. Issues raised included drug and alcohol abuse by adult children, family violence, parents in jail, unstable living arrangements and the effects of the children's separation from their parents. Grandparents worried when they observed their adolescent or immature adult children's behaviour and its impact on their grandchildren. There were also problems with real or implied threats about access to their grandchildren when relationships between the grandchildren's parents were strained or ended:

My son and his wife had a bit of an argument about three weeks ago and she threatened to take her four [children] to [another city] and we went straight away, went and got legal advice for custody of our moko ... we wanted custody of our moko, but they got back together the next day. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Grandparents were sometimes critical of the way their mokopuna were parented. When there were significant concerns, some had stepped in and taken over care of their mokopuna. Amongst Māori, responsibility for children is traditionally widely shared, but this can conflict with legal and policy approaches to grandchildren. Māori grandparents who take over the care of their mokopuna, for example, might not want to go to court to seek custody, but if they do not, the children can be uplifted.

Māori focus groups also affirmed what is emerging in other current New Zealand research (such as Smith, 2010): the relationship between Māori grandparents and Child, Youth and Family (CYF) needs to be strengthened. Some Māori grandparents avoid contact with CYF staff, believing that there is poor understanding of their needs and inadequate knowledge of whānau responsibilities. A non-grandparent participant in one of our focus groups offered the following suggestions:

Perhaps if we had more Māori people with the skills that could advocate on behalf of whānau in those communities and situations and understood that process and could explain it better to the whānau, you know, I think we would probably achieve better outcomes as far as relationships between our whānau, and government agencies... (Non-grandparent participant, Māori focus group)

As one focus group participant explained, differing cultural values and perspectives can clash, sometimes resulting in time delays, during which a child may remain in an unsafe environment:

[There] is probably not a great enough recognition as far as government policy itself and the legislation as far as our taha Māori and our own cultural values and perspectives, and ... they often ... clash at times. I feel that something needs to be done as far as giving greater recognition of the roles that our grandparents played. And the roles that they should play in the raising of their mokopuna, you know, because for us as Māori, that is our tikanga – our grandparents had that same mana as parents, you know.

A lot of these mokos have these terrible things happening to them ... in traditional times often if a grandparent saw the situation he'd just instantly remove the child from that situation, whereas now you've got all this legislation – 'you might go to jail and I'll go to CYF...' And then the process could take a month or two to go through... (Non-grandparent participant, Māori focus group)

Feeling powerless

Some grandparents felt a sense of powerlessness during the decision-making process around their grandchildren's welfare:

We as grandparents, when we take our mokos on, we haven't got a leg to stand on... (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Stress and tension

Some grandparents raising grandchildren expressed high levels of tension, stress and frustration as they tried to maintain their own time, space and relationships:

Like as grandparents, when do we get our life? When do we have a life? I get a bit down. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Intergenerational differences

Some grandparents struggled with the changes in the generations:

They are growing up in a different sort of world that you know a little bit about, but not a great deal. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Some grandparents reported that they found it difficult to engage in conversation with their grandchildren.

Grandparents recognised that there are many pressures on grandchildren, and found it hard to watch the impact of those pressures on the grandchildren and the choices they made at times. Concerns were expressed about grandchildren roaming, and young, at-risk grandchildren being out late or finding themselves in 'bad company'. Setting enforceable boundaries seemed to be difficult for some grandparents because of the more laissez-faire attitude of the grandchildren's parents, who were perceived as wanting to avoid confrontation.

Differences relating to rights, responsibilities and tolerated behaviours were significant issues for some grandparents, most often in relation to:

- › a perceived lack of respect for parents and grandparents
- › differences in parenting styles between the grandparents and the children's parents (and their partners), leading to tensions.

I couldn't get out of there quick enough – the way those children behaved to their mother, you know, was making me sick. The way they speak to their mother. I said, 'You shouldn't speak like that to your mother' and they sort of stick their nose up in the air and think 'Who are you to talk to me – you're not my mother.' I dearly love my mokopunas, but I couldn't stand the way they were talking to [their mother] and I said, 'I can't stand this – I'm going home.' (Focus group grandparent)

The truth is, I don't like my daughter-in-law – I put up with her for my son, and now of course my moko. She's not a very nice person ... when they got together she got pregnant and I found out she's got older kids, but we accepted her into the whānau because of our son and our moko. But I don't like her. I just put up with her.

And that's easy to do when they're just the boyfriend or the girlfriend, eh. It's harder to do if they're the mother or the father of your moko. (Grandparents, Māori focus group)

In our focus group discussions, differences between grandparenting and great-grandparenting were raised by participants. Māori grandparents talked about the fact that when you have “dozens of mokopuna and great-mokopuna” you do not have the time or resources to look after them in the same way. They also noted that as great-grandparents they were more physically tired and no longer had energy for looking after mokopuna. They noted a mismatch between the expectations of grandparents and their great-grandchildren. Generally, children and grandchildren accepted and respected the authority of the grandparent, but we heard from some great-grandparents that their great-grandchildren could be disrespectful, lacking an understanding of their role and responsibilities in keeping the family going. For instance, one commented:

My grandchildren are grown now, but it is the greats that I am having to deal with nowadays, one of whom is 12 and the other 13 ... and the 13-year-old is very lippy and I can't stand that. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Although some grandparents described disrespectful behaviour, others spoke with pride about practical demonstrations of aroha:

One day I came out of the supermarket with my stores and one of my great-grandchildren was outside and he would have been about 15, and he came up to me and he said 'I'll take your trolley Nan, and I'll push it to the car' and he did, he pushed my trolley to the car, and put all my stores in the car and he went to take the trolley back and I said to him 'Hang on a minute' and I got my purse and he said 'I didn't do it for money Nan. I did it because you're my Nan', and I wanted to cry. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

One grandparent could see the benefit of what she did for her mokopuna now being repeated in the lives of the next generation:

The interesting thing is that all the time we had together in the school holidays – he's now taking his kids back to have a look at that, you know. 'And this is where Nan took me.' They go away – he just took them back to Taranaki actually, to walk all the beaches and do things like that ... he remembers all the nice things we [did] together and that sort of is quite impressive, and he makes sure that his kids know about that, which is rather nice. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Isolation arising from physical or emotional distances

This category included grandparents who lived some distance from their grandchildren and other family members, and grandparents who for other reasons had limited access to their grandchildren. Living some distance from their grandchildren caused sorrow for grandparents, particularly if opportunities to get together were infrequent:

I love my mokos even though I would love to see more of them, and have the opportunity to go and see the ones that are across the Tasman. I haven't been for a few years, but they ring me up, you know, and it's music to my ears. I can just about look at their pictures in front of me while they're talking: 'Yeah, Koro, we have to come over there some time and catch some crayfish where Dad got his.' 'Yeah, well I'll take you out there, sure', and these are the sort of things that are sort of keeping me alive. (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

Financial pressures

Māori grandparents customarily indulge their mokopuna, which can lead to financial hardship. Focus group grandparents described how grandchildren's attitudes towards the amount of, and their entitlement to, pocket money puts pressure on grandparents who hate to say no, but sometimes cannot afford to meet grandchildren's expectations or demands. One grandmother described an assumption she has 'plenty of money'. Others felt pressured by mokopuna to provide pocket money or fund cellphone top-ups. There was some concern expressed about grandchildren's reluctance to undertake chores or part-time work, even if there were opportunities to be paid for doing so.

Māori grandparents provide a range of financial support to families, and these contributions make a significant difference to some families' lives. Despite grandparents' willingness to offer financial support, this is not always easy and it may place their own current or future financial security in jeopardy:

...it could be a trend going through our young people now. They want money, money, money. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Grandparents talked about expectations that they would provide financial back-up for the whānau:

...as they grow older they form their own lives, and I guess one of the pressures is the pressure of letting go and letting them go, but they know that if they come to grief they can come back again. There's always the pressure about 'Nan's got plenty of money so she can help me out here.' (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

They, being the grandchildren, think that money grows on trees and think you can pluck it off the trees. The ones that live up north think I've got a money tree outside. (55–59-year-old Māori grandmother with nine grandchildren, telephone survey)

While some grandparents are in a position to provide financial assistance to their families, for others it can be an ongoing strain:

The other pressure too is the pocket money. You know, I can remember my children got two shillings. No doubt about it, prices have gone up. They got two shillings and [were] happy to get it ... then the grandchildren came along ... there were six of them that I had ... and I hate having to say 'I haven't got [money]' and so to me that's a pressure, too, because their mates have got it. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Financial concerns were spontaneously raised as a pressure for grandparents by 12 percent of Māori grandparents in the telephone survey. Additionally, in response to a specific question in the phone survey, 29 percent of Māori grandparents reported that their finances were stretched because of the contributions they made to their grandchildren or their family:

[I hate] not being able to buy things for them. You can't take them shopping, buy them presents or have a birthday party as I usually have no money. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with nine grandchildren, telephone survey)

The eldest has been in and out of jail, and when parents go away to visit, we're there to support the other kids, and we supply all the money. We don't like that too much. (70–74-year-old Māori grandfather with six grandchildren, living with but not raising at least one of them, telephone survey)



4. BALANCING NEEDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Balancing time

Three out of four respondents managed the balancing act of spending time with grandchildren and their other commitments and activities well. Amongst both the focus groups and the telephone survey sample, many felt that while they achieved a good balance, some compromises were needed.

The more heavily involved they were, the more they needed to actively seek to address balance, learning how to assert their own needs more directly. The consequences of not having enough time of their own may mean that grandparents have to give up or restrict their voluntary work. For grandparents who feel overcommitted to the needs of mokopuna, it may also mean isolation or stress resulting from a lack of time to commit to their own friends, hobbies and recreational needs.

The telephone survey asked respondents to respond to a series of statements using a ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’ four-point scale. The results are presented in Table 4. As the table shows, the great majority of Māori grandparents agreed that looking after their grandchildren was enjoyable and satisfying. Comments from other grandparents illustrate the satisfaction gained from sharing ‘family time’ with grandchildren and their whānau:

Depending on the circumstances I see them... [grandchildren] for an equal amount of time. Very often it is grandchildren from each family so they can spend time together. They get a lot from the contact and don't see the time as simply being babysat or cared for but as family time together for all. Often their visit finishes with the parents and other siblings arriving for a meal. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Table 4: Managing time

Māori grandparents who agree with these statements	N=162 %
Looking after my grandchildren is enjoyable and satisfying	95
I am satisfied with the balance between the time spent with grandchildren and time spent on my own interests and activities	75
I have a lot of control over how much time I spend with my grandchildren	65
I have often put my own needs and interests on hold to look after my grandchildren	62
I would like to change the amount of time I spend with my grandchildren	56
I have changed my lifestyle so I can spend more time with my grandchildren	44
My finances are stretched because of the financial contributions I make to my grandchildren and/or their family	29
My grandchildren's parents expect a lot of me but I am not always able to cope	22
I have put my own work or career on hold to look after my grandchildren	20
My family expects me to look after my grandchildren	19
Looking after my grandchildren is often a strain	17
The amount of time I spend with my grandchildren puts me under pressure	13

Base: 162 Māori participants, telephone survey: multiple responses possible

Some grandparents were confident about asserting their own needs and turning down requests:

Working full-time I used to go home and the mokos were right behind me and I hadn't had time to chill out of my own work and [their parents would say] 'We'll be here to pick them up in the morning', and they didn't get them until Sunday and I ended up having to take them home. It just got too much, so I just said no. 'Where are you going?' 'I'm just going to the pub', or 'I'm going to a party'. 'Well, you take your children home; you look after them.' (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

There is growing understanding that people do not make decisions about paid and unpaid work in isolation from their family. For those grandparents in paid employment, balancing work and family responsibilities is not always easy. In New Zealand, the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 gives employees with caring responsibilities (including grandparents, if eligible) a statutory right to request flexible work arrangements and requires employers to give reasonable consideration to the request.

Families Commission (2008b) report on flexible work showed that the ability to take up flexible work is vital to the quality of life of many families with caring responsibilities. Grandparents played a key role in some of the families who participated in the research. Yet some spoke of the challenges they faced balancing work and family responsibilities, particularly those who wanted more time with their grandchildren:

I just wanted to do stuff with the boys and be a part of their lives and I'm not because I have to work just to keep the house going. But then how do you tell a grandchild that you can't spend time with them because you've got to work to keep the house going? (Marama; Families Commission, 2008b, p. 56)

Childcare

The care that grandparents provide for mokopuna can be vital. This is especially so where families have difficulty balancing their work and family commitments. Grandparents often help families balance these commitments by providing childcare, although at the same time they may need to juggle their own paid work, family responsibilities and outside interests.

Many grandparents told us that they provided either regular or irregular childcare for their mokopuna. Whilst childcare is frequently provided when parents are in paid work, it can also be offered for other reasons, at night as well as during the day.

Table 5: Looking after the mokopuna

Do you look after any of your grandchildren without their parents being present?	N=144 %
On a regular basis, say on a particular day each week	34
On an irregular, less predictable basic	58
Total looking after grandchildren on either a regular or irregular basis	72

Base: Those who were NOT raising their grandchildren full-time

A Couch poll grandparent described how she willingly met requests for caregiving, which benefited all generations:

There are many instances where I am more easily available to be with my grandchildren if their parents are working, so I fill those gaps for all of them as an ongoing commitment. It works for us and we all benefit from it and enjoy it. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Table 6: Parental activities

What sorts of things are your grandchildren's parents usually doing while you are looking after the grandchildren?	N=104 %
Paid work	58
Having time out from the children (eg, going out for a meal, socialising, going for a haircut)	51
Sports activities	14
Grocery shopping	5
Studying	5
Looking after other children in the family	5
Voluntary work	1
Sleeping or relaxing	2
Housework	2
On holiday	2
Receiving medical treatment	1

Base: Those who looked after any of their grandchildren without the parents being present on a regular or irregular basis; multiple responses possible

The Families Commission (2008c) Juggling Acts project studied 25 New Zealand families and asked how parents working non-standard hours arrange care for their pre-school children:

The aspects of non-standard work that seemed to present the most challenge to these parents arranging childcare for their pre-schoolers were shifts that started early in the morning, went overnight or were during the weekend. Some forms of non-standard work, particularly on-call and seasonal work, meant parents had significantly reduced ability to plan ahead and set childcare arrangements. (Families Commission, 2008c, p. 37)

The support provided by partners and grandparents was crucial to keeping parents' non-standard work sustainable. Some grandparents lived in the same household as the pre-schooler. Others were involved in the transition between an early childhood service and the child's home before a parent returned home from work. In several families, grandparents were reported to have made significant changes to their lives so that they could support their children and care for their grandchildren.

Some parents in that study were reluctant to have their children cared for by grandparents for long periods of time. They were conscious of not overburdening grandparents, taking into consideration grandparents' ages, abilities, health, work commitments, social activities and desire to maintain an independent and busy life.

Telephone survey grandparents in Families Commission (2010) research also described some of the limitations imposed by health or physical problems, and low energy, which affected the extent to which they could provide care for their grandchildren.

Families Commission (2009a) research explored parents' experiences with long working hours and their impact on their family life.¹¹ A number of families participating in this qualitative research had work arrangements that could not have been sustained without support from members of their extended families, particularly grandparents.

11 50-plus hours worked per week.

In our telephone survey sample Māori grandparents were more likely to look after mokopuna who were pre-schoolers than grandchildren aged five to 13. A small number reported providing care for young people in their mid-to-late teens.

Some grandparents in the focus groups made significant lifestyle changes in order to care for mokopuna, including moving to another area and living with mokopuna, either with or without the children’s parents present. It was quite common for grandparents to pick up mokopuna after school and look after them when their parents were working. Several focus group grandparents also had high involvement in the care and support of mokopuna during school holidays:

My son and partner are like ‘ships in the night’. Son finishes night shift at 5 am. His partner starts work at 6 am six days a week. My wife and I care for the child at crossover of parents’ shifts and when parents are resting. The care that is given to our grandchild is 24 hours – meals, schooling and general care in the family. (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

As shown in the table below, the hours spent looking after grandchildren in a given week ranged from none at all (which may or may not be a typical week) to more than 40 hours.

Table 7: Hours spent looking after mokopuna in the past week

Number of hours you have looked after your grandchildren in the past week	N=104 %
Fewer than 10 hours	23
10–20 hours	20
More than 40 hours	11
21–30 hours	8
31–40 hours	2
Did not look after them	36

Base: Those who looked after their grandchildren on a regular or irregular basis but were not raising them

Grandparents may also look after several mokopuna at the same time – 28 of the 49 Māori telephone survey respondents who regularly looked after their grandchildren said that they looked after two or more.

Childcare compensation

The childcare provided by grandparents can also have real economic benefits. It will often mean savings for parents, if they would otherwise be paying for it. There may be costs to grandparents (for example, in terms of reduced leisure time, a decrease in their own paid work hours meaning reduced income, and increased spending on petrol or other costs). Some grandparents, however, are prepared to make changes to their own lives if they would benefit the whānau:

If I was able to give up work and spend more time with my grandchildren while their parents (who work full-time) are able to take on further study and increase their employment marketability, I would. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Receiving compensation for childcare was explored with some focus group participants and in the online Couch poll. Our findings suggest that most grandparents do not expect to receive financial compensation for looking after their grandchildren:

I do not believe in taking money for looking after my own whānau. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)



Grandparents told us about other ways in which families recognise grandparents' assistance with childcare, including exchanges of skills or time, contributions towards petrol or travel costs, meals and occasional gifts. One grandparent described the following gains from looking after their grandchildren:

Love and quality time spent with my mokos. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Grandparents have told us that being able to assist their grandchildren and their families emotionally and financially through providing childcare can be beneficial to all three generations.

Agencies, as well as whānau, should recognise and value the roles of grandparents in the provision of childcare, so that grandparents do not feel taken for granted. When negotiating the provision of childcare, grandparents' own needs and interests, as well as their health and general wellbeing, should be taken into account.

Lifestyle changes

Some grandparents make substantial changes to their own lives to move closer to their grandchildren, often in order to provide childcare. These changes may be temporary (such as providing care while a parent is away on a short-term trip or in hospital), or permanent (assuming custody of a grandchild whose parents can no longer care for them).

Focus group grandparents told us about lifestyle changes they had made, or planned to make. Almost half of the Māori grandparents taking part in the telephone survey said that they had changed their lifestyle so that they could spend more time with their grandchildren.

The changes most likely to have a significant impact on a grandparent's life were a move, and assuming responsibility for raising a mokopuna. For some grandparents, these were planned and conscious choices, while for others the changes happened very quickly, often without time to prepare. One grandparent described how he and his partner had put their own goals on hold in order to provide care for their grandchildren:

[My wife] was made redundant from her job, but has taken on a full-time role in caring for our mokopunas. We have delayed [and] given away many of our personal lifetime goals to give good care to our grandchildren. Existing on one wage/salary is hard, but can be done. We love our mokopuna so much, we would not want it any other way. (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

Table 8: Changes in lifestyles

In what ways did you change your lifestyle to spend more time with your grandchildren?	N=72 %
Less time for other things	43
Reduced paid work hours	32
Changed work arrangements other than reducing hours	22
Started living with grandchildren	10
Made effort to visit grandchildren	8
Nothing specific	6
Financial	1

Base: Those who had changed their lifestyle to spend more time with their grandchildren; multiple responses possible

Effects of lifestyle changes

Lifestyle changes have associated implications for grandparents' social and financial wellbeing, and can also have implications for their careers and health. Telephone survey grandparents who had changed their lifestyle reported that they had less time for other things, including their social, sport and leisure arrangements:

We used to go [on] holiday for three or four months at a time and now we probably go for only two or three weeks at a time. (55–59-year-old Māori grandfather with four grandchildren)

I do not do sporting activities or go out as usual. (45–49-year-old Māori grandmother with one grandchild)

I gave up smoking and I do not go fishing or hunting if I am required to babysit. (50–54-year-old Māori grandfather with nine grandchildren)

Respondents also reported reducing their work hours or changing other aspects of their work or study arrangements so as to spend more time with their grandchildren. The following comments reflect such changes:

I quit my computer course. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with 10 grandchildren)

I changed work hours to work more in the night. (60–64-year-old Māori grandfather with two grandchildren)

Māori grandparents were likely to say that they had 'less time' or 'less freedom' after undertaking lifestyle changes, with around one-third reporting these effects – though this could be positive for many. Around a third of those who reported that they had less time for other activities stated that they felt happier and less stressed as a result. This suggests that spending time with their grandchildren was more satisfying than the things they used to do.

Māori grandparents can have other roles (such as kaumātua) that require large commitments of their time. Making lifestyle changes to spend time looking after grandchildren may decrease the already limited time they have available. Grandparents may benefit from additional information to help them consider the potential effects and implications of lifestyle changes (such as relocation, migration or living with grandchildren) and the likely effects (both positive and negative) on their social lives, financial wellbeing, employment prospects, relationships and other areas of their lives. The appendix, Information for Grandparents, has details about a range of resources.

Balancing paid work and caring responsibilities

The pattern of older people retiring from the workforce at the time they qualify for New Zealand Superannuation is also changing. Many people who have turned 65 (previously the mandatory retirement age) choose to extend their working lives. Many Māori grandparents are also younger than 65 and actively involved in the workforce. This means that large numbers of grandparents are still in paid work.

A Statistics New Zealand (2009) report states that Māori aged 65 years and over are more likely to be in the labour force than their European counterparts, with almost one in four Māori over 65 in paid work in 2006.¹² This was more than for any other ethnic group and included the 12 percent of kaumātua aged from 75 to 79 who were still in the workforce. A Statistics New Zealand (2007) report notes that available evidence suggests that older people are more than twice as likely to be working part-time (less than 30 hours per week), as those aged between 15 and 64 years.¹³

Grandparents' employment decisions (including where, when and how long to work) can involve weighing up personal, financial or other benefits against benefits to their mokopuna. These decisions can require considerable soul-searching.

¹² Labour Force Participation of New Zealanders aged 65 Years and Over 1986-2006 http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/income-and-work/employment_and_unemployment/labour-force-participation-aged-65-plus-1986-2006.aspx

¹³ New Zealand's 65+ population: A statistical volume http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/older_people/new-zealands-65-plus-population.aspx



Family-friendly work arrangements make it easier for working grandparents to balance paid work with spending time with their grandchildren. Promoting family-friendly work practices will also provide additional support to their adult children who are juggling care and work responsibilities.

Our research findings suggest that the primary support needs for grandparents in paid work are for:

- › awareness of their right to request flexible working arrangements
- › workplace cultures that encourage flexible work arrangements
- › opportunities to take extended leave (to meet caring responsibilities, for example).

Māori grandparents, and grandparents of other ethnicities, who took part in our research described the various decisions made to allow them to balance paid work with grandparenting responsibilities. These choices included:

- › working in a school so that school holidays were available to visit grandchildren
- › contract work to fit in with grandchildren's schedule
- › swapping roles once a week, where the grandparent provides care and the child's mother does the grandparent's paid work
- › buying a business and employing staff so that grandparents could spend more time with their grandchildren
- › changing shift-work hours.

I'm a grandmother of 16 and a great-grandmother of 10 and a bit and I'm involved with ... my mokopuna... I get called on to babysit ... because they are always there, they don't know their way home, but that's OK – I love it. I work full-time so weekends I have my mokopuna time so that's great. (Great-grandmother, Māori focus group)

Other employment changes undertaken included reducing paid work hours, and taking leave without pay. For grandparents not under financial pressure, reducing work hours can be a positive lifestyle change.

Some grandparents expressed concerns about the pressures on women to return to the paid workforce following the birth of a child. They encouraged the development of policy changes leading to longer parental leave.¹⁴

For the [grandparents] that do work, I reckon there should be like ... nannie leave, grandparents' leave or something, because we've got to help out with that baby too. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Employer support

Workplace cultures that encourage flexible work arrangements generate a climate of support for grandparents with multiple caring roles (such as those caring for dependent grandchildren and older family members). New Zealand's Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 gives employees with caring responsibilities the right to request flexible work arrangements.

In the telephone survey, respondents who were in full-time or part-time employment were asked what, if anything, their employer could do to help support them as a grandparent. Two out of three Māori grandparents said that there was nothing more that their employer could do.

¹⁴ The Families Commission has previously recommended to government that current parental leave provisions be extended.

Table 9: Support from employers

What, if anything, could your employer do to help support you better as a grandparent?	N=102 %
Nothing	64
Greater flexibility	16
Already happy with employer	7
Financial	6
Does not apply (general)	3
Unsure	3

Base: Those who were in paid work; multiple responses possible; excludes those who stated that it did not apply because they were self-employed

As the comments from the telephone survey show, many respondents believed that their employer already did as much as they could reasonably be expected to:

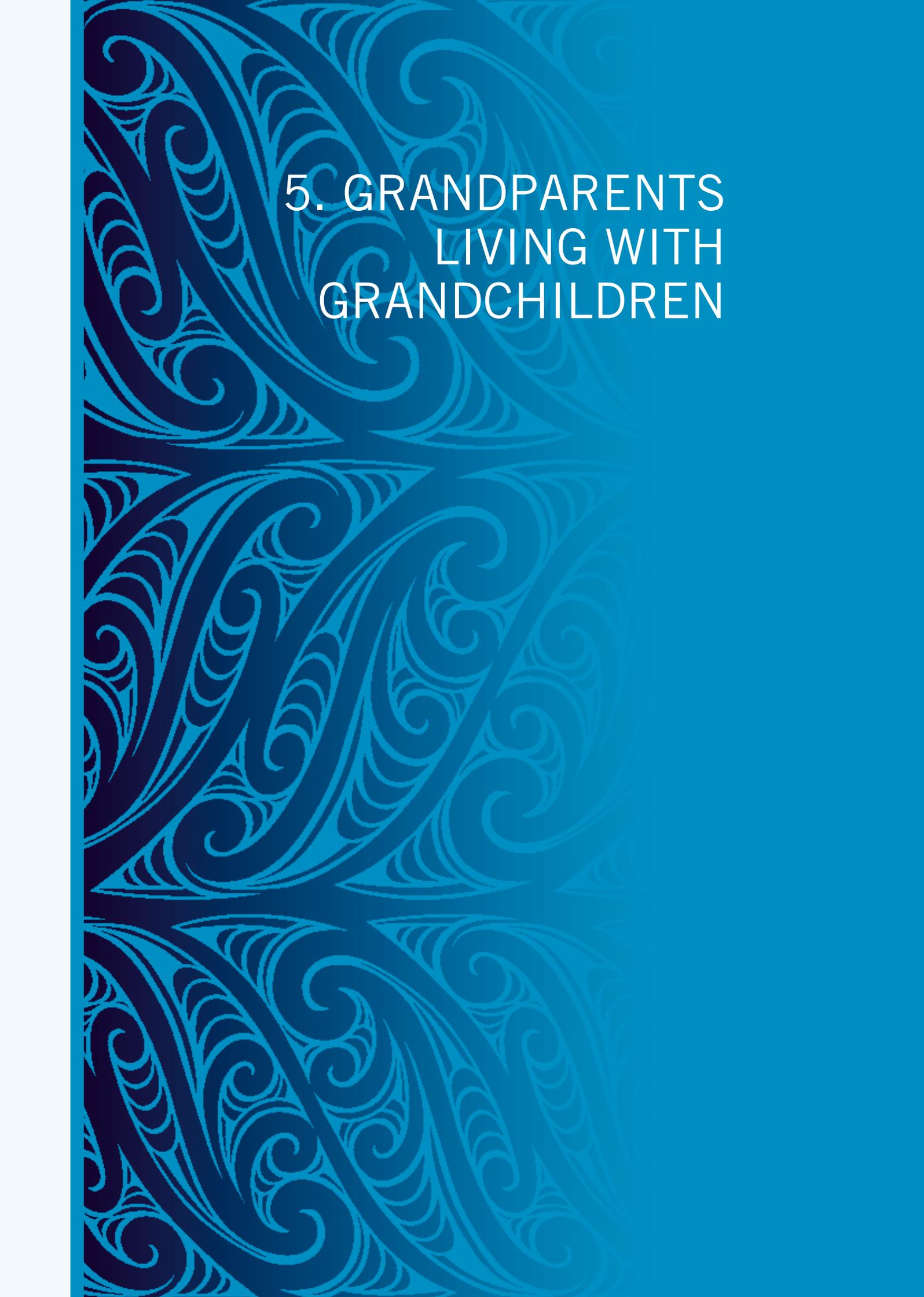
I work in a Māori environment so they are aware of strong family ties. I'm given time off if I need it. (55–59-year-old Māori grandmother with six grandchildren)

I'm very lucky with my employer. He allows me to go south whenever I need to be there. He is very supportive. I do not need anything more from him. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with five grandchildren)

Grandparents made comments about flexible work arrangements and leave provisions:

He could be a bit more understanding. Maybe give me the same parental leave that they give to parents of young families. (55–59-year-old Māori grandmother with four grandchildren, living with but not raising at least one of them)

Some New Zealand employers are already responsive to grandparents' needs for time off to support their grandchildren. For some grandparents, however, it continues to be a balancing act between their own needs for restorative time off, as well meeting the needs of their mokopuna.



5. GRANDPARENTS LIVING WITH GRANDCHILDREN

It is common for Māori grandparents to live in multi-generational households with members of their extended families and there are many reasons for doing this, including cultural preferences, financial reasons and adult children and their families moving back 'home' following separation from a partner.

You know, I have a home, and my daughter and my son-in-law with their four children live with me, and it's wonderful. There was a time there when I was on my own, and oh man, I wished I was dead, you know. The silence. I have eight children and so the silence was quite deafening because, you know, I was used to having sounds around me all the time. So now I've got my four mokos and my house takes all my 19 mokopuna when they come up for Christmas and other times and it's just wonderful having them all around... (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

There are a number of different ways in which grandparents can live with their mokopuna. Some grandparents co-purchase a home or property with the grandchildren's parents. Others choose to live near their grandchildren and their families, sometimes next door or in the same neighbourhood. Grandchildren may live in their grandparents' homes when their parents are unable to, or unwilling to, raise them themselves; sometimes this can be a transitional arrangement (while parents are settling elsewhere following a move, for example).

Table 10: Why grandparents live with mokopuna

Main reasons why grandparents live with one or more of their mokopuna	N=40 %
Because you are raising these mokopuna full-time as their parents are unable or unwilling to	18
Because your mokopuna and their parents have moved into your home	16
Because you have moved into your mokopuna's home	4

Base: Those who live with one or more of their mokopuna; multiple responses possible

A number of Māori grandparents in one focus group had adult children living in Australia. Grandchildren sometimes remained living in New Zealand with their grandparents until the parents found work and housing in Australia, or until the mokopuna completed their education.

Some grandparents had flexible living arrangements, meaning that grandchildren stayed with them for short or long periods, depending on the family's needs and circumstances:

When I took my teenage moko on full-time, I really had to make some big adjustments, 'cos I was working full-time so that he could have a home and we actually compromised because he went to boarding school during the week and came home each weekend so that we got a balance there so that I could work and then we could have time together. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Amongst the 40 Māori grandparents from the telephone survey who were living with their grandchildren, the most frequently mentioned reasons were that the grandparents were raising the mokopuna (18 percent) or that the mokopuna and their parents had moved into the grandparent's home (16 percent).

Table 11 shows the most common reasons why 18 Māori grandparents in the telephone survey sample were raising one or more of their grandchildren. Parental separation or substance-abuse issues were the main reasons. Some focus group grandparents raising grandchildren also mentioned drug and alcohol abuse as reasons why they took over care of their grandchildren.

Table 11: Main reasons for raising mokopuna

What is the main reason why you are raising these mokopuna?	N=18
Parents have separated	N=4
Parent with drug/alcohol problem	N=3
Neglect	N=3
Parents travelling/living/working overseas	N=3
Parents' illness/mental illness/disability	N=2
Cultural reasons – to pass on the language or culture to the next generation	N=2
Parents are too young to look after their children	N=1

Base: Those who were raising their mokopuna full-time as their parents are unable or unwilling to; multiple responses possible

Worrall (2009), drawing on CYF data, states that:

...for those children in the care of Child, Youth and Family, being of Māori or Pacific Island ethnicity makes the likelihood of being placed in the care of whānau/fono significantly higher than if the child is New Zealand European/Pākehā (p. 15).

Smith (2010) notes that it is often grandparents who take responsibility for overseeing whānau health and wellbeing. Grandparents' commitments can include caring for their own elderly or ill parents, caring for their partners, supporting their children and raising mokopuna. The number of Māori grandparents raising mokopuna has increased over recent decades. Grandparents with roles as kaumātua and kuia will have additional commitments to whānau, marae, hapū and iwi. Smith's research found that, despite having multiple commitments, these grandparents are unlikely to seek help for themselves:

Grandparents are often not asking for help even if they need it. They are primarily focused on the grandchildren and place the needs of mokopuna before themselves, commonly 'going without'. There are likely to be impacts on [their] health and wellbeing ... when important support and help is unavailable or they do not have whānau-friendly support to access help that does exist. (Smith, 2010, p. 5)

Smith notes that grandparents raising mokopuna can be relatively 'invisible' within their communities, as it might not be known to others that they have full-time care of their grandchildren.

Financial support

Grandparents who are raising grandchildren and carrying out significant caring roles require adequate financial support. There are still inequities in the amounts that grandparents (and other kinship carers) who are raising children are eligible to receive as government benefits, compared with the amount that foster parents receive – unless the grandparent is officially acting as a foster parent.

See the appendix, Information for Grandparents, for more information on the financial support available.

The reasons why grandparents do not always seek full custody include:

- feeling that they are being 'held to ransom' by parents
- hoping that they are caregiving on a temporary basis until the parents can resume care
- not wishing to risk bringing the arrangement to the attention of CYFS

- › wanting to avoid dissension within the family (a backlash from parents, for example).

Grandparents raising grandchildren under an informal whāngai arrangement are ineligible for government benefits that could otherwise be received within a more formal arrangement with the associated constraints of legislation.

Legal and other rights

Some focus group grandparents were unclear about their rights, although grandparents who have custody of grandchildren have clearly defined legal rights under the Care of Children Act (2004, No 90).

Grandparents may be eligible to apply for a parenting order. This is “an order made by the Family Court that says who is responsible for day-to-day care of a child, and when and how someone else important in the child’s life can have contact with them”.¹⁵ Ministry of Justice data show that 15 percent of all applicants in 2006 and 2007 were grandparents; no breakdown by ethnicity was provided.¹⁶

Grandparents in our focus groups who did not have formal care arrangements felt they “did not have a leg to stand on” (legally) if the parents wanted their children back. In the words of one grandparent, they had “no teeth” as a grandparent.

In New Zealand, the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren charitable trust has 48 support groups throughout the country and just over 4,100 individual members. As well as supporting each other, group members lobby parliament, hold conferences, network and speak to many community organisations.

Grandparents raising grandchildren can experience high levels of tension, stress and frustration as they try to maintain their own time, space and relationships. They have clearly defined information and support needs. In particular, our research suggests priorities for information and support in the following areas:

- › information about their legal rights and support to navigate custody issues
- › assistance with financial costs associated with raising grandchildren
- › developing positive relationships with government agencies, particularly CYF and Work and Income
- › access to counselling, respite care and out-of-school services
- › social and emotional support
- › information about the education system and how to support their grandchildren’s education.

¹⁵ <http://www.justice.govt.nz/family/pdf-pamphlets/courts005.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.justice.govt.nz/publications/global-publications/f/family-court-statistics-in-new-zealand-in-2006-and-2007-april-2009/publication>



Here are a few comments from Māori grandparents suggesting ways in which information can be provided:

...I have all the skills I need to be a good grandparent but for some people the SKIP¹⁷ resources could consider putting some practical advice booklets together for grandparents on ways to spend quality time with your grandchildren, as they grow very fast and before you know it they are spending time with their own friends. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

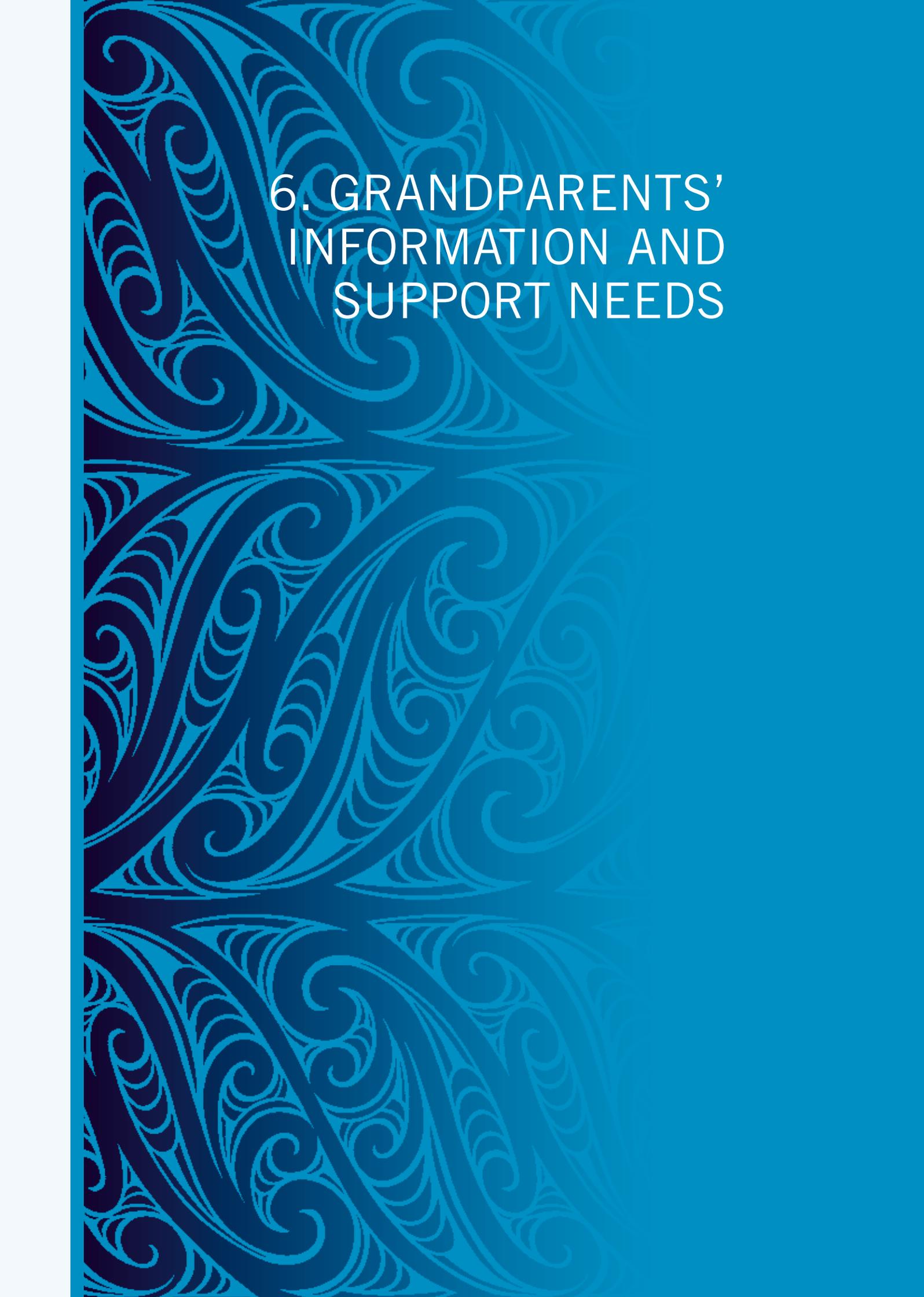
TV ads that promote the value of the grandchild and grandparent relationship, or the young and the elderly. There is a lot to be learned by both parties and a good commercial can help define such values eg the old traditional values of respect, good manners, courtesy, kindness, honesty, that are a two-way communication and our grandchildren can teach us those values as well. The power of TV can convey a lesson about grandparents in a way that no other medium can. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

One practical form of assistance would be regular forums to provide a way for grandparents raising mokopuna to express their thoughts and needs, and opportunities to discuss financial stresses and the '24/7' demands on their time.

Service and support providers should recognise the various ways in which grandparents prefer to receive information and assistance. Providers should also take into account the cultural, social, psychological, financial and other needs of grandparents and recognise their diversity. Not all grandparents are 'older', which means that support and information for grandparents should be directed through channels beyond those targeted at older people.

17 Strategies with Kids, Information for Parents (SKIP): <http://www.skip.org.nz/>
SKIP is a government-funded initiative that supports parents and whānau in guiding their children's behaviour in a positive way. This website offers information and inspiration to those who work alongside parents of babies and young children.





6. GRANDPARENTS' INFORMATION AND SUPPORT NEEDS

The need for recognition, acknowledgement and valuing of the grandparent role was often talked about in the focus group discussions. Grandparents in all focus groups strongly endorsed the group discussions as a way of sharing experiences and valuing their roles.

One participant suggested acknowledging grandparents' value by holding celebrations:

The only time I can think of my nana, for example, being celebrated is at her 70th birthday. Don't get me wrong ... everyone knew my nana; she had huge mana in her community. And she may not have even wanted to be celebrated, but I think perhaps in these times when we don't have as much time available to us to acknowledge and value our grandparents, that some sort of celebration just for them needs to happen. (Participant, Māori focus group)

Many hapū and iwi already run events like kaumātua balls or dinners. Kuia and koroua are honoured by their whānau and communities at these celebrations. Mokopuna often accompany their kuia and koroua, formally presenting them to the people.

Another focus group participant suggested an intergenerational day out, to benefit both younger and older family members:

As grandparents, we [could] have a day out with our mokos – we make it a day, so we are actually interacting and we can share ideas and kōrero at the same time while our mokos are playing. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Grandparents in the telephone survey were interested in information on several topics, presented in the following table.

Table 12: Types of information of interest to grandparents	
How interested are you in information on the following topics?	N=162 %
Activities and events that grandparents can share with their grandchildren	65
The school curriculum and what else is being taught in schools	64
Managing grandchildren's behaviour	56
What to expect of grandchildren at different ages and stages	54
How to have good relationships with grandchildren who do not live nearby or who you seldom see	49
Drug, alcohol and other addictions that can affect family relationships	49
How to keep in touch with grandchildren when their parents separate	49
How to balance your own time with the time spent with your grandchildren	46
How to respond to requests and demands from grandchildren for money and other gifts	37
How to turn down requests to look after grandchildren when it doesn't suit you	21

Base: All respondents; percentage indicates those who were 'very' or 'fairly' interested

One grandparent expressed an interest in learning about free activities:

What are the activities available free of charge? Even group activities. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with four grandchildren)

Practical help for grandparents

Some grandparents may need help determining their priorities, so that they can make sound choices and negotiate solutions that will work best for them and their family.

Information and support for grandparents need to be channelled to places where they can access it easily. Grandparents are likely to look for support, information and advice from a range of sources, including the internet, family and friends, marae services, community facilities, government and non-government organisations, printed material and other networks, such as church communities. This information may also be provided to marae or accessed through Māori health and whānau ora providers, or iwi authorities. Support directed through channels targeted towards older people will not reach all grandparents, as not all are 'older'.

In general, this study highlighted grandparents' needs for information and support in the following areas:

- › negotiating boundaries
- › ongoing personal development
- › financial advice
- › maintaining positive relationships
- › balancing competing priorities.

Negotiating boundaries

- › Balancing time spent with mokopuna with grandparents' own needs, interests, work and other responsibilities
- › Negotiating and setting boundaries within the family (concerning requests for childcare, for example)
- › Recognising and responding to health and physical limitations associated with ageing, disability or illness that may affect relationships with mokopuna and other family members.

Ongoing personal development

- › Developing and maintaining community, social and cultural networks and interests (such as networks with other grandparents and strategies to counter social or cultural isolation);
- › Strengthening technological skills and computer literacy (developing confidence and competence with email or Skype conversations to maintain contact with family members not living nearby, or mastering texting).¹⁸
- › Providing opportunities for grandparents to 'learn how to grandparent', particularly for those with no role models.
- › Recognising and protecting against elder abuse and neglect.

Financial advice

- › Budgeting skills and support to help grandparents to manage their own finances (if needed) and to manage financial contributions to their families, as well as to acquire skills to share with family members.

¹⁸ Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the internet. Calls to other Skype users, and in some countries to free-of-charge numbers, are free, while calls to other landlines and mobile phones can be made for a fee. Additional features include instant messaging, file transfer and video conferencing.

- › Strategies for managing the cost of travel, particularly for those grandparents with families living elsewhere in New Zealand or overseas.

Maintaining positive relationships

- › Responding to changing family dynamics and being involved and supportive in grandchildren's lives during times of transition such as family separation and re-partnership.
- › Balancing time spent with mokopuna with time spent with partners and other family members.
- › Managing and responding to grandchildren's behaviour (having age-appropriate expectations, for example).
- › Strengthening intergenerational relationships (by developing awareness of generational changes in parenting styles and practices, child-discipline attitudes and practices and current child-safety guidelines and regulations).
- › Learning how to support grandchildren's education; increasing opportunities for grandparents to visit early childhood centres and schools.
- › Sustaining close relationships with grandchildren in the face of mobility and geographic distance (through the use of technology, for instance).
- › Adapting to changes or variations in family structures, practices and traditions arising as a result of cross-cultural relationships.

Balancing competing priorities

As noted earlier, many grandparents are active in the labour market. Efforts to promote family-friendly work arrangements will make it easier for grandparents to balance their own paid work with time they want to spend with their mokopuna. It will also enable them to provide additional support to their adult children who are juggling care and work responsibilities.

Grandparents raising grandchildren

According to Smith (2010), increasing numbers of Māori grandparents are becoming the primary caregivers for children whose parents are unwilling or unable to provide care (sometimes because of drug or alcohol problems). The support needs for grandparents in this situation include:

- › access to reliable information about legal rights, guardianship, day-to-day care and contact and benefit eligibility
- › financial assistance (including with housing, accommodation, educational, medical and other costs associated with raising grandchildren)
- › access to counselling, regular respite care and subsidised out-of-school care and recreation programmes
- › social and emotional support – from other grandparents in the same situation, as well as more widespread understanding of the unique needs and circumstances of grandparent-led families (amongst educators and employers, for example)
- › information about the education system (from early childhood onwards), including curriculum changes, NCEA and current approaches to supporting the development of literacy and numeracy skills
- › access to services available to parents (as these grandparents are in a parenting role)
- › recognition of and protection against vulnerability to elder abuse and neglect
- › developing positive relationships with government agencies, particularly CYF and Work and Income.

Despite the difficulties some grandparents face, many of the telephone survey grandparents were happy with the status quo and had no information or support needs:

Nothing – just as long as there is food on the table and everyone is healthy and happy. (45–49-year-old Māori grandmother with two grandchildren raising at least one of them)

Potential sources of information and support

Telephone survey respondents were asked who they would like to be able to ask, or where they would like to be able to go, to get advice, support or information about grandparenting or grandchildren. A wide range of suggestions was offered, including individuals, organisations and media channels.

A third of respondents mentioned family members and friends as possible sources of advice, support or information:

Kuia and koro in the community who know my moko. (60–64-year-old Māori grandfather with 11–15 grandchildren, telephone survey)

Other suggested sources included community facilities (19 percent) and charities, advocacy groups and support groups (12 percent).

One grandparent told us he would turn to the Bible:

I would go to the Good Book — the Bible. (55–59-year-old Māori grandfather with three grandchildren, telephone survey)

Online Couch poll responses

Grandparents who responded to *The Couch* poll made similar suggestions about where relevant information for grandparents could be provided, including websites (such as the Families Commission and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust), marae, Plunket, doctors' surgeries, community centres, libraries, churches, Citizens Advice Bureaux, SeniorNet, Age Concern, schools and early childhood services. Focus group respondents offered comparable suggestions:

I think it would be great to share this information with parents at schools, kōhanga reo and childcare centres. My son's school has a 'Grandparents' Day' once a year, which I'd like to see increased. It gives the grandparents a real sense of belonging and being a part of their grandchild's life. Some grandparents speak about how much they missed of their own child's school life because of work commitments or working out of town etc. Make it a forum where this information and support can be shared in this environment. The grandchildren feel very proud when their grandparents come to their school for something really special that only a grandparent can receive. (Māori grandmother, online Couch poll)

Role-modelling

A theme that was evident throughout the Māori focus group discussions was that participants who had experienced a strong nurturing relationship with their own grandparents when they were young looked forward to the grandparenting role and felt a special relationship with their own grandchildren. For some, memories of their own positive relationships with their grandparents were a vital influence:

My father's parents lived next door to us until I was about 12 and I know how important that influence was for me that was different to my parents. (Grandmother, Māori, online Couch poll)

Some focus group participants mourned the loss of their own grandparents. Several expressed sadness at their inability to replicate the strong bonds they shared with their grandparents in their relationships with their grandchildren, particularly if their grandchildren did not live close by:

I know with my grandmother, we lived with her – all the first cousins. She took the whole lot of us in and my grandmother’s house was like a marae 24/7. My children have grown up not having their grandparents on both sides, mother’s and father’s side. All of them have experienced not having those grandparents around... I have awesome memories. My grandmother was our rock. She passed away, she’s been gone now for about 15 years, even longer. I hurt for my children today that have grown up without their grandparents... I still grieve today over my mother and my grandmother – both of them are gone. The only time I feel like my grandmother is around is when whānau, like her daughters, my aunties, come from Australia and when they’re at my whare, I feel like my aunties have brought the rest of my uncles, my grandfather, my grandmother – they are here with us today. I feel that spiritually. Other than that I miss them dearly. I miss them dearly for my kids and for myself. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

There may be a societal assumption that grandparents know ‘how to grandparent’. Yet grandparents who have not had exposure to role models through their own whānau or social networks may not know what is expected of them:

I have never had a grandparent and I do not know anyone close to me who is a grandparent... (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with seven grandchildren raising at least one of them, telephone survey)



7. CONCLUSIONS

He taonga te mokopuna – grandchildren are precious. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Māori grandparents are repositories of cultural knowledge and wisdom and it is vital that their roles continue to be honoured and valued. This can occur through their participation in cultural processes and the vital roles they play as teachers, role models and supporters of younger members of the whānau. The kaumātua leadership role in iwi and whānau has compatible responsibilities with those of the grandparenting role. Both roles should be cherished, with acknowledgement of the multiple demands on the time of older Māori.

Although Māori grandparents share many common characteristics, they also have differing ages, experiences and expectations and this diversity must be reflected in policy decisions that may affect their lives.

The research shows that the pleasures of grandparenting outweighed the pressures for most grandparents in this study. Grandparents spoke of the pleasurable experiences of nurturing and observing grandchildren's development, sharing happy times and passing on skills, knowledge and wisdom to the next generation. They also spoke about their responsibility and desire to share their cultural practices, protocols and beliefs and to teach grandchildren te reo Māori. They showed resilience and flexibility in adapting and responding to changing family dynamics and other changes that led to more demands on them.

The relationships between grandparents and mokopuna generate significant benefits for both generations, and grandchildren's parents often benefit from grandparents' involvement in their lives as well. Increasingly, families with both parents in paid work need support from their extended families to balance their work and family life. Some grandparents, especially grandmothers, step into a caring role.

Grandparenting can however, also place considerable strain on grandparents' time, energy and resources. Grandparents need to be aware of, and confident about, determining their own priorities and developing and negotiating solutions and compromises that will work best for them and their family. Support from others may be needed, particularly during times of transition and where conflict exists within the family. Whānau, hapū and iwi services may be able to help, as well as organisations and government agencies.

Our research suggests that some Māori grandparents may need support to ensure that they can share traditional wisdom and practices with their mokopuna in the face of increasing pressures on traditional ways of teaching roles and responsibilities, and the erosion of traditional whānau supports through urbanisation and emigration. This support is likely to come from whānau, hapū, iwi and organisations such as Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust and the Māori Women's Welfare League, for example.

He ara ki mua

Māori grandparents need a stronger voice in the development of policies and services that affect them. Through the Families Commission's whānau strategic framework 2009–2012, the Commission is seeking to add value to whānau voices on issues of relevance and importance to whānau Māori, with emphasis on the development of strong, resilient whānau who can manage through times of challenge and change and lead their own development. Grandparents can be key contributors to this process.

Economic, practical and emotional support for family wellbeing primarily comes from within families, but communities, government and society also have important support roles. By determining what is needed, not only by individual grandparents, but also by grandparents as a whole, ways can be found to effectively support grandparents' wellbeing and resilience. Agencies and policy-makers should acknowledge that kaumātua, including grandparents, are crucial in the revitalisation of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga.

The power of grandparents' influence is recognised in the words of a young man in one of the focus groups. Not a grandparent himself, he was a community worker involved with school students and recognised the contributions that grandparents make:

I believe that the ... input that we can have from the grandparents [whose] mokos [are] coming to the school is going to be of some benefit. Having those relationships, with the students, grandparents, parents ... I suppose it's about facilitating as much as possible with the grandparents and parents in that process. I mean if tamariki aren't listening to their own grandparents or their own parents, there's very little chance that they're going to listen to you, as the teacher. (Non-grandparent, Māori focus group)

Organisations working with Māori can ensure that this sort of informal recognition is translated into concrete policy and action.

We conclude this report with the words of this grandfather as he reflects upon being a grandparent. Our hope is for all Māori grandparents to experience the positive feelings he describes:

We are grateful for four beautiful mokopuna. Our legacy in life is that they in turn give to their children and mokopuna the same knowledge, love and care that they have received. (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

Glossary

Word or phrase	Meaning
Aroha	Love
Hapū	Clan, sub-tribe
Harakeke	Flax
Haukāinga	Homeland
He ara ki mua	The pathway ahead
Iwi	Tribe
Kāinga	Village
Kaipupuri	Holder of knowledge, rights and values
Karakia	To pray; prayer
Karanga	Call
Kaumātua	Elderly person/elderly people
Kaupapa	Subject of, thought, trend, platform
Kawa	Etiquette
Kōrero	Conversation, discussion, speech
Koro/koroua	Elderly man, grandfather
Kuia	Elderly woman, grandmother
Kura kaupapa	Māori language immersion schools
Iwi	Tribe
Mana	Right and responsibility, derived from spiritual sources
Manaaki/manaakitanga	The capacity to care
Māoritanga	Māori culture; a way of life and view of the world
Marae	The open area in front of the meeting house; the collection of buildings around the marae
Mihimihi	Introductory speeches that take place at the beginning of a gathering after the more formal speeches of welcome. Mihimihi are generally in te reo Māori.
Mokopuna	Grandchild/grandchildren (also known as moko and mocos)
Pākehā	New Zealand European
Pakeke	Adult
Papakāinga	Original home, home base
Pupuri taonga	The capacity for guardianship
Pūrākau	Fable, legend, story
Rangatahi	Young people
Reo	The Māori language
Rito	Inner shoot of flax bush

Word or phrase	Meaning
Taha Māori	The Māori perspective
Take	Cause, base, topic
Tangihanga	Funeral
Taonga	A treasure; precious
Te Kōhanga Reo/kōhanga	Language nest; immersion early childhood education
Te reo Māori/reo	The Māori language
Tikanga	Etiquette; code of behaviour
Tipuna/tupuna	Grandparent
Tipuna/tūpuna	Grandparents
Tohatoha	The capacity to share
Tūrangawaewae	A place to stand; home ground
Waiata	Chant, song
Wānanga/whare wānanga	Learning, place of learning
Whaikōrero	Art of oratory
Whakamana	The capacity to empower and enhance
Whakapapa	Genealogy; family tree
Whakatakoto tikanga	The capacity to plan ahead
Whakatau	Welcome ceremony
Whānau	Family
Whānau ora	Healthy families
Whāngai	To feed or nurture; adoption – children being raised by kin members other than their parents
Whare	House
Wharekura	Kaupapa Māori secondary school

Appendix: Information for grandparents

Financial support

Grandparents' entitlement for support is based on who has care or custody of the child and the reasons for this:

- ▶ If a child is in the care of a grandparent because of a family breakdown and it is likely that they will be in the grandparent's care for at least a year, the grandparent may be eligible for the Unsupported Child Benefit (through Work and Income).
- ▶ If a child is in the care of a grandparent who is acting as a foster parent, because the child is in the custody of the Chief Executive of Child, Youth and Family (CYF), the grandparent is eligible for the Foster Care Allowance, plus other financial support for child-related costs (through CYF).
- ▶ If a grandparent has custody of a child through a Family Court order subsequent to being in CYF custody, the grandparent may be eligible for the Unsupported Child Benefit (through Work and Income).

[Orphan's and Unsupported Child's Benefits: A guide for caregivers who are raising someone else's child:](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/documents/orphans-and-unsupported-childs-benefit.pdf)

<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/documents/orphans-and-unsupported-childs-benefit.pdf>

[How child support works:](http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/background)

<http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/background>

[Common questions and answers about child support for custodians:](http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/custodians/questions/)

<http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/custodians/questions/>

[The *Working for Families* package:](http://www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz/)

<http://www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz/>

Legal rights

Grandparents who have custody of grandchildren under the Care of Children Act (2004, No 90) have clearly defined legal rights. If access has been denied by parents or guardians, grandparents may be entitled to apply for access through the Court. Grandparents may be eligible to apply for a parenting order. This is "an order made by the Family Court that says who is responsible for day-to-day care of a child, and when and how someone else important in the child's life can have contact with them".

<http://www.justice.govt.nz/family/pdf-pamphlets/courts005.pdf>

Caring for mokopuna (and others)

Help for Kinship Carers: A Guide for People Who Are Raising Someone Else's Child

This booklet (prepared by Work and Income; Child, Youth and Family; Inland Revenue; StudyLink; Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust) describes the different types of financial support kinship carers may be able to get. It is described as a general guide, as details may change and what carers are eligible for depends on their, and their child's, situation.

<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/individuals/forms-and-brochures/help-for-kinship-carers/index.html>

Child, Youth and Family: Information for Caregivers

<http://www.cyf.govt.nz/info-for-caregivers/index.html>

The New Zealand Carers' Strategy and Five-year Action Plan

The Carers' Strategy is supported by a five-year action plan to address some of the issues that affect the thousands of New Zealanders who assist friends and family members who need help with everyday living because of ill health, disability or old age.

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/policy-development/carers-strategy/>

A Guide for Carers: He Aratohu mā ngā Kaitiaki (2009)

The guide includes information on the government-funded services and supports available for carers, such as financial help, respite care, help at home, needs assessment, sources of equipment and modifications and information about health and disability rights.

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/what-we-can-do/community/carers/carers-a4-booklet-v8.pdf>

The **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Charitable Trust** has 48 support groups throughout the country and over 4,100 individual members. As well as supporting each other, group members lobby Parliament, hold conferences, network and speak to many community organisations. They also publish helpful information for grandparents:

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: A Handbook for Grandparents and Other Kin Caregivers *Mā Ngā Kaumatua Hei Tautoko Te Tipurangi Ake O Ngā Mokopuna*. (Third edition, 2007)

Prepared for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust, New Zealand, by Jill Worrall

<http://www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz/supporting/booklet.pdf>

Working grandparents

The Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 gives employees with caring responsibilities (including grandparents, if eligible) a statutory right to request flexible work arrangements and requires employers to give reasonable consideration to the request.

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/er/bestpractice/worklife/flexibleworkguide/index.asp>

Separation

The Ministry of Justice website provides a fact sheet of suggestions to grandparents and other adults in the whānau as to how they might support children whose parents have separated.

Tips for Grandparents and Other Family/Whānau When There's Been a Separation Involving Children (Ministry of Justice, New Zealand)

<http://www.justice.govt.nz/courts/family-court/documents/pdf-pamphlets/Courts178-FS9-Tips-for-grandparents-and-other.pdf>

Changing trends

The Changing Face of Grandparenting (Positive Ageing Series, Age Concern New Zealand Inc, September 2005)

Includes sections on the following topics: suggestions for parents and grandparents, intergenerational bonds, cultural differences, grandparenting from a distance, changes to the family network, grandparents raising grandchildren.

<http://ageconcern.org.nz/happiness/family/changing-face-grandparenting>

Disability

The **IHC** website provides information about living with intellectual disability in New Zealand. IHC New Zealand Inc advocates for the rights, inclusion and welfare of all people with an intellectual disability and supports them to live satisfying lives in the community.

www.ihc.org.nz

CCS Disability Action is a partnership organisation working with disabled people, their whānau and the wider community as well as with government and other NGOs.

www.ccs.org.nz

Prader-Willi Syndrome Association (NZ) shares guidelines for grandparents of children with Prader-Willi Syndrome.

<http://pws.org.nz/Just-for-Grandparents>

Elder abuse

Age Concern and the **New Zealand Government** have produced a pamphlet on elder abuse that includes suggestions for valuing and respecting older people's contributions, as well as contact details for sources of information and support.

http://www.areyouok.org.nz/files/test/resources/Elder_Abuse_F.pdf

The Families Commission fact sheet *Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect* outlines risk and protective factors for elder abuse and neglect, as well as providing guidelines for older people, whānau and carers. Positive relationships between generations are encouraged, as is ensuring that boundaries are openly discussed and agreed. Families and carers are also reminded to ensure that older family members have information, or know where to get information, about matters that affect them.

<http://www.familiescommission.govt.nz/research/elder-abuse/elder-abuse-fact-sheet>

Relationships, sex and sexuality education

Family Planning has developed a resource for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. The resource was developed after a workshop held in Hawke's Bay, at which grandparents raised a number of topics that they wanted more information about. Examples were talking about sex and relationships, house rules and family values, raising resilient young people, puberty and sexuality education in schools.

The Grandparent Pack (2011)

<http://www.familyplanning.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=rgAYRKXyZhQ%3D&tabid=930>

Support and advocacy organisations

Age Concern serves the needs of older people by offering nationally contracted services, education, resources and national leadership.

<http://www.ageconcern.org.nz>

This link includes a series of questions for older people to consider if they are contemplating moving house or moving to living in a multi-generational household.

<http://www.ageconcern.org.nz/my-home/home-choices/making-your-move>

Grey Power is a lobby organisation promoting the welfare and wellbeing of all citizens in the 50-plus age group.

<http://www.greypower.co.nz/>

The Salvation Army has provided accommodation and care for senior people in the community for over 70 years. They provide residential care, chaplaincy, independent living units and community-based care.

<http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/here-to-help/seniors/>

Skylight offers a range of services to support those facing tough times of change, loss, trauma and grief – whatever the cause, and whatever their age. They also equip, train and support those wanting to assist, such as friends or whānau members, community volunteers and professionals.

<http://www.skylight.org.nz>

Services for Seniors

A guide to help older people find out what's out there. It includes information about New Zealand Superannuation, as well as contact details for government organisations, community groups and others offering services and support for seniors.

<http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/brochures/services-for-seniors.html>

Other

Congratulations – You're a Grandparent

A pamphlet outlining current parenting practices and providing practical suggestions for how grandparents can help new mothers (developed by Johnson & Johnson Professional and Educational Services)

http://www.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ecconnections/J_J_GrandparentBooklet2007.pdf

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