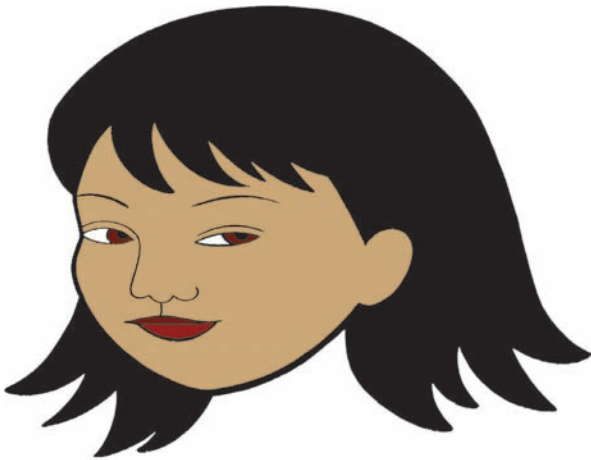


Introduction

Who is this booklet for?

This booklet has been created especially for young people in Aotearoa New Zealand, who are parents or are about to become parents. While both young mothers & fathers can use this booklet, it has been made mostly for mothers. This is because there are more young mums out there than young dads. It's also because when young women become parents, their lives are often changed in different ways than when young men become parents. For example, many more young mums face the challenge of parenting alone & the major responsibilities that children bring to our lives. However, if you are a young dad, there is still a great deal of information that you may find useful.

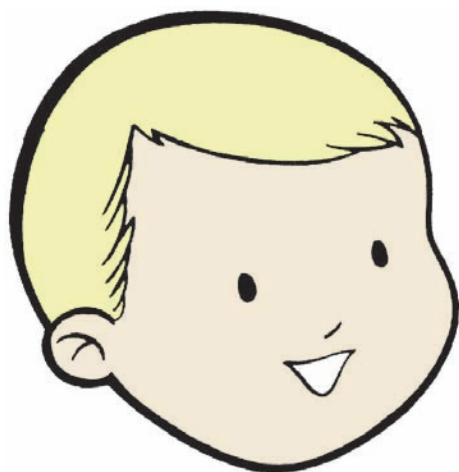
People who are involved with, or who support young parents, may also find this booklet useful. Family, whanau & friends: this resource has been created with you in mind too.



Why does this booklet exist?

Being a parent is a huge challenge no matter what your age or circumstances. However when you are young it's often challenging in different ways. Young parents need information they can relate to. Many young people haven't got their lives 'sorted' before they become parents: some are still at school, living at home, & don't have an income. The more relevant information you have, the better equipped you are to direct your life,

make the decisions you will need to make & get on with the job of being the best parent you can be. This booklet is a way of offering information & ideas to young parents.



How was this booklet made?

Young parents shared their ideas & opinions on what they felt should be included in the booklet. They also gave their ideas about how the booklet should look, for example, illustrations & colours. With these ideas & instructions as a guide, information was gathered from a variety of people & sources. Social workers, youth workers, health professionals, community workers, parent educators, lawyers & counsellors all supplied information for this booklet. Additional ideas & information came from books & the internet (see the resources page), as well as leaflets that are available from the organisations listed in the service directory that is supplied with this booklet.

Because all people are unique, with different backgrounds & experiences, it makes sense that this booklet may not cover everything you want to know, or it may have missed something you feel is important. You are invited to offer your ideas & opinions for updated versions.

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