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# Tipppaper

Parenting tips and information for every parent

# No.1

> Triple P, Positive Parenting, Take care of yourself, Winter/Spring 2012

[www.triplep-staypositive.net](http://www.triplep-staypositive.net)



## Help for Bay of Plenty and Mid Central families

Families in the Bay of Plenty and the Mid Central region are getting quality parenting support through a new government initiative.

The world-acclaimed Triple P parenting programme has become available to families through a partnership between the Bay of Plenty District Health Board, the MidCentral District Health Boards and local agencies working at the frontline of community wellbeing.

This project, to boost parenting skills and awareness, is co-ordinated by the Werry Centre, a workforce development organisation. Agencies taking the lead to develop the network of Triple P parenting practitioners and reach families are Kaitiaki Nursing Service/Western Bay of Plenty PHO and ACROSS Social Services in the Mid Central region.

Locally, 93 practitioners have been trained.

## Triple P – from NZ to the world

The United Nations ranks Triple P as the number one parenting programme in the world, based on the body of evidence behind it. Yet more than 30 years ago, Triple P started out as the research project of a young New Zealand psychologist.

Today, Professor Matt Sanders is considered one of the world's leading parenting authorities.

And his Triple P – Positive Parenting Program has been shown to work time and time again, helping more than six million families around the globe.



## Bedtime battles a nightmare for mum



**Tauranga single mum Elisha Ma'a was being run ragged by the antics of her high-energy, four-year-old son Kynin. Night times were a nightmare. Elisha couldn't get Kynin to go to bed at all and had nearly given up trying! Most nights he'd eventually settle in her bed but not until late. And, as often as not, he'd be up again in the middle of the night watching videos.**

"He was pretty out of control during the day too and I was getting really worried about how to handle him," says Elisha. "I talked to the nurse at his before-school check and she told me about Triple P. Thank goodness!"

The Triple P Elisha heard about was the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program, a system of parenting help devised by a New Zealand psychologist, and now regarded as one of the world's most effective parenting programmes. Triple P, which is used in 24 countries, is available free to Mid Central and Bay of Plenty

parents of children aged between three and seven.

As it happened for Elisha, her new partner Michael Anderson was very willing to support her through the four short Triple P sessions.

"(Kynin's) a great kid," says Michael, "but when I first met Elisha she was so tired and so stressed and she felt she couldn't take him anywhere. Since she was referred to Sharon, we've been working together all the way."

Sharon Coxon is the Triple P practitioner who visited Elisha and Michael, working

with them as a couple. She helped them develop new ways of managing Kynin's behaviour and supported them as they put their new skills into practice.

And what a transformation at their place! These days Kynin's in bed around 7.30pm and everyone is delighted with the changes in his behaviour. He's a lot calmer, he's getting to bed and he's doing as he is told.

"Doing Triple P has been a huge help for us. I'd really recommend it," says Elisha.

To read how Elisha and Michael used Triple P turn to page 2.

**Contact?**  
Go to the website  
[triplep-staypositive.net](http://triplep-staypositive.net)

## 2 About Parenting

2.0

The fertility rate of births per New Zealand woman.

Source: Statistics New Zealand

90%

Proportion of children who prefer playing with their friends to watching TV.

Source: Ikea PlayReport

236

Number of words in Dr Seuss's children's book, The Cat in the Hat.

Source: Wikipedia



# Mid Central parents more relaxed

It's early days yet, but in the Mid Central region, parents are already feeling more relaxed and are enjoying their families more, according to parenting coordinator Rachel Smithers. Rachel, a social worker, is one of two parenting coordinators overseeing the introduction of the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program in Mid Central. And as a Triple P practitioner herself, she is heartened by the positive changes she is seeing in the families that have been among the first in the region to benefit from the world-renowned programme.

"Feedback has been very positive from families," says Rachel. "We are hearing that people really like Triple P because it's really practical and they're finding they can do it quite easily to start getting the sort of changes they want with their kids."

"We are hearing all the time about parents who love the changes they're getting at home and the big improvements in behaviour they're seeing. When things get better with behaviour, we're seeing parents more relaxed and getting into a space where they are starting to enjoy being parents."

Rachel is based in Palmerston North, at ACROSS Social Services, and has been working with the many new Triple P practitioners who are starting to see families from Dannevirke to Palmerston

North and points south. In Mid Central, families have been able to choose to get their free Triple P help one-to-one with a practitioner or to join other parents at a two-hour Triple P discussion group. Rachel says those seeing a practitioner one-to-one are often surprised at how relaxed the programme is.

"For some, just having a Triple P practitioner come to see them has been the start of a new direction..." she says.

"Sure some parents might have been a bit apprehensive about getting help before they met their practitioner. But we have been able to get it across very quickly that we're not there to judge. We're there to help them make a plan to suit their situation and over the four sessions, we

are going to help them implement it."

Other parents are now putting into practice the ideas they've learnt at one of the brief discussion groups, which deal with common problems such as disobedience or fighting and aggression. Rachel says parents who've been to these groups say they've had fun. And she says the take-home workbooks, which are permanent reminders of the strategies talked about within the group, have been popular too.

"It's making it just a bit easier for them to carry on the good work," she says.

Rachel says there are many ways parents are finding out about the new Triple P support. While some are referred by a health professional or teacher, others have



Practitioner Rachel Smithers

read about it in the paper or picked up one of Triple P's distinctive "Stay Positive" brochures at kindy and liked the sound of getting parenting help in such a no-fuss way. And there's plenty more Triple P on the way.

"Our group of practitioners is spread all over the region and growing in numbers," says Rachel. ■

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Kynin, Michael and Elisha

## How Elisha and Michael did it!

Teamwork - and some new Triple P-inspired routines - helped Elisha Ma'a and her partner Michael sort out the major bedtime hassles they were having with little Kynin.

Says Michael: "We kept a very united approach on a plan leading up to getting him to bed and keeping him there, and it wasn't really difficult to do."

For a start, Michael and Elisha made sure four-year-old Kynin knew what was expected of him in the lead-up to bedtime.

"We both talk him through the routines before bedtime so he knows what is coming up and now he knows the way it goes," Michael says.

"For example, it's just been things like telling him he's had his last drink for the day, it's time to go to the toilet, time to clean his teeth, it's shower time and then it's going to be bedtime. And we told him he had to stay in bed."

And soon that's just what happened.

"He stopped getting up again quite quickly. It's worked really well," says Michael.

Michael and Elisha's Triple P practitioner

was Sharon Coxon, who helped the couple agree on their strategies, and supported them as they tried out the new routines.

And while Elisha and Michael may have started Triple P because they wanted to sort out the nightly bedtime dilemma, they ended up with much more – they became more confident about parenting in general.

"(Sharon) made it so easy to understand and gave us such great support," says Elisha.

"We started to turn things around quite quickly. Once we got bedtime sorted other big improvements started to follow right away."

Michael agrees. "It doesn't sound like much but it's really turned his behaviour around. I've noticed a big difference in Elisha – she's much happier and more relaxed, and we've got our evenings back." ■





Evie Wheeler and her dad Chris

## Join a group or go it alone

The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program doesn't assume 'one size fits all' when it comes to providing support to families. Triple P knows that each family has its own special needs and concerns so there are different ways for parents to get their Triple P help.

In Mid Central and Bay of Plenty, Triple P is available for parents of children from three to seven years of age. The types of Triple P offered here are known as Primary Care Triple P and Discussion Group Triple P. Families choose what suits them best.

### Primary Care

Primary Care is a brief and private way for parents to get help tackling one or two specific problems. Parents meet with a practitioner on about four occasions for sessions of between 15 and 30 minutes.

The practitioner may play segments of a Triple P DVD, *Every Parent's Survival Guide*, which shows other parents dealing with similar problems with their own children.

Parents will get a take-home tip sheet that relates directly to the problem they're having. There are dozens of tip sheets covering a huge range of parenting concerns, including fighting and aggression, going shopping, bedwetting, mealtimes, sharing, toilet training, homework, disobedience, whining, tantrums, swearing and many more.

### Discussion Group

After just one two-hour small group session, parents go home armed with plenty of new ideas for dealing with a specific problem. Each session brings together a maximum of 10-12 parents who are experiencing the same parenting issue. The topics are:

- Dealing with disobedience
- Developing good bedtime routines
- Managing fighting and aggression
- Hassle-free shopping with children.

As well as getting some great tips and suggestions from their Triple P discussion group facilitator, parents also leave the group with a workbook of simple exercises and information to support them as they try their new strategies at home. ■

# Independent Evie now in time with mum and dad



Dawdle, dawdle, dawdle, went little Evie Wheeler every morning when it came to getting dressed and ready to go off to kindy. This Dannevirke three year old was finding her independence and wanted to get dressed without help - however long that took. And while her parents Charmaine and Chris Wheeler were getting exasperated with the trying routine, they weren't sure how to tackle it.

It wasn't a huge issue, but Charmaine says there had also been tantrums. All round, she and Chris had some concerns that Evie wasn't behaving as they would have liked her to.

But by happy coincidence, Triple P had just become available in their town. At kindy, the couple chanced upon a brochure that pointed to some parenting discussion groups being held at Tararua REAP (Rural Education Activities Programme).

"We decided it would be good to tweak our parenting skills with advice from someone who knows what they're talking about," says Chris.

And, after just two hours at the session "Dealing With Disobedience" with Triple P practitioner Wendy Lansdown, Chris and Charmaine had new ideas and strategies to start turning things around with Evie at home.

## "The course was very easy to understand"

"The course was very easy to understand," says Chris. "Now it seems like common sense but really it got us to rethink our approach to how you put things to a small child. For example, instead of saying 'don't jump on the chair', we learned it would be a better approach to say 'chairs are for

sitting on, not for jumping'.

"We also learned how effective it is to praise Evie right away for doing as she is asked and we're now both making sure we are continually encouraging the behaviour we want. It's a more positive approach and it's started to work well quite quickly."

Charmaine says although the discussion group was just two hours with a focus on disobedience, everyone took on board some great parenting ideas.

"Listening to Wendy, we were reminded



Chris, Evie and Charmaine

of the importance of giving clear, direct instructions and to tell (Evie) exactly what we wanted her to do. We know we need to give her a few seconds to take in what she's been asked to do but now I don't count up much past five in my head while I'm waiting for her to do as I ask. Evie is much more cooperative now and much quicker to respond."

The group setting was reassuring for these parents too.

## "It was good to see that it wasn't just us and that other parents have these issues"

"I realised that a lot of what was happening was normal stuff for her age – just pushing the boundaries and wanting to be a bit more independent," says Charmaine.

"It was good to see that it wasn't just us and that other parents have these issues. The course was really worthwhile and it came at just the right time. We're now feeling a lot more relaxed about things." ■



## 4 Take Care of Yourself

### PARENTS SAY



We asked New Zealand mums and dads how they de-stress as parents. Here's what they said:

#### Leanne, mother of two boys, 8 and 10.

"I love to cook – it relaxes me. So when I feel myself getting uptight at home, I go into the kitchen and start baking something really nice. I find it creative and it feels nurturing for all of us. Just the smell of something yummy in the oven calms everything down."

#### Dean, father of two boys, 7 and 10.

"Humour saves me from getting too worked up. If I find myself getting stressed I try to have a laugh and to get the boys laughing too. I try to see the lighter side of things - they're only kids!"

#### Megan, mother of two boys, 9 months and 4.

"My neighbour and I had our first babies at the same time. A couple of nights a week, rain, hail or shine, we left them with their dads and went for a good walk. We'd moan, laugh and cry but then we always felt better. I plan to get a few hours for myself on Saturday. Just knowing I have that treat coming up gets me through the week of tantrums and battles."

#### David, father of two girls, 4 months and 3.

"I'm an exercise guy. Going for a run, or just getting out in the garden and getting active, is my way of coping with stress. Sometimes it's good to get out with my mates to let off a bit of steam too."

#### Karen, mother of girl, 6.

"I'm on my own and I work fulltime so it can all get a bit stressful. But I can usually find a distraction. I just jump on facebook and look at photos and jokes and things from friends. That can make me feel good again pretty quick."

#### Melissa, mother of twin girls, 6.

"I'm really lucky I have lots of family around me so I can grab a short break. Keeping really fit is my way of staying on top of things. I can get out for a quick run at least a couple of times a week and it's my lifeline."



## Ten minutes with... Ardell Unsworth



Based at Kaitiaki Nursing Services in Tauranga, Ardell Unsworth is coordinator of Triple P practitioners in the Bay of Plenty and a busy Triple P practitioner herself. Ardell is also a paediatric nurse and a public health nurse with a passion for parenting.

#### What are some of the common issues that cause parents stress?

The ways their kids are behaving. Things like fighting and not doing as they're asked. Parents often feel they're on their own struggling with these things. Some feel they don't have much support from their partners when it comes to parenting.

#### What's your advice to parents who are feeling over-tired or stressed?

Get help from neighbours, friends or family. Go to your doctor or see a health professional. It's healthy to ask for help.

#### What are the consequences of parents not taking care of themselves?

Burnout, increased stress and pressure. It impacts on the kids.

#### What are three of the most common things parents tell you would make them feel less stressed or tired?

Feeling supported by their partners, being in a society that is supportive about raising kids and feeling confident about parenting.

#### How do most parents feel about parenting?

Most parents love it. But some know they are falling down because they're just too tired to manage and finding it tougher than they thought it would be.

#### What would you say to someone who thinks they may need some parenting support and is considering a programme such as Triple P?

Parents find Triple P helps them whether they're just brushing up on tips or really struggling to cope. And they love it because it makes a big difference, fast! When they get to a parenting course, they realise they're not alone, other parents have the same issues. ■



#### What might prevent a parent from looking after themselves?

Feeling they have to keep going with chores and running around for their families. Just feeling too stretched and having no one else to give them a hand.

#### Why do some parents feel guilty if they take time out for themselves?

They might feel it's selfish to take time for themselves or feel guilty about wanting to even sit down with a cup of coffee.

## Calming the morning rush hour

The morning rush hour can be the most stressful part of a family's day. You're trying to get lunches packed. One child has spilt toothpaste all over his clothes. The other refuses to get dressed at all. Surely there has to be an easier way to get you and your kids out the door on time?

Well, the key is very simple. It is to be organised.

For a start, prepare some things the night before. You'll save a bit of time in the morning. Once you're up, get yourself ready first, before your child.

I also recommend you don't have the television on in the morning. Once the children are completely ready to leave you may want to turn it on. Otherwise it is a distraction.

It also helps to let your child know ahead of time what you expect them to do before

you leave.

Teaching children to get dressed by themselves helps them become more independent too. They soon realise how important it is to be organised. And a child who brushes his own teeth, or makes her own bed will make life easier for you.

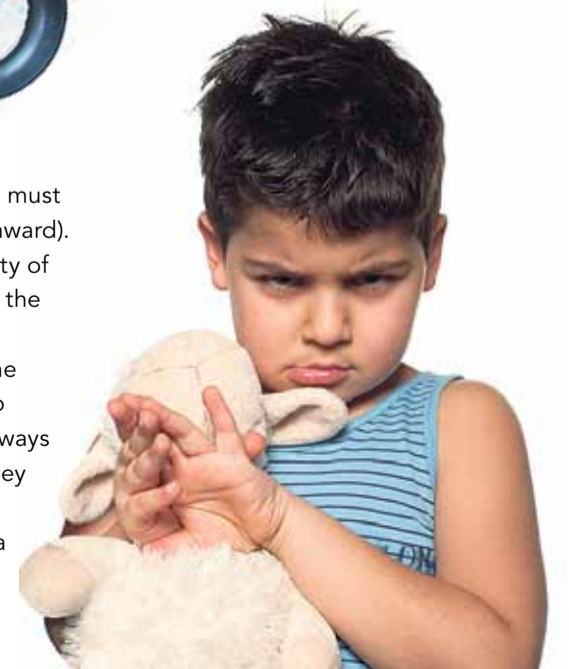
You may also like to try the "beat the clock" game. The goal is for your child to be ready before the alarm clock sounds off. If your child wins, he earns a small treat or reward – perhaps a favourite snack in his lunch box.

Tell your child exactly what tasks he must do to be ready to leave (and win the award). Make sure you set the timer with plenty of time. Try not to repeat instructions all the time or nag your child to hurry up.

Often you'll be able to phase out the rewards and the clock after about two weeks. But of course, remember to always praise your child's achievements as they become better organised.

You should find mornings become a lot calmer.

- Professor Matt Sanders





## Parents need time out too!

Getty Images



### Balancing Work and Family

Juggling the competing demands of work and family can be incredibly stressful. Here are a few ideas to help you get the balance right.

- Be organised, especially in the mornings
- Teach children to do things for themselves
- Have a 'leaving home' routine and have some basic ground rules
- Avoid unnecessary conflict before work
- Make sure you and your partner work together as a team
- Make family your priority when you are with them.



#### How to prevent stress at work affecting home life:

- Make work a priority while you're at work
- Complete difficult tasks early rather than just before leaving for home
- Let your employer know your needs and find out about workplace entitlements
- Use commuting time to unwind
- Avoid being overcommitted
- Make sure you take regular holidays
- Develop a relaxing 'coming home' routine.

- Professor Matt Sanders



There are five basic steps to positive parenting, the Triple P way. One of the key steps is to make sure that you, as a parent, are looking after yourself. You matter too, you know! Here are a few tips to help you start protecting your own wellbeing.

When parents are stressed, anxious, unhappy or tired, it's natural for them to be on edge. And, because a frazzled mother or father will definitely find it more difficult to be patient, calm and consistent with their children, it's really important that you, as a parent, take care of yourself. Because being a good parent doesn't mean you have to be with your child every single minute of the day!

Start by finding time on a regular basis to indulge in something enjoyable – whether that's sharing a coffee with a friend, taking an exercise class or simply spending 30 minutes reading the newspaper. Doing something relaxing or fun can be a great circuit breaker and you'll feel refreshed to face the family fray again!

When you really need support, call on the friends and family you trust. Everyone needs a little help now and then, so there's no reason to feel guilty about asking a close friend to mind your child or provide a shoulder to cry on from time to time.

Take notice if you're feeling upset with your child and avoid blaming the child or yourself for what's happening. It often helps to try changing the way you think about situations. For example, a child who plays

up while you're on the phone is possibly bored and not deliberately trying to annoy you.

If you work, aim to strike a balance between your home life and your job. If you're doing too many hours at work, you may need to reassess, just as you may need to occasionally curb extra family activities when work demands.

Mornings can be incredibly stressful for families trying to get out of the house. Encourage your children to be self-sufficient in the morning rush hour. If they can calmly get themselves ready for school or kindergarten without you doing everything for them, you'll arrive at work in a much better frame of mind.

And try to work as a team with your partner or with other carers. Share the load, discuss daily events and try to agree on how you'll approach discipline. Of course it's not always easy to work as a team but arguing is only going to make you more stressed.

If you're unhappy with the way your partner has handled a situation, wait until it's over and find a time to calmly discuss what happened. Remember though that talking and sharing your ideas also



means listening to your partner's points of view and acknowledging that you have understood them correctly.

And don't forget to praise your partner when you think they're doing a good job. Everyone will feel good about that! ■

### Stress alert

Everyone experiences stress differently but these are some of the common warning signs:

- Tense or stiff muscles
- Headaches
- Irritability or anger
- Disturbed sleep
- Tiredness
- Problems concentrating
- Feeling overwhelmed or unable to keep up with everything
- Stomach upsets or diarrhoea
- Skin reactions such as rashes or pimples
- Repeated infections or viruses





## Family fun – our favourite cool weather adventures

Don't let the cooler weather or the bank balance spoil your family's fun. There's always plenty for families to do – indoors and outside – without blowing a hole in the budget. And to lure kids out of the house at this time of year, include them in the planning and let them help organise a picnic.



### Shanks' pony

Walking is a great way to explore - without going too far. Look on the websites of your local authorities for maps and descriptions of nearby trails and walkways.

For starters, the landmark mount at Mt Maunganui is one of the country's standouts for kids and grownups. It's bike friendly and is great in almost any weather. It's only an hour or so and there are great spots to stop along the way. For more of a challenge, take the summit walk.

### Beachcombing

Swap the swimsuits for woolly hats and go beachcombing anywhere on the beautiful rugged coastlines at our back door. Collect driftwood and shells to make all manner of things back home.

### Park life

Check out the parks near you. Even the smallest usually have play equipment and room to toss a ball. For Manawatu families the riverbank Victoria Esplanade Gardens is a beautiful big old space with play equipment, bike trails, a miniature train to ride and endless picnic spots. For a bit more adventure, pick up a map there and give the permanent orienteering course a go.

### Marvellous museums

New Zealand's smaller cities are home to some fabulous theme museums.

Te Manawa Museum in Palmerston North is free and has a dedicated kids' zone, with games, dress-ups and secret passageways to fire the little ones' imaginations.

Next door, the fascinating Rugby Museum encourages the kids to tackle, kick and leap like an All Black at the "Have a Go" section. The museum charges \$5 entry for kids and \$12.50 for adults.

Classic Flyers in Tauranga is a huge open hangar of classic old planes and great stuff to do with the adventures of flying. There are even tiny 'planes' for little ones to wheel around in. With regular events both indoors and in the skies above, it's a great drawcard. There is a small admission fee.

### On your bikes!

Palmerston North is as flat as a pancake and you are spoilt for choice of cycling routes on the riverside, in city streets, the countryside and for mountain biking. Download maps from the council website at [www.pncc.govt.nz](http://www.pncc.govt.nz)

And for those times when wet weather threatens, you can find more free stuff to do without looking too far. Try these websites for starters:

- [www.temanawa.co.nz](http://www.temanawa.co.nz)
- [www.classicflyersnz.com](http://www.classicflyersnz.com)
- [www.tauranga.govt.nz](http://www.tauranga.govt.nz)
- [www.pncc.govt.nz](http://www.pncc.govt.nz)

## Plan ahead for stress-free outings



If you're setting out on an adventure with the kids, it's a good idea to plan ahead – being prepared can help you nip potential behaviour issues in the bud.

Think about what could go wrong before you leave and try to tackle the problems in advance. For example, pack snacks if you know your child gets irritable when they're hungry.

Talk about the rules of the outing before you head off. Chat in a relaxed manner and get your child involved in deciding the rules. Choose only a few and keep them simple, for example: "Keep your hands and feet to yourself" and "Stay close to Mum".

Plan interesting activities for those times when kids get bored and play up. You may need to take toys or games to occupy the littlies in the car or on the bus. And if you're queuing with the kids, keep them focussed - start a game of "I Spy" or question them about what they can see around them and they'll be less likely to get fidgety and act out.

Make sure you provide the interesting activities to keep children busy before problems start rather than after they have already started otherwise you might accidentally reward misbehaviour.

Diverting children to different activities

works best when it is done at the early signs of behaviour problems, not after it has gone pear shaped.

You may also like to create a rewards system so your child can earn a treat by following the rules. Perhaps you want to carry a sticker chart with you to reward good behaviour as it happens. And remember to praise and encourage the good behaviour when you see it.

If your child breaks the rules, there should be consequences that are practical and immediate. If you're in a playground, for example, the consequence for pushing a little brother or sister could be to have the child sit quietly away from the swings for a few minutes. You should always talk about the consequences before you leave home though, so your child knows what to expect.

And when you're finally home, it helps to have a brief follow-up discussion. Praise your child for following the rules and, if necessary, point out one rule that may have been broken.

- Professor Matt Sanders

## My family - Dame Susan Devoy



**International squash legend Dame Susan Devoy and husband John Oakley have four sports-mad teenagers. High performance and lots of activity has been a great recipe for this family. Susan and John have put in years on sidelines cheering their boys. These days Jamie (13), Josh (15), Alex (17) and Julian (18) are showing star quality in cricket, squash and athletics.**

"It's been chaotic and lots of hard work but I have great memories of Saturday nights around the dinner table. We'd reflect on their games, celebrate the good and laugh off the bad. We missed it when they moved on from that stage but we're still very much out there as a family.

"Sometimes it was hard to get them going on our great family walks but usually it was lots of fun - or we tried to make it fun. Boys have heaps of energy to burn off so we've always kept on the go.

"We certainly put in the time for them

and that's brought really good outcomes for our family. The boys are really close and very supportive.

"Just being there for them has been so important. Sometimes you don't have to be doing anything much at all. Sometimes just being there is enough." ■



Dame Susan Devoy



## Good reading habits start early



Curling up with your kids and reading to them is a great thing to do anytime. For sharing time together and for learning, it's a great routine to develop and one of the pleasures of parenting.

You may already be very good at finding books and bringing them to life for your kids. But if you're in need of inspiration, help is as close as your local library. Libraries these days are not the quiet places you might remember from your childhood.

Pop into Tauranga library on a Tuesday morning and you could think you've struck a party – judging by the number of families and the sounds of laughter at the 'Toddler Time' sessions. The library's half-hour interactive story times attract big, happy groups of up to 40 mothers, fathers and pre-schoolers. They're having fun and getting the obvious benefits of learning and literacy together, says children's librarian Amanda McFadden.

"But there are other benefits too," says Amanda. "As well as having a happy time with their children, some parents are discovering books and authors they may

not have found without help.

"Some parents are also learning new skills from these sessions. They're getting the confidence to go home and pick up a book and read aloud more often. At the library, we've really noticed that quite a lot of parents don't really know how to do this because they didn't grow up with parents who read to them. Once they try it, they love it and so do their children."

It's the same picture at Palmerston North library and the branches around the region. Story sessions for babies and for toddlers are very popular. So too is their winter series for older kids and their parents, known as "Stories at Six".

Encouraging children's interest in reading at sessions like these can have long term benefits too. Many educators say learning to read is the single most important factor in a child's success at

school, while reading – or being read to – in the safety and security of a parent's arms can have a positive effect on a child's behaviour in the classroom. Triple P's Professor Matt Sanders agrees.

"If a child can't read and is struggling to keep up in the classroom, they may begin to misbehave as a way of seeking attention or simply because they feel excluded and bored," says Professor Sanders, who also points out the benefits reading brings to the parent-child relationship.

"As a parent, you're giving the child dedicated, positive attention and children appreciate that. That can be a special and loving time for all. Reading is also a calming activity that can help children learn to be settled, particularly at bedtime when it can become part of the sleep routine." ■



## Best books for kids of all ages

To encourage your child to read, you'll want to choose books that are perfect for their age group. Janice Marsters at Poppies bookshop, Mt Maunganui has some great suggestions:

### Tiny Tots

Few words and strong pictures are best for the littlies. Much-loved books for this age group include many by homegrown authors and illustrators. Try Sally Sutton and Brian Lovelock's *Roadworks*, *Wonky Donkey* by Craig Smith (illustrations by Katz Cowley), *Down the Back of the Chair* by Margaret Mahy (and Polly Dunbar) or *There's a Hole in My Bucket* by the Topp Twins – a fabulous new spin on an old song, with pictures by Jenny Cooper.

### 6 years +

Girls particularly love the Jacqueline Wilson stories written for younger readers. The *39 Clues* series - adventure novels by various authors - appeals to many kids at this age and so do Roald Dahl stories (oldies but goodies). *Press Here*, by Herve Tullett, and the *Zac Power* series grab this age group too.

### 9 years +

Jacqueline Wilson has also written lots for this age range. Other series Janice says to look for include Lian Tanner's *The Keepers*, Anthony Horowitz books (for boys) and Michael Morpurgo stories for boys and girls. If the kids haven't already discovered the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, look out for the books in this series for older kids.

Get them started on one or more of these series and hours of happy reading should follow. ■



## TIP

### Misbehaviour begins at home

Kids start learning about behaviour within the family home. But you could be accidentally encouraging misbehaviour – just by the way you interact with your child.

Put yourself in this picture: Your child asks you for a biscuit just before dinner. You say 'no' but your child keeps asking. If your child keeps getting louder and more demanding, you begin to feel harassed. So, eventually, you give in. They get the biscuit.

But by giving your child the biscuit, you've rewarded them for being demanding. And probably you've got a reward too – peace and quiet! But these rewards mean the situation is likely to happen again and again.

Of course, the opposite also applies. You ask your child to do something and they don't, so you keep repeating the instruction, getting louder and louder each time. Finally, you get angry, raise your voice or scream: "You've got until the count of three, or else!" Of course, they finally get the message. But unfortunately, the message they've learnt is that you're only serious when you yell.

**Tip:** Children may misbehave if you always ignore them when they behave well. Kids often prefer attention to no attention at all. They see it as "any attention is good attention". So, take notice when they're doing something you like and praise them for it. They'll probably do it again.

- Professor Matt Sanders



## Contact?

Go to the website  
[triple-staypositive.net](http://triple-staypositive.net)



## Local regions lead the way for government trial of parenting help



Free parenting support is now available to families in the Bay of Plenty and the Mid Central region under a government initiative that's already making big differences to local families.

Mothers and fathers in both regions can now get help from one of the many health, education or community professionals who have recently been trained to deliver the Triple P - Positive Parenting Program.

Some parents are getting individual support. Others are going to small group sessions that focus on common parenting problems such as disobedience or fighting. Parents are seeking help from Triple P practitioners with a range of concerns – from small issues to not-so-small issues.

The Ministry of Health is trialling the introduction of free and accessible parenting support in these district health board regions and in Counties Manukau and Waitemata this year.

Announcing the parenting support trials, Health Minister Tony Ryall said:

"Research shows that providing parents with information and support reduces parental distress and social and health problems in children."

Mr Ryall said the Triple P programme is described as one of the world's most effective parenting programmes. It is also one of the most extensively researched programmes in the world.

"This programme doesn't tell parents

how to parent, it gives them practical advice and skills they can use to help them manage the challenges we all face when we're raising our children," he said.

The practitioners who have been trained in Triple P as part of the trial are people already working with families through roles including social work, teaching, counselling, psychology and public health.

They have been selected from agencies within the district health board boundaries and are spread across the regions, ensuring access for parents in urban or rural locations.

The Bay of Plenty and Mid Central rollout of Triple P has been coordinated by the Werry Centre, a workforce development unit contracted by the Ministry of Health.



"It's been inspiring to hear of the practitioners' enthusiasm for the parenting programme and their growing confidence in this important field of work," says the Werry Centre's project coordinator, Lisa Maughan.

"It's gratifying too, to hear feedback about the delight of parents in improving their family situation after building their parenting skills through Triple P's tips and strategies."

Parents with pre-school or primary-aged children can seek help directly or they can ask a health or education professional to arrange a referral. They may attend brief one-to-one sessions with a practitioner or, depending on their concerns, a two-hour discussion group. ■

To learn more about Triple P and which options could be right for their families, parents should go to the website [www.triplep-staypositive.net](http://www.triplep-staypositive.net)

In Bay of Plenty the central contact point is Kaitiaki Nursing Service which is promoting regular discussion groups across the region. Contact details for Kaitiaki and all Triple P practitioners in Mid Central are listed on this page.



### Click for more

More news, stories and information about positive parenting in Bay of Plenty and Mid Central is available – all day, every day – at the Triple P "Stay Positive" website.

Go to [www.triplep-staypositive.net](http://www.triplep-staypositive.net) and you'll land on a site dedicated to helping local parents find the support they need.

For those struggling with an issue at home, there are simple tips that give a taste of what positive parenting is all about. There's also a wealth of information about how and why Triple P's many programmes work so well for families around the world.

Other local parents share their own stories too, telling of the changes Triple P has made to their lives. Then, each week, there's a link to a fresh radio podcast from Dr Alan Ralph, a Triple P author and researcher, who shares Triple P's proven suggestions for happier, more effective, parenting.

You can also click through to keep up-to-date with the times and details of the upcoming discussion groups being offered free of charge to parents of children between three and seven years.

And if your friends haven't got their hands on a copy of the Triple P Tippiaper yet, tell them to check it out online.

[www.triplep-staypositive.net](http://www.triplep-staypositive.net)

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