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Tippaper

Parenting tips and information for every parent

No.4

> Triple P, Positive Parenting, About Discipline, Summer 2014

www.triple-p-parenting.net



Free parenting help for NZ families

The world-acclaimed Triple P – Positive Parenting Program is available free to families in four North Island regions thanks to a government initiative that aims to promote positive parenting skills.

The Waitemata, Counties Manukau, Bay of Plenty and MidCentral district health boards are working in partnership with local agencies to provide support at the regional level for families. The project is co-ordinated by the Werry Centre, a workforce development organisation.

Lead agencies in each region recruit teams of health and welfare professionals who are trained to deliver Triple P to families in their area. They support families through two main Triple P programmes: Triple P Discussion Groups and Primary Care Triple P.

The lead agencies are: Kaitiaki Nursing Service (Bay of Plenty), ACROSS Social Services (MidCentral), ProCare Psychological Services (Counties Manukau), and Te Whanau o Waipareira Trust (Waitemata).

Small changes big differences

From toddler tantrums to a child's defiance, from bedtime dramas to disobedience, the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program helps parents sort through the issues that affect families everywhere.

Triple P's strategies are simple, practical and can be adapted to suit a family's individual needs. The programme started out as the research project of a young New Zealand psychologist. Today Professor Matt Sanders is regarded as one of the world's leading parenting authorities.

The battle to get Liam to bed

Palmerston North couple Kylie Baker and Neil Hanson struggled for years to get their son Liam to bed and keep him there. But their problems were not just confined to the night time.

Daytimes too were a nightmare as their bright and busy boy suffered the consequences of not getting enough sleep. Liam, who would be up at least five times a night, became difficult to deal with during the day and even started going off his food.

"I thought it was my fault," mum Kylie says. "I couldn't understand how this great little boy who I loved so much could be causing me so much distress.

"I couldn't go out because I really couldn't take him anywhere. We tried to help ourselves and find solutions but really, I was just far too tired to do anything."

Kylie and Neil tried rocking Liam to sleep on the sofa before carrying him to bed. But soon the nightly battle would begin and Liam would be up and down all night disturbing his exhausted parents nearly every hour and

then be ready to go again before dawn.

For many months Neil and Kylie hoped things would improve but when baby Mia was born, 18-month-old Liam was showing no signs of settling and sleeping.

Looking back, says Kylie, he was just getting worse. Every night was a nightmare and Liam's behaviour was also becoming difficult. There were tantrums all the time, he'd rarely do as he was asked and he was pretty fussy about food.

When he was coming up to three, his desperate mum took Liam to a paediatrician who told her about the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program, which is being offered to parents and caregivers of children in Waitemata, Manukau, Bay of Plenty and MidCentral regions.

By this time, Kylie and Neil had separated

but they were sharing parenting and Neil fully supported Kylie as she worked with visiting Triple P practitioner Nikki Walden to turn life with Liam around.

"I didn't know much about the programme at first but I was absolutely determined to find solutions," Kylie says.

"I really had no idea how it would go but I was 100 percent committed to giving it my very best shot."

With Nikki, Kylie worked on a plan to keep Liam in his bed and get everyone some decent sleep. Things improved within days.

"The change was incredible. We stuck to the plan and it's worked wonders on his sleep schedule." ■

Find out what worked for Kylie and Neil. Page 2.



Contact?
Go to the website
triple-p-parenting.net

2 About parenting



13-14

The average number of hours a cat sleeps per day.

Source: www.sciencekids.co.nz

9

The number of moons that Saturn has (officially).

Source: www.kidsastronomy.com

200

The average number of seeds in the skin of a strawberry.

Source: www.ars.usda.gov



How Triple P can help you

Sometimes it helps to know you're not alone. For other people, a little one-on-one time might be needed.

That's why the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program comes in a variety of formats, so parents can find support in a way that's helpful for them.

In Manukau, Bay of Plenty, MidCentral and Waitemata, parents of children aged 3-7 can access two different types of Triple P for free.

Parents can choose between Triple P Discussion Groups, which are attended by groups of up to 12 parents, and Primary Care Triple P, a private session between parents and an accredited Triple P practitioner. Or they can do both!

Discussion Group

Parents often find common ground talking with other parents about the "big four" behavioural issues. Disobedience, fighting and aggression, supermarket meltdowns and bedtime dramas seem to be universal problems shared by most families.

The good news is that it's surprisingly straightforward to deal with these behaviours calmly and effectively. Often all it takes is a two-hour Discussion Group session.

Triple P Discussion Groups are standalone two-hour sessions. Each session focusses exclusively on one of those big four behaviour problems and brings together a maximum of 12 parents who all share the same problem.

During a group, parents get ideas for tackling the specific problem behaviour and watch videos of other parents dealing with the issue. A take-home work book helps parents remember and work through the strategies at home.

Primary Care

Primary Care Triple P offers more personal consultations between parents and an accredited Triple P practitioner. Problems tackled can cover virtually any parenting issue. A Primary Care consultation usually lasts anything from 15 minutes to half an hour. Parents usually go to four sessions.

[Find an accredited Triple P practitioner near you, Page 8](#)

Primary Care Triple P saves the day – and the nights

For Kylie Baker, four brief one-on-one sessions with Triple P practitioner Nikki Walden have had a huge impact on her young family's life.

Six months ago Kylie was almost too tired to think when she began using Triple P strategies.

Her toddler Liam was not only keeping the family up all night. His sleep-deprived behaviour during the day brought with it a whole other set of problems which only became harder to deal with when baby Mia came on the scene.

After talking to her paediatrician, Kylie was put in touch with ACROSS Social Services in Palmerston North who recommended she try Primary Care Triple P.

For parents of children from birth to 12 years of age, Primary Care Triple P involves around four individual consultations of between 15 and 20 minutes.

The first thing Nikki did was help Kylie develop a plan.

With regular sleep likely to bring with it improvements to Liam's behaviour, Kylie and Nikki decided to manage his sleep issues first.

"Looking back, I really can't believe how quickly things changed"

Kylie says she was quite nervous at first but she was determined to follow through. She and Liam's dad, Neil Hanson, knew they had to be consistent in the approach they took.

Kylie says once she explained to Liam what was going to happen, she was ready to put the plan into action.

The first night was difficult. The next night was a little better with Kylie praising Liam if he stayed still and stopped crying out. She gave him a little clock so that he could see when it was six in the morning – an acceptable time to get up.

After four nights, Liam was starting to settle and stay in bed.

"Looking back I really can't believe how quickly things changed once we took a



clear, positive course of action and realised how important it was to be consistent, firm and fair as we stuck with it," Kylie says.

"Although we still have some quite difficult times with his behaviour, I am much more confident now about how to handle him.

"Of course I am not so tired and stressed now. I've stopped yelling and most of the time I feel much calmer."

Getting more sleep did improve Liam's mood and made him happier and easier to deal with.

And Kylie says she is now feeling more confident that she has the right strategies and knowledge to manage Liam's behaviour.

Both parents have taken a fresh look at how they give instructions to their son and are careful to keep things simple and clear.

They've learned the value of praising Liam when he does something they want him to do – and they've found that he's much more likely to continue doing as they ask if they do.

"We have our days but we're having much more fun now. He's a great kid.

Triple P has been fantastic for us." ■





Mum and daughter team up to tackle the chaos

When mother and daughter Jeanette and Sharn-Leigh Jensen found themselves raising their children together under the same roof, they knew tricky times might be ahead.

And there were plenty of them – from disobedience to mayhem at bedtime.

In this busy Tauranga household, mother and grandmother Jeanette works long hours and shifts while young mum Sharn-Leigh is back at a school for young parents, revisiting her studies.

Both women said life could get tough at times and both were stressed.

“We were determined to find a solution and to work together to sort out our issues and help each other out,” says Jeanette.

“There’s no way we wouldn’t have worked on this. But it was a question of what to do and what to do first.”

Ten-year-old Meadow is Jeanette’s youngest – and Sharn-Leigh’s little sister. Three-year-old Cyris is Sharn-Leigh’s little son who would not go to bed without a great fuss and wouldn’t stay in bed without mum anyway. Disobedience too was an issue with both the youngsters.

But help came by chance in the form of a flyer they came across for Triple P Discussion Groups.

Jeanette and Sharn-Leigh signed up for all four of the two-hour groups covering the everyday issues involved in bringing up children. These cover problems such as disobedience and fighting, hassles at bedtime and the struggles of going shopping with kids.

“For me, disobedience was the biggie with Meadow,” says Jeanette. “I needed to brush up my parenting skills and at the



Jeanette, Meadow, Sharn-Leigh and Cyris

groups I soon learned to set up routines with consequences and rewards.

“I needed to make things really clear with her – and then stick with having her follow through on what I was asking her to do. Most of the time it’s working really well.”

“Everyone shared their stories and you realise everyone has their hassles with kids”

Jeanette says attending the discussion groups with Sharn-Leigh also helped both mums realise they weren’t the only parents experiencing problems.

“We found the small parenting groups really good,” she says. “Everyone shared

their stories and you realise everyone has their hassles with kids.

“It was great to go along together with Sharn-Leigh so that we could both learn ways to handle things the same way back home.”

Sharn-Leigh says what she wanted most from the group was to get a bedtime routine in place that she could stick to and handle with confidence.

There have been big improvements in the sleeping habits of young Cyris but there are still some bad nights.

“I learned I had to have a routine of preparing him for bedtime and telling him he had to stay there but I also have to keep at it and not give in,” Sharn-Leigh says. “It hasn’t been easy but it hasn’t been too hard either and I’m just so glad I did something about it.” ■

TRIPLE P TIP

It’s not surprising many parents have mixed feelings about imposing rules.

While they want their children to learn what is expected of them so they can get on with others, parents may not want kids to be blindly obedient to adult authority.

But families with no rules often live in chaos. Family life can become a battleground with a lot of stress placed on both parents and children. However, too many rules does not help either.

Family rules should be few, fair, easy to follow, enforceable and positively stated. Where possible, kids should contribute to decisions about the rules.

– Professor Matt Sanders



Turuki’s efforts reap big rewards



Practitioner Mata Peato

Mothers all over Mangere know the cheery face of Mata Peato from local health and social service provider, Turuki Health Care.

For more than a decade this mum of four has worked in mother and pēpi maternity support with young Maori and Pacific mums.

Becoming a Triple P practitioner, she says, has only enhanced the wide range of support she and her team at Turuki already offer to their families.

But getting the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program started in the community wasn’t easy at first. The Turuki team thought Triple P may not be

welcomed as a great fit for Maori and Pacific families.

The first step, says Mata, was getting Maori and Pacific practitioners involved.

“That’s just getting over one of the barriers,” she says. “To get people on board we knew we had to be the presenters.”

A year down the track, the programme is getting great feedback – especially the Triple P Discussion Groups. The two-hour workshops deal with everyday behaviour challenges such as disobedience or fighting.

“We thought a lot about getting the timing right. And we knew too that it was important to finish up with kai,” Mata says.

“Although providing food is what we would do, it’s also been great to hear them

all talking parenting over lunch, realising they’re not the only one finding parenting tough sometimes.

“Right away we could see that Triple P would work for our families – for mums, grandparents, and aunts. We saw this parenting support could really give them a home run.”

As well as ensuring workshops were culturally appropriate, the Turuki team offered childcare on site and drove to neighbourhoods to gather up their first participants, texting ahead to say they were on their way. Now mothers make their own way and are spreading great feedback.

“Once we get them here, we’ve got them,” Mata says. “They like the groups and take it all on board very quickly. They love it. We all love it.” ■

4 About Discipline



Clear rules make discipline easier

Many parents are confused about how to discipline their children, and there's even a thought that discipline equals punishment.

But, put simply, good discipline means a child knows and understands the rules and that the consequences for breaking the rules are consistent and fair and carried out in a family environment that is secure, predictable and loving.

Professor Matt Sanders, a clinical psychologist whose Triple P – Positive Parenting Program has helped hundreds of thousands of families around the world, says parents can encourage good behaviour by using a strategy called assertive discipline.

"Assertive discipline is one of Triple P's five key steps to positive parenting and is based on the simple ideas that you are consistent, you act quickly when your child misbehaves, and you teach them how you want them to behave," says Prof Sanders.

"To get started, you must set some ground rules and make sure they tell your child what to do rather than what not to do. For instance, tell them to walk inside the house rather than don't run inside the house."

Prof Sanders says it's also important that children understand that "no" means to stop the behaviour that is not allowed. And when your child isn't following the rules, you stay calm and avoid shouting, name calling or threatening as this can make the problem escalate. Instead, give clear, calm instructions – get close, say your child's name and tell them in a firm, pleasant voice what you want them to do.

If your children are fighting over a toy, you might tell them to stop fighting, explain how important it is to be able to share and then show them how to go about sharing. If your child is being loud and interrupting,

explain it is important to be polite and teach them how to gain mum or dad's attention in a more acceptable way.

Children also need to understand if they break the rules, there will be consequences. And these should be fair and age appropriate. That way, children know what to expect, and will feel safe and loved – even though they may have done the wrong thing! Some suitable consequences for children include temporarily taking away a favourite toy, banning the use of a bike, or turning off the television.

If your child doesn't do what you have asked, a useful strategy can be quiet time. This means removing your child from the activity where the problem has occurred and having them sit quietly for a couple of minutes.

It's also easy to fall into the habit of constantly telling a child what they are doing wrong. You can change this by focussing on the positive. When your child behaves well and follows the rules, congratulate them or thank them for helping you. And it's often wise to ignore minor misbehaviour, which could be simply an attention-seeking ploy.

"It can be easy for parents dealing with a child's misbehaviour to fall into the trap of unwittingly feeding negative behaviour by nagging and criticising, often inconsistently, and by not praising and encouraging the child when they behave well," says Prof Sanders. "It isn't magic that brings about these results, just effort, and an understanding that we all need a little help sometimes." ■



Getty Images

Charting positive changes

When you are teaching a child a new skill or trying to encourage positive behaviours, creating a behaviour chart together can be a great way to start! The charts are particularly good for children aged between two and a half and 10 years.

Try a behaviour chart for daily routines such as homework, or for regular chores like drying dishes or putting away toys. Even children who aren't motivated to change, or who don't enjoy the task, can benefit from a behaviour chart.

Making a chart

First of all, gather all the materials you'll need to make a chart together – a large piece of cardboard, stickers, stars or 'smiley faces' and decide where you will display it. Somewhere central in the home, like on the refrigerator, is a great spot!

Next, the chart should set out simple and specific target behaviours and whether

they are achieved. Remember to phrase the behaviour positively – like "going to bed on time" or "sitting at the table until dinner is finished." Lastly, decide on regular rewards to provide an incentive to the child.

Rewarding positive change

Use rewards that are activities rather than things you have to buy – like staying up a bit later to watch a favourite television show, having a friend over, or playing a board game after dinner.

Rewards should be given initially every time the positive behaviour occurs and then gradually phased out once the new behaviour is learnt.

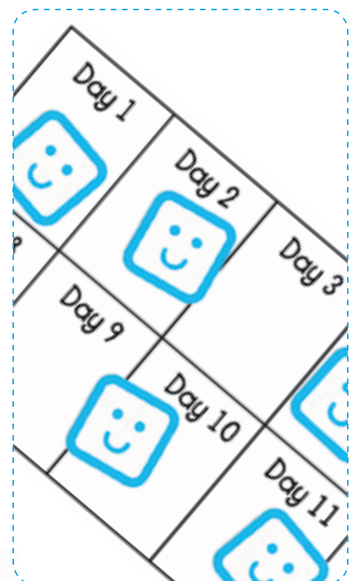
Time to say goodbye

A behaviour chart will not make your child become dependent on rewards if you follow a few simple rules. Always make sure you praise and pay your child attention at the same time that you give them the star or smiley face so that the rewards can be phased out. After a child has mastered the skill, make the rewards less predictable and more like occasional surprises.

You'll find you will only need to use a chart for about two to three weeks at a time to encourage a specific new behaviour.

– Professor Matt Sanders

If you're having trouble encouraging a new or positive behaviour with your child, try Primary Care Triple P or Discussion Group Triple P. See page 8 for contact details



Example behaviour chart: "My happy face chart for staying in my bed all night"





Ten minutes with... Beck Blatchford



Beck Blatchford is an educator and social worker with Tararua REAP. She has been delivering Triple P Discussion Groups through the Rural Education Activities Programme in Dannevirke for the past year.

Do children generally respond well if rules are explained clearly to them when they are set?

Yes I believe they do. It's good for families/whanau to sit down and talk about the rules they want to set. Setting clear rules ahead of time can save a whole lot of arguing, negotiating and frustration later when situations do arise.

Is there ever a time when children should be involved in rule setting?

Involving children when you set rules gives them a greater sense of ownership with the rules and it's likely to make them more inclined to follow them.



Triple P Practitioner Beck Blatchford

How difficult is it to establish rules in a family that has traditionally not set them?

Setting a few basic and positively stated rules that cover a multitude of situations is my recommendation. Too many rules can become too difficult to enforce. So keep it simple!

How do you help parents who are reluctant to discipline their children for fear of upsetting them?

We talk in our groups about discipline being about learning to follow rules and about it being firm but fair. We also talk about the fact that children often operate better when there are boundaries clearly

set and consequences are clear. When the consequences are followed through, it's important to make time to have positive interaction with children afterwards and to praise them again for behaving well. Parents can soon see how the ground rules can lead to positive interactions.

How important is it to set clear consequences for misbehaviour or rule breaking?

It is very important. Children can be great negotiators when they want to be and can draw much of our attention into arguing about the consequences and rules. We need to be firm and fair and follow through on consequences we set. They

need to be logical, that is: related in some way to the misbehaviour.

What advice do you offer to parents whose child refuses to act on a request? For instance, if they are asked to shut down their computer and they refuse.

Parents might need to restate the ground rules and, if necessary, follow through with time-out. If children feel they're not being heard, issuing a 'when/then' can be effective; e.g.: 'when' you are calm and speak nicely 'then' I will listen. Praising a child when they stay calm and speak politely will show them that positive behaviours get attention. And parents

should remember that behaviours that get attention are the ones that will occur most.

How do parents get around the fact that different families have different degrees of consequences for certain behaviours?

My advice to parents is to stick with the rules and routines set in their family/whanau. Be clear with other adults and visiting families and children about household rules. Displaying the rules in a space that can be clearly seen at home is a good idea. Letting rules and routines change when other people visit can lead to all that arguing and negotiating that kids are so darn good at! ■

PARENTS SAY

We asked parents in regions south and west of Auckland: "What are the most important rules in your house?"

Joy Williams, Glen Eden, Auckland
Mother of four – Anna 10, Isaac 8,
Oliver 4, Eli 19 months

"We want our kids to be kind and respectful. We are a big family where all sorts of behaviour crops up across the age ranges. Kindness and respect apply in so many situations. But you have to model this behaviour constantly for your children. If you say one thing and do the other, the kids soon pick up on that."

Kate Gere, Green Bay, Auckland
Mother of two – Dylan 6 and Ethan 3

"The rules at home apply to me too. The rules we operate by are to stay calm and don't get angry. I was brought up in a background of anger and hitting and it's absolutely not okay. I'm very firm about not hurting others or hurting ourselves and the boys do understand that."

Shelley Norman, Albany, Auckland
Mother of two – Jordyn 11 and Kingstyn 4

"In our whanau we were all brought up to be respectful and kind and to speak nicely to each other. We all share the same values in our wider family and the kids know that's how it works. Maybe their grandparents are a bit stricter about putting toys away and not running riot. The kids share our values and understand the rules so we're very lucky."

Jono Winther, Te Atatu Peninsula, Auckland
Father of two – Luke 9 and Jordan 8

"The kids have to listen to instructions and then do as I have asked. I'm strict about this approach and usually it works very well."

David Hornblow, Avondale, Auckland
Father of two – Zac 7 and Tom 4

"The rule is general respect. There's a bit of a disconnect between what they want and what they can have. We're a split family and they're learning they can't throw a paddy

to get what they want. They're learning we all have to be respectful and get along together."

Emma Hopkinson, Totara Heights, Auckland
Mother of two – Natalia 5 and Braxton 1

"Respect is number one at our house. Respect for yourself, for others and for our environment. If that is the way your family is living, I really believe everything follows on from that."

Yolanda Mackie, Glen Eden, Auckland
Mother of three – Matthew 13, Charli 7 and Joshua 4

"Because our kids are such different ages and stages we seem to have lots of rules. I guess 'ask first', is one of our most important rules. But right now with our youngest, the rule is 'kind hands'. He has been shoving his brother and sister and the cat."





How much homework is ok?

Attitudes are changing in New Zealand about how much homework children should be doing. Some experts say kids should be out playing sport, learning music or doing things they enjoy rather than going straight back to the books after school. Others still lean towards setting homework for children of all ages.

Such divided opinion about how much homework children should be doing only makes a tough topic even more confusing for parents.

But the reality is the amount of homework your child should be doing will all depend on the school they attend.

New Zealand's Ministry of Education has no set homework policy, leaving it up to individual schools to set their own. Different schools, therefore, have different homework policies.

"Schools are self-managing and principals set their own policies with their boards of trustees," says Liz Hawes, executive officer of the New Zealand Principals Federation.

"Because there's such a huge variation in the expectations of parents and communities you are going to find quite different policies on homework from one place to another. But research does show that doing homework becomes more important towards the secondary school years."

At Manurewa Intermediate, principal Iain Taylor says his school makes it clear to parents that pupils are expected to spend about 30 minutes after school on study

related to what they've been doing that day.

"It's a focus on basic facts – arithmetic, spelling and reading. That way there can be no excuses and parents and kids are quite clear on what is expected. But the days are gone of setting heaps of those home projects that saw parents doing most of the work. By this age though, there's definitely a need for kids to start getting into the study habit."

In West Auckland at Henderson Valley School, principal Maree Stavert says the school has pulled back on giving homework in recent years. Instead, teachers send home ideas and resources to help parents develop activities for their children, encouraging "real life" learning.

The Ministry of Education advises parents to talk to their child's school about their homework policy.

"If your child's school doesn't set homework at this stage, that's ok – your child will still be learning what they need to. If your child is getting homework and often struggles with what they have to do, talk to their teacher about it," says the Ministry on the advisory section of its website.

Whatever the policy is at your school, a recent national school survey showed that many primary-aged children are spending nearly an hour on homework at night.

The Census at School found that 77 percent of students from six to 12 had done some homework the night before the survey and had spent an average time of 53 minutes doing it.

Triple P's Professor Matt Sanders says that if parents want to help their children overcome potential homework problems, the best thing they can do is plan ahead and create the right environment for their child to study.

He says children first need to be able to relax and unwind when they get home from school.

"Always show an interest in your child's work," Prof Sanders says.

"Be prepared to sit with your child to get them started. Praise them as they persist and always give them a chance to do the work on their own before helping. Prompt them to solve problems themselves and offer only guidance about how to find the right answer, rather than just giving it to them."

By using the right strategies, you'll be helping to set your child up for success at school and at home.



A problem solved

Problem solving is a hugely important life skill and a vital key for your child's academic and social development. What are the best ways to encourage your child to have a go solving their own problems?

1. Let your child see you dealing with problems and explain how you came up with a solution.
2. It's important not to jump in and solve all their problems for them. Instead, encourage your child to work things out for themselves.
3. Initially, you may have to help them identify the problem and prompt them to find solutions.
4. If things don't work out well, be sure to talk with your child about what they might do differently next time.

– Professor Matt Sanders



Setting up a homework routine

Poor planning is often at the core of homework problems, and while some children do make it hard for themselves, you'll all enjoy more success if your child is set up to succeed.

The best place to start is by setting up a good study routine in which homework is a priority. Begin by choosing a regular time that fits within your family schedule, and remember to take into account your work commitments, and those of your children including sport, clubs and music.

It's also important to choose a time that gives the children a chance to relax when they get home from school, but before they are allowed to play or watch television. Talk to your child about these ground rules and check that they understand them. And don't worry if you have to remind them sometimes.

When you've found a time that works for everyone, the next step is to choose a good study space. If your child wants to be in the main living area with the rest of the family, this is fine, but they will need a well lit, clear space at a table or desk, and limited distractions, although absolute quiet is not necessary.

Be prepared to sit with your child to get them started on their first task. Praise them as they persist and always give them a chance to do the work on their own before helping. Prompt them to solve problems themselves, and offer only guidance about how to find the right answer, rather than just giving it to them.

Always show an interest in your child's work and encourage desirable behaviour by praising and rewarding their efforts when the homework is finished by giving them a treat such as watching television or playing a special game.

– Professor Matt Sanders





Little creatures for little people



Pets are an inseparable part of life in New Zealand. So much so, that nearly 70 percent of Kiwi homes also house some form of companion creature.

Surveys show the No. 1 reason we love our pets is for their companionship. But it also turns out that we love them almost as much for the joy they bring to the lives of our children.

The second most common reason New Zealanders give for the decision to bring a pet into their homes is that it's for their kids, says animal lover and Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals executive director, Bob Kerridge.

He says that in the right environment, animals can help children learn a wide variety of lessons.

"Companion pets have an important role in families," Bob says. "With good parental guidance they can help convey essential early wisdom to young minds on the realities of life."

Bob says pets can also help boost the confidence of children, increase their sense of wellbeing and help give kids the social confidence to interact with others.

"With the dog on a leash out for a walk, people often spontaneously approach, social engagement develops and the child learns how to interact," Bob says.

For the young dog owner, these casual

conversations can promote involvement and make kids feel less isolated in their neighbourhood.

But Bob warns there are important things to consider before bringing something furry, slippery, feathered or hairy into the home. And bringing a puppy home should be looked at as the start of a commitment that can last up to 14 years or more.

"Pets provide great assurance to children and a sense of stability"

"All kids love to cuddle kittens and puppies but mums and dads need to think carefully about the pets they choose and they need to give their children lots of guidance on caring for that pet," Bob says.

Triple P founder Professor Matt Sanders agrees that parents thinking about taking on a pet need to be prepared to supervise and take ultimate responsibility for that pet.

He also believes pets can bring many benefits to children and families.

Prof Sanders says studies show that children can see a pet as something that just

accepts them for who they are.

"Pets provide great assurance to children and they can also help provide a sense of stability for them particularly at a time of change," Prof Sanders says.

Ee-Heng Lim is part of a busy practice at Auckland's West Harbour Vet Clinic and is on the executive committee of the Companion Animal Society.

He says deciding to take on a companion animal is all about taking responsibility and getting educated. Finding the right kind of pet or the right kind of dog for your family is the first step.

With a pup, he says, total commitment is required right from the start.

"It's very important to take them to puppy school where they can be exposed to different situations and learn how to react," Ee-Heng says. "It's vital that the whole family is part of this so you are all working together. By putting in the effort at puppy school you're investing in raising the nice-natured family pet you hoped for."

But the first and one of the most important things to think about is whether or not your home environment is suitable for the type of pet you are considering for your family. ■

Five most popular dog breeds in New Zealand

Many families get their mutts and moggies from the SPCA but there's a growing trend for small and designer dogs. New Zealand's favourite breeds are:

Labradors: Big dogs with a great reputation as loyal, gentle and friendly family pets

Rottweilers: Loyal and brave, they are highly protective. Great for stretching everyone's legs

Poodles: Intelligent and highly trainable. High maintenance in grooming but low maintenance around the home. Cross breeds are becoming very popular

Schnauzer: A fashionable choice. But they're also loyal and dependable

Yorkshire terriers: Small and don't need a lot of space or exercise. Loyal, smart and highly trainable

Family-friendly pet choices

West Auckland vet Ee-Heng-Lim suggests parents think carefully when choosing a pet:

- Don't get a big dog if you don't have plenty of time and space
- Cats can be a better choice for small homes where someone is home at least some of the time
- Rabbits can be lovely pets. You need a little outdoor space but they require less maintenance than dogs and cats
- Guinea pigs are a good choice for young children and are cheaper to keep than cats and dogs
- Rats make great pets. They're intelligent, friendly, inexpensive and very low maintenance





Practical help for families

Word is spreading among North Island parents. The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program is helping families live happier, healthier, less stressful lives.

Triple P is delivered free to parents and caregivers of children aged three to seven in North Island regions where the programme has been made available to families by the Ministry of Health.

More than a thousand parents in Bay of Plenty, MidCentral, Counties Manukau and Waitemata have been given access to the programme.

And with more than 300 practitioners already trained to deliver Triple P to parents and more family support workers recently trained in the west and the south of Auckland, the number of families being able to access parenting support is set to increase.

Lisa Maughan, project co-ordinator at the Werry Centre, a workforce development unit contracted for the Triple P rollout by the Ministry, said the response from parents had been overwhelmingly positive.

She said the majority of parents found the programme extremely practical because of its focus on giving parents a range of strategies to tackle the everyday issues they face raising children.

Developed by New Zealand psychologist Professor Matt Sanders, the program is designed to give parents just the right amount of support they need for their particular circumstances.

It's based on the principal that we can all do with a little help at some time of our parenting lives.

Triple P practitioners in New Zealand work with parents by either providing personal consultations through Primary Care Triple P, or in a group format called Triple P Discussion Groups.

Lisa said many North Island parents found the information so useful in one discussion

group, they often came back for more.

"Once they come to one discussion group, many come back to another session on a different topic," Lisa says.

"They might have had doubts about looking for help or going to parenting programmes, but once they come along, they're saying they feel really comfortable. They also realise they are not alone in wanting support."

She said parents found the advice extremely practical.

"Once people start doing Triple P they learn there are things they can do to make changes at home and that it's not so hard to do," Lisa says. "They feel more confident. And once things start to improve at home and everyone is getting along better, we're hearing many say that life is a lot less stressful."



Your Tippet

Photography: Brendon O'Hagan, Graeme Brown, Mark McKeown, Getty Images

The content of this paper should not be construed as legal or clinical advice.

Tippet content

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CONTACT

Find your local Triple P practitioner in Counties Manukau and Waitemata, Bay of Plenty and MidCentral region.

MidCentral

Palmerston North ACROSS

Rachel Smithers
T: 06 356 7486
E: rsmithers@across.org.nz

Nikki Walden
T: 06 356 7486
E: nwalden@across.org.nz

Abuse Rape Crisis Support

Ruth Steven
T: 06 356 5868
E: rsarcsm@gmail.com

All Saints Church

Alison Waldrom
T: 027 8135221
E: acleverword@hotmail.com

Methodist Social Services

Andrea Horne
T: 06 350 0307
E: nikki@methodistsocialservices.org.nz

Angie Crabtree

T: 06 350 0307
E: angie@methodistsocialservices.org.nz

Linda Martin

T: 06 350 0307
E: jaimee@methodistsocialservices.org.nz

Open Home Foundation

Belinda Prinsloo
T: 06 358 4024
E: Belinda.prinsloo@ohf.org.nz

Robyn Booker

T: 06 358 4024
E: Robyn.booker@ohf.org.nz

Parentline

Jo Te Paiho
T: 06 355 1655

Karen Gillam

T: 06 355 1655
E: couns1@parentlinemanawatu.org

Vicki Holmes

T: 06 355 1655
E: groups@parentlinemanawatu.org

Refugee Services

Antoinette Umugwaneza
T: 06 355 1415
E: Antoinette.umugwaneza@refugeeservices.org.nz

Indra Dulal

T: 06 355 1415
E: Indra.dulal@refugeeservices.org.nz

Relationship Aotearoa

Valette Hooper
T: 06 357 6483

Ruahine Kindergarten Association

Emma Henderson
T: 06 354 7992
E: Emma.henderson@ruahinekindergartens.org.nz

Sarah Goacher

T: 06 325 8761
E: Sarah.goacher@ruahinekindergartens.org.nz

Salvation Army

Deborah Radley
T: 06 358 7455
E: debs@salvationarmypn.org

Te Aroha Noa

Rebecca Conway
T: 06 358 2255
E: teenparents@tearohanoa.org.nz

Shirley Jourdain

T: 06 358 2255
E: Counsel5@tearohanoa.org.nz

Horowhenua

Family Matters Foundation

David Atkinson
T: 021 939681
E: familymatters@clear.net.nz

Horowhenua Family Support Services

Carol McEwing-Anderson
T: 06 367 5056 or 021 2370443
E: hfss@xtra.co.nz

Levin Life Chru

Fiona Anderson
T: 021 2869135
E: Feanderson70@gmail.com

Prime Life

Lynda Robb
T: 06 367 0901
E: robball@xtra.co.nz

Super Grans

Rose Cotter
T: 06 367 0680
E: horowhenua@supergrans.net.nz

Te Runanga O Raukawa

Gwenda Hetariki
T: 027 3327151
E: gwendah@raukawa.iwi.nz

Rosanne Kuiti

T: 027 6213322
E: rosannek@raukawa.iwi.nz

Dannevirke & Tararua

Pahiatua Community Service Trust

Lyn McNair
T: 06 376 7608
E: Lyn.pcst@inspire.net.nz

Pahitua Community Service Trust and Tararua Early Years

Sam Williams
T: 06 376 0166 or 06 376 7608
E: Sam@teys.org.nz

Tararua REAP

Beck Latchford
T: 06 374 6565
E: becks@tararuaareap.co.nz

Wendy Lansdown

T: 06 374 6565
E: wendy@tararuaareap.co.nz

Bay of Plenty

Tauranga

Kaitiaki Nursing Services

Ardell Unsworth
T: 07 571 0144 ext 720 or 027 3112140

Families Achieving Balance

Donald Welsh
T: 07 543 3194

Footsteps Counselling Services

Teresa Sage
T: 07 548 2103 or 021 1661148

Parenting for Men

Dave Halligan
T: 027 5742280

Sharon Coxon

T: 027 4588124

Te Runanga O Ngai Te Rangi Iwi Trust

Heta Cooper
T: 07 575 3765 ext 207

The Omokoroa Centre Trust

Vanessa Coultas
T: 07 548 2414

Te Puke Community Care Trust

T: 07 573 5614

Whakatane Supporting Families

T: 07 308 9430

Voyagers

T: 07 308 8803

Opotiki

Whakatohea Iwi Health & Social Services

T: 07 315 6042

Waitemata

Te Whanau o Waipareira Trust

T: 0800 924 924
E: referrals@waiwhanau.com

Dayspring Trust

Linda Wallwork
T: 09 827 6321 or 09 834 4893
E: lindadayspring@xtra.co.nz

Vision West Counselling Centre

T: 09 818 0760
E: counselling@visionwest.org.nz

Hellensville

Te Ha Oranga

T: 09 4208523
E: robyn.griffith@tehaoranga.co.nz
donna.tapurau@tehaoranga.co.nz

Women and Family Centre

T: 09 420 7992 or 0275160457
E: cummingsjeanette@yahoo.com

Counties Manukau

Counties Manukau District Health Board

Contact Jasmine Murphy (jasmine@procare.co.nz) or Linda Cooper (09 3757761) at ProCare Psychological Services, to be put in contact with a Triple P practitioner from one of the following organisations:

- Asian Family Services
- Barnardos
- Blossoms Educare Limited
- Catholic Social Services
- Chinese New Settlers Services Trust (CNSST)
- Counties Manukau Kindergarten Association
- East Tamaki Healthcare
- Franklin Family Support Services
- Huakina Development Trust
- Karaka Learning Centre
- Mangere East Family Service Centre
- Papakura Marae
- Papakura Family Service Centre
- Papakura Support and Counselling Centre
- Plunket
- ProCare Health Limited
- ProCare Psychological Services
- Refugees as Survivors
- Strive Community Trust
- Taonga Education Trust Centre
- Te Hononga O Tamaki me Hoturoa
- Turuki Health Care

