

Early Start Project

Atawhaitia nga pepe ~ Nurture the baby early

Annual Report 2020/21

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Vision

A society where children enjoy a supported,
positive and happy childhood.

Mission Statement

Early Start encourages and supports Canterbury families to provide each of their children with a positive and enjoyable childhood experience.



Early Start Board

Early Start Project Ltd is a charitable company and was formed in 1995. It is governed by a board of directors consisting of a consortium of health care professionals and community members:

- **Mr Ashley Seaford ~ Chairperson** Oranga Tamariki
- **Shelley McCauley ~ Deputy Chairperson** Business Advisor
- **Maria van der Plas** Plunket Canterbury
- **Dr Lynda Gray** Pegasus Health
- **Emeritus Prof. John Horwood** Christchurch Health and Development Study
- **Elsa Kipa** Māori Health Worker
- **Hildegard Grant** Service Development and Delivery Advisor

From the Chairperson

Tēnā koutou

I hope this finds you and your whānau well.

The Covid19 pandemic has impacted on Early Start's kaimahi and their whānau in various ways. I know that it has caused anxiety and distress for many of the tamariki and whānau that Early Start supports. From operational and governance perspectives the pandemic has given rise to a number of service delivery questions and challenges. At their core these challenges have important ethical and human rights implications.

In uncertain, and rapidly changing environments, principled, intelligent and compassionate leadership is required. I want to acknowledge and thank Jan Egan and her management team for meeting the Board's expectation to consistently take this approach to leadership. Jan's attitude, fortitude and personal style has been a key factor in Early Start coming through the consequences of the pandemic in a strong and resilient manner.

My thanks also go to Early Start's kaimahi. I want to acknowledge their support to each other, and their unwavering commitment to our tamariki and whānau.

I wish to acknowledge the departure of our Kuia, Mere Balsom. Last year Mere signaled that her time with the Board was drawing to a close and that her intention was to return to the North Island to live with whānau. Mere has been a Director at Early Start for almost 5 years. Mere also managed to find the time to:

- Work as a Kuia for Canterbury Police
- Support various kaupapa Māori social and health services in Otautahi
- be involved in the Youth Court that operated from Nga Hau e Wha.

On behalf of Early Start I thank Mere for all her hard work, passion, energy and commitment.

In 2022 I am looking forward to continuing to develop our organisational knowledge and confidence with Te ao Māori. Fantastic progress has been made in service delivery. This ensures we meet our obligations and responsibilities and are providing a service that meets the cultural needs of our tamariki and whānau. The Board are committed to this journey. Thanks to all of you who are working in large and small ways to contribute to this important goal.

Ngā Mihi
Ashley Seaford

Ashley Seaford
Board Chairperson



From the General Manager



Jan Egan: General Manager

Tēnā koutou

Early Start's guiding principle is expressed in the words Atawhaitia nga pepe (Nurture the Baby Early) and this year we have put even more emphasis on providing a tailored and early response to whānau who connect with Early Start. This approach has been congruent with our ongoing commitment to pro-equity by working in a way that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Over this past year Early Start has been forging ahead on the journey to build on and support a stronger culturally safe workplace with the goal of becoming more culturally responsive where whānau Māori are a priority.

Along the way we have participated in Te Tiriti o Waitangi workshops, one in November 2020 and again in May 2021. Both workshops have been the basis of our ongoing work in developing our own cultural safety framework. This has meant a focus on building further cultural capacity awareness and cultural safety which enables and supports safe service utilising bilateral thinking. This has in turn translated to distinct ways of working alongside maōri whānau, review of resources and family focused responses for all Early Start whānau,

Building strong, trusting long term relationships with whānau has always been at the forefront of Early Start, and over this past year we have carefully examined how we do this. As part of a review and consultation process we have moved our practice to be even more whānau focused, respectful and meaningful. We have reviewed and made changes to practice, and the tools we use from the beginning of the client journey which is from referral till the time the whānau chooses to enrol with ES after the first 6 weeks or so of getting to know us and what we can offer. This has been a rewarding process for the Team and has had a positive response from whānau.

Along the way we have fully phased in the open source *Parenting Resource developed by Family Start* which replaces our previous parenting resource. This has been another change the Team has needed to become familiar with over this past year. It too has been popular with whānau and the ES Team who work directly with them. Any change can be challenging, especially in times of uncertainty as this year in a pandemic context has been. The Team is to be commended for their commitment, creativity and for actively being a part of the change.

The Early Start waitlist was very reluctantly paused in May 2021 for more than 4 months bringing the number of whānau, on the waitlist down from 97 to 25 when we reopened again in September 2021. We worked diligently to make this happen and kept referrers and therefore whānau, informed of this situation. In future the waitlist will be paused at 50 accepted referrals.

From the General Manager

Many Early Start families experience significant challenges along the way in their parenting journey. Our collaboration with the Integrated Safety Response (ISR) Team enables us to provide even more tailored support to whānau, experiencing family violence. ES Clinical Supervisor, Sarah McKinnon, undertakes an active role liaising between ISR and ES and undertaking agreed tasks on behalf of ISR. This year Tania Gilpin, ES Kai Hapai Mātauranga Māori, along with Sarah and the ES Leadership Team applied a Te Ao Māori lens to this work which has led to specific practice changes. For example ensuring our approach is Whānau-centred in this context. That which puts families and whānau at the centre of the system, assessing the whole whānau and tailoring each response to their needs. This means creating a safety plan based on risks and needs, acknowledging and respecting diversity, asking questions, offering options and respecting whānau choice and self-determination. Building whānau confidence in the service by doing what we say we will do.

The work being undertaken on behalf of Early Start whānau, who come to the attention of ISR continues to be invaluable and is considered essential and is supported by our funders.

During May 2021 the Ministry of Social Development undertook the Level 2 Social Service Accreditation Assessment of Early Start. Once again we were commended with several strengths identified in the report. Overall feedback commented; *“This assessment has found that Early Start continues to demonstrate a high level of compliance with the Social Sector Accreditations Standards, and excellent capability to deliver quality services to clients with a strong focus on achieving positive child and family wellbeing outcomes”*. (p3/4). The next review will be in 24 months by April 2023.

The updated Privacy Act 2020 brought with it the need to examine our employer’s obligations to employees, and to ensure our processes and policies were fit for purpose. Infection control and other Health and Safety matters relating to living and working in a time of Pandemic also needed our attention.

The Oranga Kai programme is meeting expectations in terms of what we hope to help whānau achieve. The goal of the programme is that whānau, increase their knowledge and skills in planning, preparing and cooking healthy nutritious food for their whānau.

Family Support Workers/Whānau Āwhina continue to report it as a very useful practical intervention for whānau, who have a variety of challenges relating to nutrition, meal planning and budgeting for healthy meals. This enables FSW/WĀ to be able to concentrate on other areas of support work and core programme delivery. Clients enjoy it and show good engagement throughout the Oranga Kai programme. Some recent feedback from participants;

“I enjoyed the conversation today with Lorrae and learning about new foods I have never tried before. I liked having a lovely person to teach me new things and thank you for this opportunity”

“Decent size meals for a good price, lots of healthy stuff”, “I like being supported while cooking, it gives me confidence in cooking”.

From the General Manager

“The easy simple recipes, it made me feel more confident about cooking more meals at home. I will continue to use these recipes”

We remain very grateful for the generous donation of funding to enable us to undertake this response to demonstrated need.

This year we have welcomed the following new team members: Becky Steetskamp, Christina Stagg, Jane Beard, Lorrae Campbell, Nicola Lawton, Shanna Jenner and Shelley Martyn

This year we said farewell to: Ange Keepa, Azalia Gove, Claire Weatherford, Emma Jeffery, Jennie Down, Jane van der Merwe, Lyncia Alexander, Miranda Harris, Sally Burrett, Shaniqua Mahani-Tafua and Tui Sinclair

Once again Early Start this year has demonstrated how agile we can be in order to support the diverse and changing needs of the vulnerable whānau, in our community. At the same time we have focused on capacity and efficiencies and ‘doing things differently’. Caseload points work review is going well with workloads becoming more manageable. Our intent over the next year is to keep exploring how we can support whānau in innovative and flexible ways to meet increasing need and changing times, and to continue to provide a safe supportive working environment for all at Early Start.

Finally I want to acknowledge the Early Start Team for the creative and skilled work undertaken both in leadership and alongside whānau, and behind the scenes the strong administrative support over this past year. Thank you also to Chairperson Ashley Seaford, Deputy Chairperson and Business advisor Shelley McCauley and all Early Start Board Directors for their capable and caring governance. To our partners, supporters and donors, as well as our funding agencies, thank you for your support on behalf of the tamariki and whānau Early Start have engaged with over the year.

Jan Egan

Nurture the baby early
Early Start encourages and supports families to provide each of their children with a positive and enjoyable childhood experience

EARLY START Child Health Goals

Encouraging a healthy environment:

- Breast feeding
- SmokeFree
- Complimentary Feeding
- Common concerns
- Care of first teeth
- Safe homes
- Sleep
- Preventing Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUDI)
- Growth and physical development

97% of children enrolled with the dental service

96% of children living in a smoke free home

94% of children are fully immunised

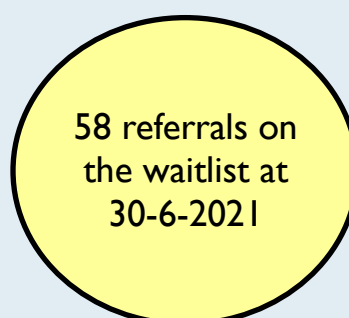
99% of families are enrolled with a single GP

- ◆ Immunisation and Well Child checks
- ◆ Enrolment with a single general practitioner
- ◆ Liaison with the Well Child Provider
- ◆ Identifying and managing childhood illness

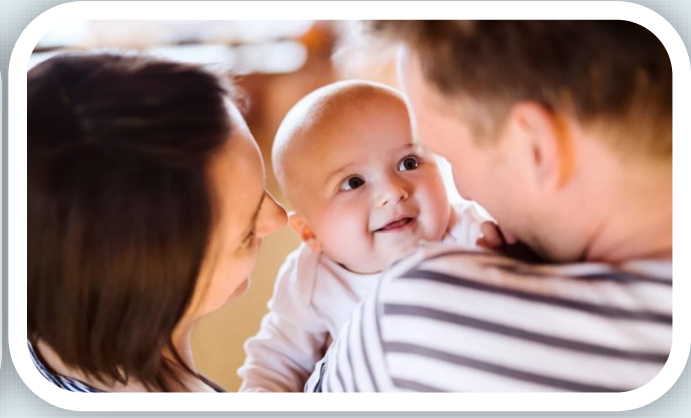
83% of children over 18 months are attending preschool

EARLY START Parenting Goals

- ◆ Encouraging parents to express warmth and affection to their baby.
- ◆ Encouraging parents to recognise and respond to their infant's needs and behaviours.
- ◆ Encouraging parents to initiate positive social interaction and play with their infant.
- ◆ Encouraging the use of positive and non-punitive child rearing methods.
- ◆ Encouraging parents to provide consistent and predictable daily routines for their infant.

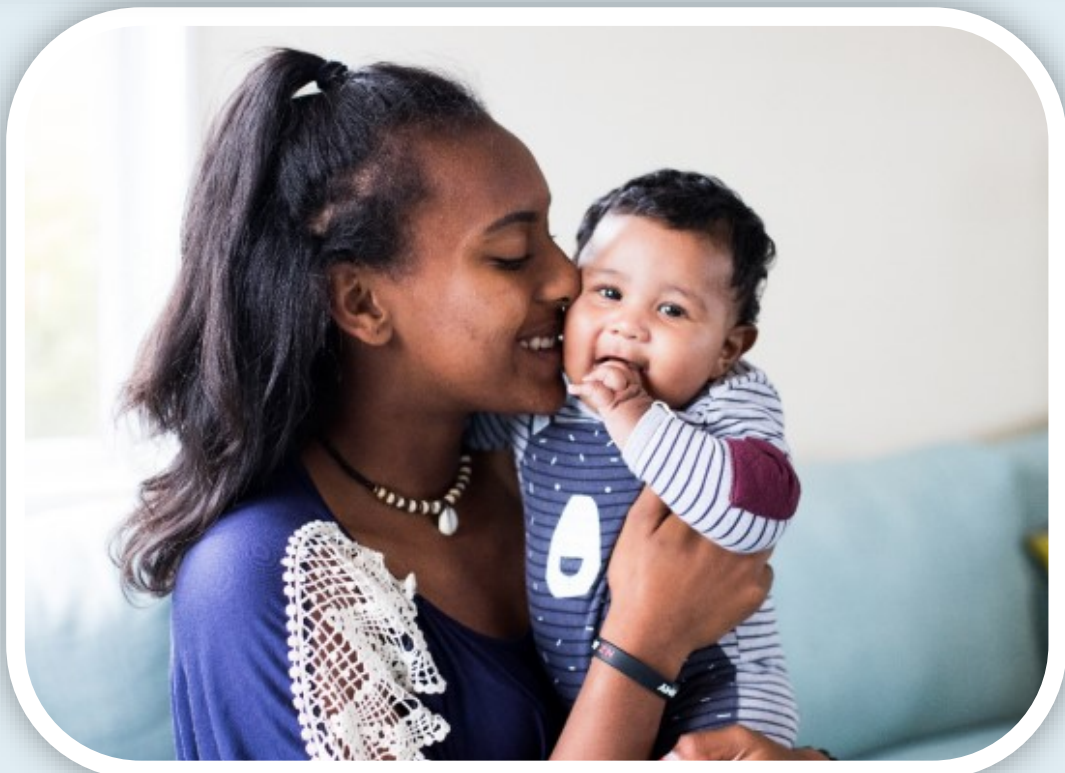
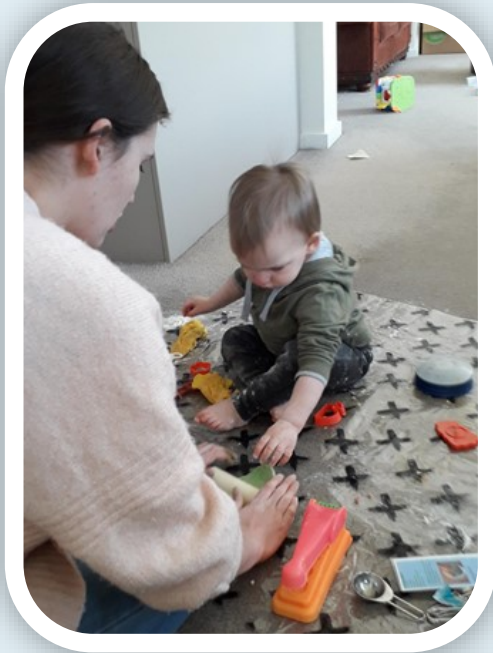


Nurture the baby early



Blending science with good practice to support and nurture great families

Children learn through play



Early Start Background

New Zealand newspapers, magazines, journals, TV and radio programmes tell us that many of New Zealand children are living in circumstances which may put at risk childrens wellbeing.

This information is supported by the Christchurch Health and Development Study which from 1977 studied the health and lifestyle experiences of 1,200 Christchurch children over a period of 20 years.

Its findings showed that the children most frequently identified as having multiple problems such as poor child health, mental health problems, drug and alcohol addictions and criminal behaviours are children who have been exposed to families experiencing challenges relating to these issues.

- ⇒ The founder of the Early Start Project was Emeritus Professor David Fergusson.
- ⇒ In December 1994 the Trust Bank Community Trust provided seeding funding to develop the Early Start Service.
- ⇒ The Consortium formed early in 1995 and funding was secured from the Health Funding Agency, Community Funding Agency and the Christchurch City Council to pilot the service. Families were enrolled from October 1995
- ⇒ In 1997 an 18-month evaluation of the Early Start service was completed and the published findings indicated that it was feasible to conduct a randomized research trial to test if New Zealand families would benefit from a home visiting service addressing identified family needs in a structured and systematized way using an intensive and long term approach.
- ⇒ In 1998 the Government "Strengthening Families" initiative provided funds for the service provision to the Field Trial, and this is in turn was distributed under contract by the Department of Child Youth and Family and the Canterbury District Health Board.
- ⇒ In 2001 Canterbury DHB provided funding to establish an Early Start Service.
- ⇒ Today there are 41 Family Start provider sites and one Early Start provider across New Zealand. Early Start is contracted to and is receiving funding from Oranga Tamariki and Canterbury DHB to work with 388 families/whānau and their children.

Core Service Components

- Family well-being
- Physical, social and emotional well-being of infants and children
- Healthy child development
- Child safety and well being
- Parenting Education
- Encouraging participation in Early Childhood Education Services
- Child and Home Safety
- Smoke Free Home Environment / Smoke cessation
- Maternal/Paternal Depression/Mental Health Support
- Advocacy, Home Skills, Relationship Issues
- Family Harm, Addictions, Strengthening Family Supports
- Support through crisis

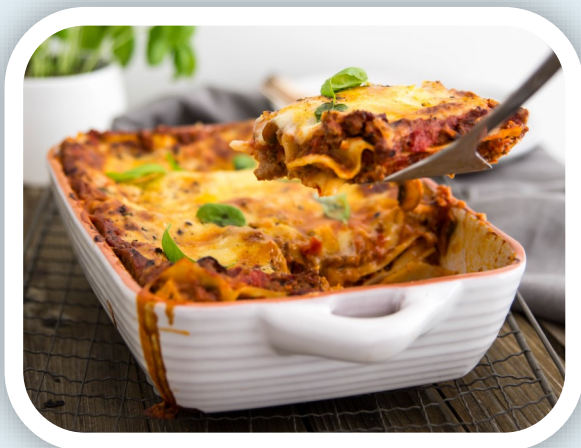
How to calm a crying baby.

1. Pick baby up
2. Hold for approximately 5yrs then gently place back down

Oranga Kai Healthy Eating

This is an additional programme which has been offered since July 2019. The aim is to help whānau grow their confidence and skills in the key area of whānau wellbeing by learning to cook healthy nutritious meals. Oranga Kai is delivered over 7 x in-home sessions.

- ⇒ Budgeting for healthy meals
- ⇒ Stocking up on pantry items and kitchen basics
- ⇒ Learning about food groups and serving sizes
- ⇒ Meal planning and supermarket shopping



This year there have been 47 x in-house referrals:

- ◆ 21 x have completed the full programme
- ◆ 9 x are currently participating
- ◆ 11 x are on the waitlist
- ◆ 6 x have exited for various reasons

What Our Families / Whānau Told us About their Involvement with Early Start

The following comments are from families who have been involved with Early Start:

- *“The print outs give me more time to read and understand things I need to know about baby and children at my own pace”*
- *“Early Start and my Family Support Worker have helped me through hard times, time after time. I wouldn't be where I am now if not for all the support I was given over the years.”*
- *“Helped me to find calm things, to stay hopeful when I was struggling.”*
- *“With having my five granddaughters in my care, my Whānau Āwhina helped me realise that I was doing a great job, as sometimes, I felt it was hard, but she told me I was doing great!”*
- *“Our monthly task/goal sheets were great and kept me motivated”*
- *It was great to have someone to talk to and help me navigate around our son's behavior. Just a simple conversation with an experienced person made a huge difference in my approach towards our son”*
- *“I'm aware I'm not perfect but I'm enough for my children and can provide them with emotional needs and physical things that make them feel loved and learn to be great people when they grow up.”*
- *“The everyday struggles are always there, however I know now I can get through using the tools I learned”*



The Early Start Team

- General Manager: **Jan Egan**
- Clinical Managers: **Michelle Fletcher and Glynis Matehaere**
- Whānau Āwhina / Kai Hapai Mātāuranga Māori Early Start Canterbury: **Tania Gilpin**
- Clinical Supervisors: **Amelia Wither, Christine Hart, Heather Davidson, Janine Harrison, and Sarah McKinnon**
- Family Support Workers / Whānau Āwhina: **Amy Smyth, Andrea Mathias, Anna Stack, Anne Robson, Becky Steetskamp, Christina Stagg, Debbie Taylor, Elizabeth Partridge, Fiona Hayes, Fiona Pentecost, Georgie Ellis, Hannah Crozier, Jayne Watt, Jean Corlett, Jenny McPhail, Jess Tarawa, Jo Waddingham, Karma Gilray, Kerry Painter, Leanne Odgers, Lesley Glenn, Nicola Lawson, Nikki Burke, Petra Drobne, Sarah White, Saskia Stein, Shanna Jenner, Shelley Martyn and Tania Gilpin**
- Admin Team: **Lucy Gregory, Shirley Percasky and Sue Taylor**
- Incredible Years Toddler Facilitators: **Jo Waddingham and Lucy Ragg**
- Oranga Kai Community Support Worker: **Lorrae Campbell**

Thank you to our Supporters

Early Start wishes to acknowledge the generous support from:

- ⇒ Good Night Sleep Tight ~ warm bedding for vulnerable families/whānau
- ⇒ Fire and Emergency NZ ~ supply and fitting of smoke detectors
- ⇒ Christchurch Aunties ~ essential supplies for vulnerable families/whānau

Research

Some of the research Early Start has completed; copies are these can be viewed on the website: <https://www.earlystart.co.nz/research/>

- Evaluation Report - Nov 2005
- Evaluation Report Nine Year Follow-up - Oct 2012
- Evaluation Incredible Years Toddler Programme – March 2017
- Christchurch Health and Development Study



Professor John Horwood
Director

Financial Summary

from the Deputy Chairperson / Business Advisor

Early Start has had another successful year operationally and financially, providing overall stability within the organisation. In addition to our core service delivery we have managed to provide several additional programs to enrich the lives of our whānau and tamariki:

- Main Family Start contract: Funded by Oranga Tamariki to 369 whānau
- Incredible Years Toddler Parenting Courses: Funded by Ministry of Education.
- Early Support to Young Parents: Funded by Canterbury DHB
- Breastfeeding support groups: Funded by Pegasus Health until Oct 2020
- Oranga Kai Healthy eating program: Funded by private anonymous donor
- Family Services Fund (providing emergency help): Funded by private anonymous donor

I would like to formally thank all our funders including the Government who provide the critical security in funding our main Family Start contract. Canterbury DHB who continue to see Early Start as an integral service to offer early to young parents in Canterbury. Ministry of Education have for the 2nd year now, continued to fund the delivery of the Incredible Years Toddler Parenting Courses for positive parenting within our whānau. As expected all government funding comes with rigorous auditing to ensure all financial and operational requirements of our contract are delivered. Early Start continues to not only meet audit but to deliver over and above requirements.

I would like to make a special mention to our private donors whom over the past couple of years have been an integral in our ability to keep certain additional programmes running. Their generosity is exceptional and as an organisation we work diligently to spend every dollar carefully to ensure all funding goes into working with our whānau. Without these special relationships Early Start would not be able to make such an impact in many ways in our client lives.

The board authorised a budget deficit of **(\$62,996)** and our actual deficit was **(\$56,939)** (including depreciation). The board authorised a CPI increase of 1.5% to all of the team which was paid out from 1st March 2021.

The audited Financial Statements show total accumulated funds of \$750,142 which protects the organisation in the situation if any funding streams were to cease. In addition, we have carried over donations of \$70,000 which will be spent in the 2021/2022 year. The Tagged Fund budget outlines the expenditure required for the payment of lease liability, notice period for wages and for all administration and legal costs to refer vulnerable whānau to other agencies. In addition it accounts for planned operational and capital expenditure of reserve funds for the year.

Finally I would like to acknowledge and specifically thank Jan Egan General Manager, Shirley Percasky Office Manager and Ashley Seaford Chairperson for their absolute commitment to achieving the operational and financial goals of Early Start. Along with our exceptional full team at Early Start and fellow board members who give their time and energy towards the mahi of Early Start to **Atawhatia Nga Pepe - 'Nurture the Baby Early'**.

Shelley McCauley
Deputy Chairperson / Business Advisor



