

Whānau Āwhina Plunket to exit parenting education programme (PEPE)

Whānau Āwhina Plunket has announced that it will no longer run its parenting education (PEPE) programme.

This decision follows a month-long staff consultation, and results in the loss of five permanent and 17 casual roles. A further 16 people will have their hours reduced.

Chief Executive Amanda Malu says this is a difficult time for the staff affected by the decision.

“This is a sad day for Whānau Āwhina Plunket. We are proud of our staff and the work they have done for whānau and communities, and we know this programme will be missed,” Ms Malu says.

“I would like to thank everyone who have been involved in PEPE over the years and acknowledge what a tough time this is – for the people who have been directly impacted, as well as their managers, colleagues, whānau and communities.”

However, Ms Malu says the charity can no longer afford to run the PEPE programme at its current deficit of \$400,000 per annum.

“Like any charity that relies on donations and grants, we have limited resources. We are having to make this tough decision now to ensure that we remain financially resilient for the years ahead. Whānau Āwhina Plunket turns 115 next month and we want to make sure we are here for another 100 years,” she says.

The PEPE courses, which started in 2004, will cease at the end of June. Facilitators have been running around 600 courses each year attended by around 4000 parents and caregivers. While the courses usually run in-person, since the arrival of COVID-19 they have run virtually.

Ms Malu is reassuring the community that the PEPE programme is just one type of parenting support on child health and development that Whānau Āwhina Plunket offers.

“As part of our Ministry of Health-funded Well Child Tamariki Ora service, we also offer additional group sessions to parents who need extra support. Run by our Kaiāwhina and Community Karitāne, these groups are directly targeted at whānau who have been identified by our nurses as needing more help,” she says.

The groups focus on common parenting issues, and connect people who are experiencing the same concerns. Topics covered include breastfeeding, nutrition and starting solids, and sleeping and settling.

“In the last three years alone, we have provided group sessions on parenting support to more than 60,000 parents and caregivers. This is a really valuable service for people who need that extra bit of help,” Ms Malu says.

Whānau Āwhina Plunket also supports parents and whānau through local community support and specialist referral services; by providing information on its zero-data website; and through its regular educational Facebook live chats.

Mrs Malu says there are also plans to produce a series of educational video resources, which will be available free of charge on the website.

She has also been in discussions with other providers, Parents Centre Aotearoa and Parenting Place (Space for you and your baby), who are exploring whether they can provide additional parenting programmes support.

No other Whānau Āwhina Plunket services are affected by this decision, including the Well Child Tamariki Ora service funded by the Ministry of Health.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Whānau Āwhina Plunket Media
027 231 8856

About Whānau Āwhina Plunket

Whānau Āwhina Plunket is a charity and Aotearoa New Zealand’s largest provider of services to support the health and wellbeing of children aged up to five. Pēpi, tamariki and whānau are at the heart of Whānau Āwhina Plunket.

Whānau Āwhina Plunket sees nearly 90 percent of newborns in Aotearoa New Zealand and works with almost 300,000 families each year. The organisation’s nurses provide clinical assessments, and along with Kaiāwhina and Community Karitāne provide care, support and health education to whānau and families, through home and clinic visits, mobile clinics and PlunketLine, a free telephone advice service for parents.