



# youth transitions

## supporting young parents

### MacroAuckland Research - Evidence of Need

Quality early childhood education (ECE) has been shown to be associated with lifelong educational and social benefits for children and their communities. However, the MacroAuckland research reveals that Auckland has the lowest rate of ECE enrolments in the country, particularly among Maori and Pacific Aucklanders. Key barriers to participation in ECE include the limited number of places, the shortage of trained teachers, unpredictable funding, the quality of services available, the availability of culturally appropriate services and costs for families, including transport.

Research also indicates that programmes that support parents to more effectively engage with their children's education can increase children's learning. However, some south Auckland families face both real and perceived cultural and socio-economic barriers to engaging in training and education at all levels.

### Action on Issues

The Supporting Young Parents initiative is a project delivered by Te Waipuna Puawai (TWP), a thriving community development initiative of the Sisters of Mercy New Zealand. The project operates out of a centre that was established in 1999, building on a decade of highly respected community development work in Glen Innes.

The project works alongside women and children living in the margins of our society, and aims to improve lives of young families primarily by providing support services and 'second-chance' education. Young parents (14-19 years) are able to participate in the support and education programmes as the TWP centre has an early childhood facility licensed for 18 children, enabling children and parents to learn in the same space.

TWP provides a variety of services to support young parents, including:

- Bridging education
- Tertiary education
- Personal development programmes
- Creative learning opportunities
- Healing therapies
- Environmental projects e.g. wetland restoration
- Childbirth classes
- Mentoring
- Parent-child play groups

These services are provided in response to the needs of young mothers. The programme's success is largely based on its flexible design and ability to adapt to the particular needs of the young parents involved at any given time.

### Collaboration

TWP's mission statement is "Working together, to strengthen women, strengthen families and strengthen community", so collaboration is fundamental to the organisation's approach.

In 2010, TWP connected with 37 other services based in the community, nine training providers, and a further 30 agencies based in other areas of Auckland as part of the programme's on-going development.

The young mothers' programme works collaboratively with other organisations, including Brothers in Arms, Auckland Women's Centre, Ngati Whatua o Orakei Healthcare, Birthcare and Glen Innes Family Centre.

The project has significant plans to strengthen its collaborative model further, with potential partnerships earmarked with Great Potentials' HIPPY programme, Plunket, Relationship Services, a language nest ECE provider, Primary Health Organisations, CADS, the Tamaki Transformation Programme and additional tertiary institutions.

### Funding

Funding of \$100,000 would provide resources for Te Waipuna Puawai to engage a project manager to expand the delivery of the Young Parents initiative. This funding would also resource the establishment of new partnerships and collaborative services with a coalition of providers.

## **Sustainability**

The Supporting Young Parents initiative has a strong focus on robust evaluation, measured over several years to capture immediate and long-term outcomes. This evidence will demonstrate the project's effectiveness, positioning the project well to secure delivery contracts with funding trusts and government agencies.

Te Waipuna Puawai has a financial sustainability strategy based on community-driven enterprise, which includes plans for a further five charity stores to generate income that will resource the expansion of services for families and the geographical reach of the programmes.

*For more information about this project, please contact Mark Bentley or Kat Stanier on 09 277 8833 or visit the MacroAuckland website [www.macroauckland.org.nz](http://www.macroauckland.org.nz)*