



LeVa

ATU
MAI

Nurturing our Children with Pasifika Values

How to nurture our children using Pasifika values to protect them from harmful behaviours like sexual grooming and child sexual abuse.

Attention: This resource talks about the serious topic of child sexual abuse. Some descriptions may be upsetting, and we encourage you to read with care. If you suspect harm or abuse, or if you need support, the resources listed at the end of this factsheet can help.

Aro'a atu, i te aro'a mai

Love flowing outwards, love flowing inwards

Cook Islands proverb

Key messages

- ▶ The *va* (relationship) between parents/caregivers and children is sacred.
- ▶ Applying Pasifika values in our parenting nurtures our children's growth and wellbeing.
- ▶ Recognising when Pasifika values may be misused helps protect children from harm.
- ▶ Sexual abuse severely harms children's wellbeing and growth.

Nurturing is a Sacred Duty

Children are at the heart of Pasifika families and society. Parents, caregivers and families are tasked with the sacred duty of nurturing these precious treasures with care to help children reach their full potential.

Building the Va

Many Pasifika cultures have long held the belief that we are all connected to everything around us, and that we are connected through the *va*. The *va* is a relational space that exists between parents and their children, siblings, families and friends.

Children hold a special place in the *va* and it is important to nurture our relationships to support children to thrive. We can nurture the *va* by putting our Pasifika values into action.

Nurturing the Va through Talanoa

Building and nurturing the *va* with children is key to creating strong, healthy relationships. Talanoa is a valuable tool for strengthening this connection, promoting understanding and trust. When the *va* is nurtured through talanoa, children feel valued and supported. Talanoa can also be used to repair the *va* and restore balance when needed. You can learn more about this in our [Talanoa factsheet](#).





Using Pasifika values to nurture the Va



The history of Pasifika traditions and values shows that we have always loved and taken great care of our children. Many proverbs passed down from our ancestors are a reminder that harming our children has never been a part of traditional Pasifika cultures. Pasifika values can help guide us on how we can nurture the relationship with our children.



Values are shown through actions and words to help nurture the va, which helps strengthen bonds and makes a child feel safe and loved. This creates a healthy environment for a child to grow.

Below are some common Pasifika cultural values with tips on how we can apply them with our children.

Values	Tips	Examples
 Family Family is an important part of Pasifika cultures. It is often the main support network. It is a source of strength, giving a sense of belonging and identity. When children learn the value of family, they grow into confident, caring and resilient people.	Think of ways to show children they are a priority. When spending time with children be present and attentive. Role model healthy ways to share difficult feelings. Be involved in children's lives, taking an interest in their development.	Set up quality time with family without distractions. Plan fun family activities to do together. Get to know children's friends and social circles. Have uninterrupted time to talk with children about school, friends, what is important to them, their interests and dislikes.
 Love Love is at the heart of Pasifika culture. It is shown through affection, support and devotion to children. When we show love in actions and words, it builds their self-esteem and teaches them the importance of self-love. This supports children to develop healthy relationships in the future.	Think about what types of actions show children how much you love them. Role model self-care to help them understand self-love. Find the unique ways that make each child feel loved and valued, and act in ways that match this. Show unconditional love by letting your child know you are always there for them, whether they succeed or fail.	Write a list of all the things you love about your children and share it with them. Hug your children often, especially when they are feeling sad or stressed. During quality time with children, engage in the activities they are interested in. Take care to understand your children's strengths and help them to use their strengths in new ways.



Values	Tips	Examples
 Respect <p>Children are of huge value and need to be treasured.</p> <p>Children deserve to be treated with respect.</p> <p>By showing respect in our interactions with children, we teach them to treat themselves and others with the same respect.</p>	<p>Role model respectful behaviours by listening to their point of view and valuing their thoughts and opinions.</p> <p>Acknowledge and celebrate when your child treats others or themselves with respect, reinforcing its importance.</p> <p>Help your child set clear and respectful boundaries for themselves and others.</p>	<p>Allow children to speak without interrupting them.</p> <p>Encourage children to ask questions and express their thoughts and emotions in safe and respectful ways.</p> <p>Ask children to use polite language, such as saying “please” and “thank you”.</p> <p>Ask your children for permission before going into their room.</p> <p>Allow children to respectfully decline if they are not comfortable being greeted with hugs or kisses by others.</p>
 Service <p>In Pasifika cultures, service is helping others without any expectation of a reward.</p> <p>Serving and helping each other improves the overall wellbeing in a home.</p> <p>When we show service, we teach children the importance of giving back to others and contributing to the community.</p>	<p>Recognise and praise your child’s efforts to help, even in small ways, and reinforce the joy of giving.</p> <p>Teach children that serving others does not mean neglecting their own needs; both are important.</p> <p>Add service into family routines, making it a shared family value.</p> <p>Encourage children to contribute in ways that are appropriate for their age, understanding and ability.</p>	<p>Cook or clean together with your child and share how working together adds to family wellbeing.</p> <p>Encourage children to help their siblings with homework or chores.</p> <p>Explain the value of service to your children.</p> <p>Create a family activity where everyone writes down an act of service they will do that week and places it in a ‘service jar’.</p>

Values	Tips	Examples
<p> Reciprocity</p> <p>Reciprocity is the act of giving and receiving with love and respect.</p> <p>When we show reciprocity, we teach children a sense of community.</p>	<p>Explain to your child that balanced relationships involve giving and receiving, ensuring they understand the value of both.</p> <p>Involve children in family activities that need everyone's input.</p> <p>Teach children about fairness and equality in relationships.</p>	<p>You can lead by example by sharing items with children and showing generosity towards those around you.</p> <p>Cook meals together.</p> <p>Work on household chores as a team.</p> <p>Talk about how everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.</p>
<p> Spirituality</p> <p>For many Pasifika people, spirituality is faith-based.</p> <p>For some it can also be about finding a sense of purpose or peace.</p> <p>Connecting spiritually is good for the wellbeing of children.</p>	<p>Nurturing children's spiritual connection supports them to navigate life's challenges with resilience and grace.</p> <p>Spirituality can look different for each person.</p>	<p>Meditate or pray together.</p> <p>Read bible stories together and share learnings.</p> <p>Go for a walk as a family and connect with nature.</p> <p>Spend time discussing your family's spiritual beliefs with your children.</p>



Putting values into action!

You can plan ahead and decide how you will show cultural values to children. Sometimes, things can stop us from reaching our goals. By thinking about what these obstacles are and making a plan to deal with them, we are more likely to succeed.

Check out the example below:

My Values (what do I value?)	Actions I will take to show this value to my children	When will I do this?	Things that might stop me from doing this action.	How will I overcome this barrier?
<i>Family</i>	<i>Spend uninterrupted quality time with my children.</i>	<i>At least 5x per week for 15 minutes.</i>	<i>Chores</i>	<i>Plan out the time I will spend with children. Create a plan for chores.</i>

Use the table on the next page to plan how you will put your values into action, either as a family or individually. Display it in a visible place and review it monthly.









Putting our Values into action

My Values (what do I value?)	Actions I will take to show this value to my children	When will I do this?	Things that might stop me from doing this action.	How will I overcome this barrier?

When Pasifika values are misused

Pasifika values emphasise the wellbeing and happiness of children. Unfortunately, there are times when these values can become twisted or misused to justify harmful actions towards children. As parents and caregivers, it is important to be aware of how values can be misused by those who sexually harm children.

See below for some examples:

Value	Misuse
<p>Family</p> 	<p>Sometimes family members abuse their position of trust or authority to harm a child.</p> <p>The value of family can be misused when keeping the family together becomes more important than addressing reports of child sexual abuse within the family. It is important to recognise and address shifts away from the true essence of the value of family, which is to protect children from harm</p>
<p>Respect</p> 	<p>Respect can be misused when children are expected to obey adults without question, even when their safety and wellbeing are at risk.</p> <p>Adults may use their authority to force children into inappropriate actions. Those who sexually harm may convince children that it is a sign of respect to obey.</p> <p>Respect can also be misused when those who harm tell children that saying 'no' is a sign of disrespect.</p>
<p>Love</p> 	<p>The value of love can be misused when those who harm use expressions of love to trick children into accepting inappropriate behaviour. They might claim their actions are motivated by love.</p> <p>Those who harm may also present abusive behaviour as a form of affection, confusing the child about what is acceptable.</p>
<p>Reciprocity</p> 	<p>Reciprocity can be misused when those who harm manipulate children by offering gifts or money. They may force children to engage in harmful behaviour as a way of repaying their generosity.</p> <p>Those who harm might make children feel like they must repay their gestures in inappropriate ways, including sexual favours.</p>
<p>Service</p> 	<p>The value of service can be exploited when children are forced to do things they do not want to.</p> <p>Those who harm may twist a child's sense of duty to serve in harmful ways.</p>
<p>Spirituality</p> 	<p>Spirituality can be misused when individuals use spiritual beliefs to justify or excuse harmful behaviour.</p> <p>Children may be led to believe that abuse is a form of punishment or a test from a higher power.</p> <p>Children could be forced to believe they should suffer in silence and they shouldn't tell anyone about the harmful acts in case they upset higher powers.</p>

Reporting abuse and knowing where to get help

If you need to talk to someone now, help is available. Confidential support is available for those feeling unsure and needing to talk to someone about child sexual abuse.

If someone is in danger:

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call the Police on 111.

If you or a young person needs someone to talk to:

Safe to talk

Support for those impacted by sexual harm.

Call: 0800 044 334

Text: 4334

Email: support@safetotalk.nz

Live webchat: www.safetotalk.nz

Youthline

Youth helpline service & face-to-face counselling.

Call: 0800 376 633

Text: 234

Email: talk@youthline.co.nz

1737

Support from trained counsellors

Call or text: 1737

0800 HeyBro

For men who feel they're going to harm a loved one

Call: 0800 439 276

If the young person is in an unsafe environment:

Oranga Tamariki

Free call: 0508 326 459

Email: enquiry@ot.govt.nz

Support for those who have experienced sexual abuse:

Victim Support: 0800 842 846

Rape Crisis: 0800 88 33 00

HELP: Call: 24/7, 0800 623 1700 (24-hour HELpline)

Email: gethelp@helpauckland.org.nz

Text: 8236

Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP): 022 344 0496

More information and resources from Le Va:



Growing the Pasifika mental health and addiction workforce

www.leva.co.nz/our-work/mental-health



Equipping young people to look after their mental health

www.mentalwealth.nz



Shaping resilience in young people with digital mental health tools

www.auntydee.co.nz



Preventing violence by supporting families to have respectful relationships

www.atumai.nz

Learn how to help prevent suicide:

FLO Pasifika for Life Supporting community-based suicide prevention for Pasifika families
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/suicide-prevention

LifeKeepers Equipping all New Zealanders with skills to prevent suicide
www.lifekeepers.nz

Mana Akiaki Fostering te ao Māori approaches to suicide prevention training
www.lifekeepers.nz

Other learning opportunities through Le Va:

Mana Restore Enhancing mental health literacy in online gaming
www.manarestore.nz

GPS Igniting community collaboration for wellbeing solutions
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/gpssatellite-seminars

Faiva Ora Championing equity for Pasifika people with disabilities
www.leva.co.nz/our-work/disability-support/faiva-ora-leadership

Engaging Pasifika Improving the quality of health services through cultural competency
www.leva.co.nz/trainingeducation/engaging-pasifika