



# PARENTS' EXPERIENCE OF EARLY YEARS IN SOUTH AUCKLAND

Early Years Challenge  
July 2016



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all those involved in this project.

First and foremost, we thank all the participants who so generously shared their stories, experiences and thoughts with us. Without them, this project would not have been possible.

We acknowledge and thank the project team for their hard work and enthusiasm. In addition The Southern Initiative and the Auckland Co-design Lab would also like to thank the following organisations for their advice and support; SKIP, Ministry of Social Development; ThinkPlace and the Auckland Council Human Participants Ethics Committee.

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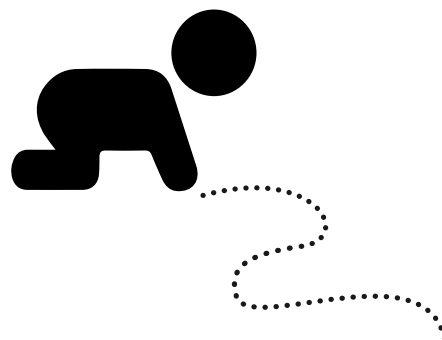
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# 1. BACKGROUND

## ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This research was developed to build understanding of the lived experience of parents in South Auckland during the first 1000 days of their children's lives (from conception to 2 years). It was designed to generate new insights and perspectives to inform the framing of an early years challenge in South Auckland.

We also hope that it will inform the work of community groups, agencies and other interested stakeholders to better understand the challenges and opportunities for parents and children in South Auckland.



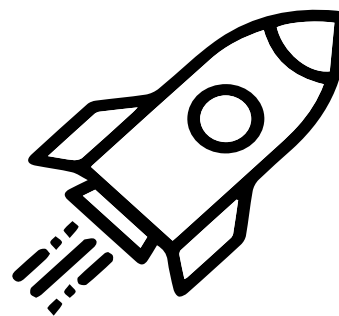
## ABOUT THE EARLY YEARS CHALLENGE

Initiated as a joint project between The Southern Initiative (TSI), Auckland Council and the Auckland Co-Design Lab (the Lab), the early years challenge explores how we can improve outcomes for young children, families and whānau in South Auckland.

Together, the joint team will use innovative co-design methodologies to understand the lived realities of parenting and to empower families to create innovative solutions that build on local strengths.

## WHY THE EARLY YEARS IS IMPORTANT

The early years of a child's life are critical to their overall well being and healthy development. Comparisons have been made between the first 1000 days of a child's life and the launching of a rocket; "small disruptions that occur shortly after take-off can have very large consequences on its ultimate trajectory" (Centre on the Developing Child – Harvard University 2010).




A synthesis of international and New Zealand research and data (commissioned to form an evidence base for the challenge) identified a range of risk factors that can increase vulnerability and negatively alter the trajectory of children’s lives. The review also revealed protective factors that help families to thrive.

**What is less understood is how these factors inter-play and how some families are more resilient in the face of the risk factors they experience.**

Combining data with a stronger understanding of the lived realities of parents and their children is critical to understanding the ‘so what’ of the statistics. Doing so has the potential to make a real difference to the trajectory of people’s lives.

## ABOUT THE SOUTHERN INITIATIVE

The Southern Initiative is one of two place-based initiatives prioritised in the Auckland Plan that delivers a customised programme of action in an area of high social need and significant economic opportunity. The main focus of TSI is to strengthen families and support stable homes. The South Auckland has a number of priorities outlined in the Auckland Plan. The first priority is to enable:



“Early, strong family attachment and learning opportunities that set children up for success at school and in life”

Auckland Plan

## ABOUT THE AUCKLAND CO-DESIGN LAB

The Auckland Co-Design Lab has been established to work with agencies and organisations to explore innovative approaches to complex social issues. The Lab has a place-based focus on South Auckland and provides a space to take a human centred approach, to work quickly, and work collaboratively.

This project is the latest in a series of TSI and Lab collaborations. Our aim is to practice true co-design with parents, community, providers and agencies.

## HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document is designed to provide insights about the experience of parenting in the first 1000 days in South Auckland. It does not aim to portray the story of every parent in South Auckland, rather, the visuals aim to capture the key ideas that emerged from the parents' stories and experiences.

The visuals themselves were developed using an iterative process of thematic analysis of interview transcripts and photo diaries. The key ideas and visuals were also tested with participating families which helped validate and strengthen those ideas.

While the main purpose of the ethnographic research was to provide a solid qualitative research base to inform the focus of the wider Early Years Challenge, this document stands alone as a unique perspective on parenting in South Auckland.

It can be used as a starting point for service agencies, policy makers and the wider community to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the needs and strengths of parents and their families so they can better respond.



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## 2. WHAT WE DID

## OVERVIEW OF SAMPLE AND METHODS

This research used an ethnographic approach which allowed us to better understand the lived experiences of parents living in South Auckland. This involved adopting a non-judgemental stance of honest curiosity.

We spoke with 20 parents using three different ethnographic techniques:

- 20 in-depth empathy interviews
- 4 parents kept photo journals
- 1 parent took part in a video tour

The team were specifically interested in speaking with families that had experience of raising children in challenging circumstances; or what is often described as vulnerability. The team wanted to speak with a broad range of parents that reflected the diversity of South Auckland. Recruitment criteria included:

- Ethnicity
- Age
- Living situation
- Employment status

Research participants were recruited via established professional networks in South Auckland including: SKIP (Ministry of Social Development); Kohanga Reo; and local social service organisations.

These organisations were used as they have professional and trusted relationships with a range of parents; have the credentials to engage parents; and because they agreed to support the research project's recruitment strategy.

The in-depth interviews were semi-structured and used empathy interviewing techniques that allowed the parents to tell their parenting story in the way that made sense for them.

A series of prompts focussing on parenting practices and the meaning of parenting were employed as necessary. All of the interviews were audio recorded.

For the photo journals, parents were provided with a digital camera and asked to take photographs of any object, person or place that was important to them in their parenting. Parents were also asked to take photos of things that made them happy or frustrated in their parenting. The photographs were then used to elicit the participants parenting stories. The resulting conversations were audio recorded.

The team had intended for several parents to participate in a video tour around their neighbourhood and home. However, this task was logistically difficult for most participants and why only one participants completed this task. The researcher and participant walked together through each part of the home while the parent pointed out talked about various spaces or objects that supported her parenting and the researcher recorded their interaction.

On completion of the fieldwork the team were provided transcripts to individually analyse using an insight mining template. The team then came together for a several facilitated workshops to synthesise the emergent themes. Visual representations of these themes were later developed.



## THE ETHICAL JOURNEY

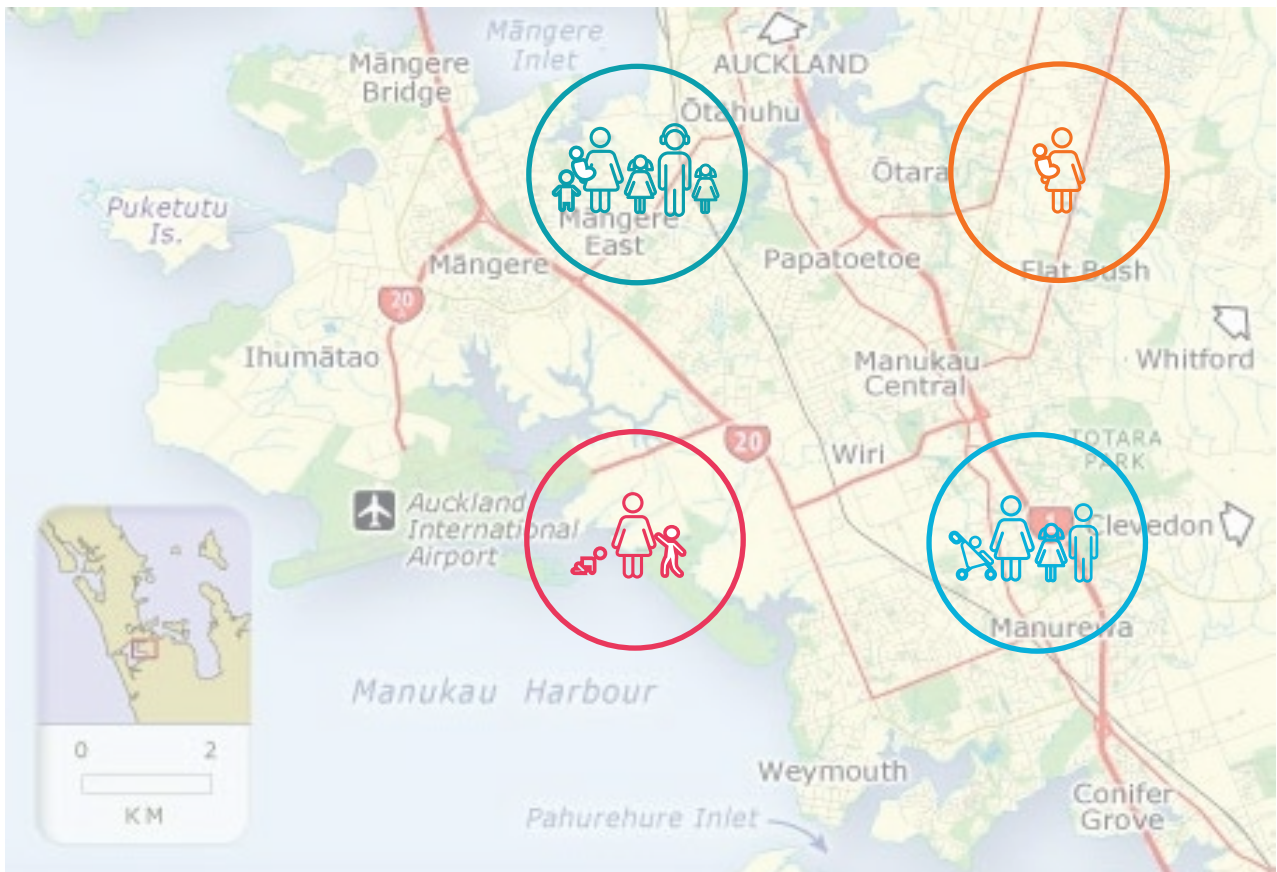
Working in an ethical manner is critical for any project that involves working with people. However, there are added ethical implications associated with conducting research that involves parents and young children.

This was at the forefront of the development of our research plan which was also submitted to Auckland Council's Human Participants Ethics Committee for approval.

This was an optional (but important) step, that helped the team test the process and to grow our own ethical capabilities, hearts and minds.

## OUR INTENT

To better understand the lived experience of parents living in South Auckland during the first 1000 days (a term often used to describe the period between conception and a child's second birthday) and use the insights gained to inform the focus of the wider Early Years Challenge.



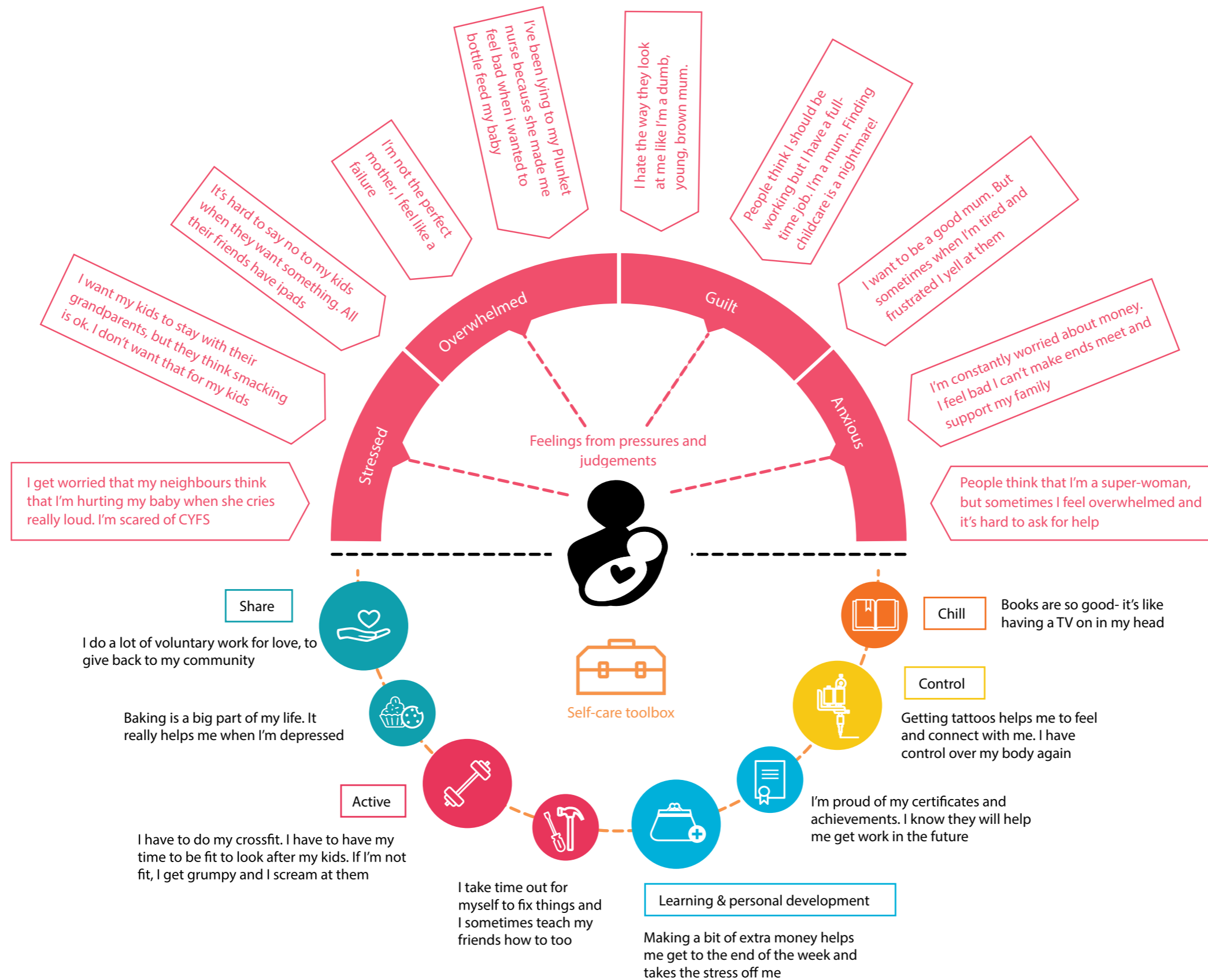
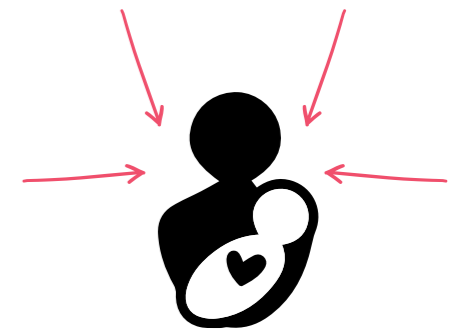
## OUR FOCUSING QUESTIONS

- What are parents' physical, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual experiences?
- What do parents' everyday routines look like?
- What formal and informal supports are available to parents and how are these supports utilised?
- What things are working well and what things are not working well for parents?

### 3. WHAT WE HEARD

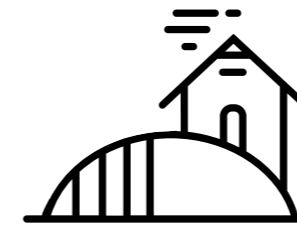
# PRESSURE & JUDGEMENT

Parents feel lots of pressure and judgement. This can create feelings of guilt and anxiety and a desire to push themselves even harder for their children. This can leave them physically and emotionally unwell. It can take a crisis for them to prioritise self-care. Here, mums describe some of the pressures they experience and some of the self-care activities they use to manage them.



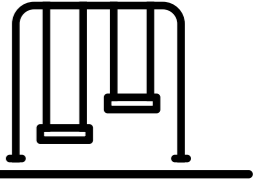
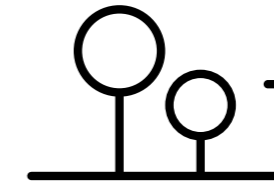
# (REATING 'HOME'

Becoming a parent brings about many changes including how people live in their homes. Some families have less control over this if they are renting, sharing a home with a disruptive partner, living in poor or overcrowded conditions or are frequently moving house. This lack of autonomy can negatively impact on the family's ability to parent. In order to cope, parents show resourcefulness by changing how they use the space they do have, developing new routines and structures, or **creating 'home'** in safe places outside the house such as libraries, parks, churches etc.

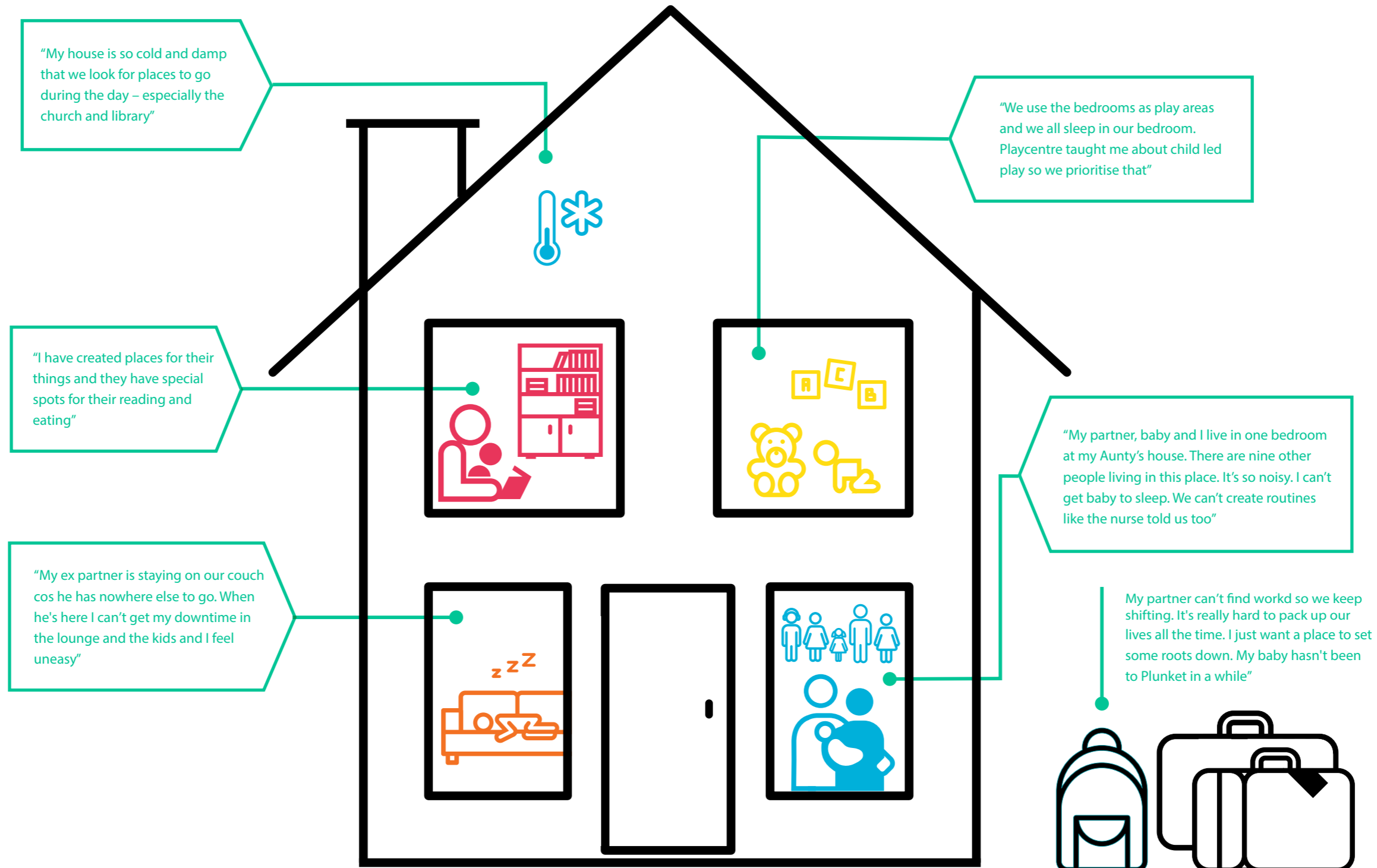


Sometimes we go stay at my sister's so that we have a quiet place where we can get away from all the people at home

We feel really welcome here and there is plenty of space to play

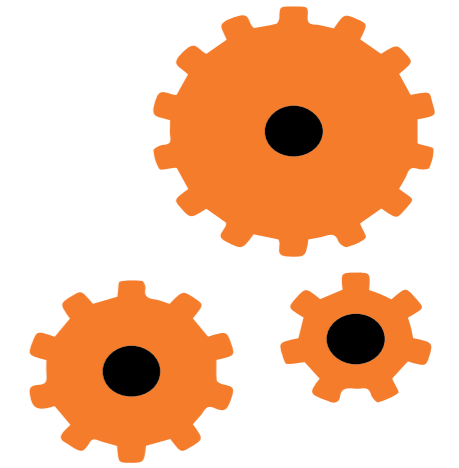


I'll pack a picnic and spend the whole day here sometimes





# SERVICE OR DISSERVICE?



There are many services available to parents. A bad service experience can make a parent feel judged and unsupported, whereas a good service experience helps them to feel confident in their parenting. We learned that a positive service experience blends both technical expertise and empathy.

Key:

- Technical
- Empathy



Cared for Grateful

My Plunket nurse "throws out the rule book" sometimes. She brought me her family's hand-me-downs. I was grateful to her since winter is coming up.



Welcomed Excited

I went to the Manurewa Parenting Hub. They really understood me. They even made me a cup of coffee. They said I could begin a teacher's aid course and help me get back to work if I wanted.



Empowered

My teacher's aid course taught me about child development and how important it is for mums to be with their kids. They even let me take baby to the course.



Guilt Pressured

I told my maternity nurse that I wanted to formula feed my baby. They asked me to sign a disclaimer form about "Breastfeeding is best." I refused to sign it and snuck out.



Unsure Confused  
Apprehensive

My baby's getting sick. I checked the mums' group on Facebook for advice. I remembered seeing a post about checking temperature. There were mixed opinions in the comments section.



Upset Embarrassed

I got worried so I went to A&E. The nurse got cross and said "why did you wait so long to bring baby in?" She made me feel like another young, dumb, brown mum.



Dismissed

I went to the GP for the second time because baby still wasn't eating well. He said, "It's normal for a kiwi baby." I didn't know what that meant, but he wasn't even trying to understand me.



# CONNECTIONS

Being a new parent increases the need for social support and connection. Sometimes new relationships and supports are formed and sometimes existing relationships change. These relationships vary for each parent and they can hold both helpful and unhelpful elements.



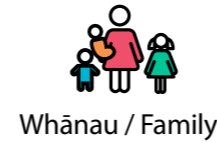
## + Helpful

## - Unhelpful

It's great my parents live so close by. I can just turn up anytime

My parents help me out so much I call them 'mum and dad PaknSave'

I spend lots of time with my cousin – our kids are the same age



I always have to look after my brother's kids – but he never helps me out

My parents passed away – I miss them so much

I'm worried that my parents will smack my kids – I don't know how to let them know that's not what I want

My friends are great when I need to let my hair down

We know everyone on our street and we all look out for each other



My kid seems can be a real conversation stopper when I'm hanging out with my old friends

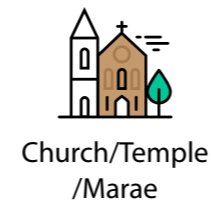
We don't feel safe in our neighbourhood and I don't let my kids outside to play

Some volunteers from the church came and cleaned up our garden – I was so grateful

I've met people who are like family to me now

When we had nowhere to live, my friends from the church opened their doors

Sometimes people drop food off for us



I have to watch my kids when we are at church – I don't have time to pray

We changed to a Palangi church because we didn't want to make the contributions anymore

I can engage on my own terms – anytime, anywhere

I can be as anonymous as I want

I can just watch from the sidelines or get really involved

I can catch up with friends and family from all over



I don't always know what the right advice is

Other mums seem to have it all together on Facebook – when I compare myself to them I fall short and I end up feeling worse

If I don't have data on my phone, I can't get on

Sometimes I feel judged by other parents

Our park is close by and there are always other mums there to chat with

We love the pool, it's really cheap and we can stay there all day

If it's free – we'll be there!



There isn't anything for my under two to actually play with at the park

Our closest library is too far to walk to and we don't have a car

Sometimes I'll find broken glass or needles

Sometimes there are people at the park that make me feel unsure or unsafe

It's great when we are all talking honestly about how hard it really is

I love being able to celebrate and commiserate the small things with other mums



It's hard when the playgroup is really small

People keep coming and going – it makes it hard to get to know people

Our ECE is great – sometimes they give us food to take home

My Plunket nurse hooked me up with a playgroup



Lots of the ECEs are full so I have to travel outside of my neighbourhood to drop my baby off

It costs a lot to have my kids in ECE

# WORKING TOWARDS A BETTER FUTURE

Mums want to do the best for their children right now but are also seeking opportunities to create positive futures for themselves and their family.



Some of the things parents told us they were doing to create positive futures



Putting careers on hold to stay at home with their children



Creating positive parenting practices



Keeping up with childrens educational needs



Going outside their comfort zones



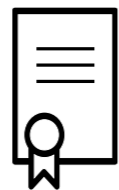
Creating non-smacking and violent free homes



Budgeting including total money management



Seeking out good role models



Gaining skills and education



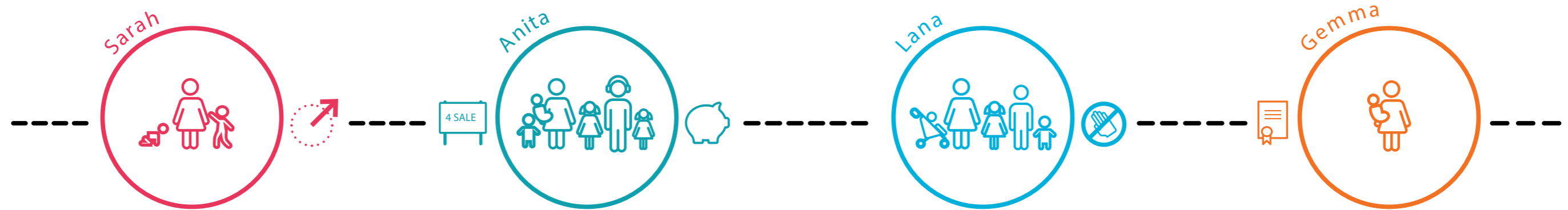
Creating enterprising opportunities



Strengthening cultural values and practices

# 4 MOTHERS WORKING TOWARDS BETTER FUTURES

Here, four mothers demonstrate how they want to do the best for their children right now as well as seeking opportunities to create positive futures for themselves and their families.



**Sarah**

I'm a mother of two children aged 4 and 18 months old. I would describe myself as an introvert – I find it really hard in social settings, especially if I have to meet new people. I had post-natal with my first child and I was really scared about getting it with my second. My husband was really worried too - it was hard on him as well, he often felt scared. Fortunately, I had lots of support from my family and my doctor who told me I needed to go outside of my comfort zone. Playcentre was where I tested my comfort zone limits. I would still take my children there because of how important it is for their development. It has been great for both them and for me.

**Anita**

I'm a mum with five children and I love structure in my life. I have a to-do list on my fridge and my children know all the things that they have to do in our home. My mum thinks that I'm never at home cos of all the volunteering I do for my Cook Island community. It's really important that you do things in your community for love. I call it the scale of love. I'm under total money management, I love it. My bills and rent get paid and I don't have to worry about that now – it just gets done. I love the budgeting program so much that I have now become a volunteer. I'm also telling my friends how good it is. Making a bit of money to run my home is really important for me to get by. You know, just a bit of baking and cleaning really. I'm also trying to build my catering business to help with my extended family. The thing is I don't want my benefit to be affected, so we keep it on the down low.

**Lana**

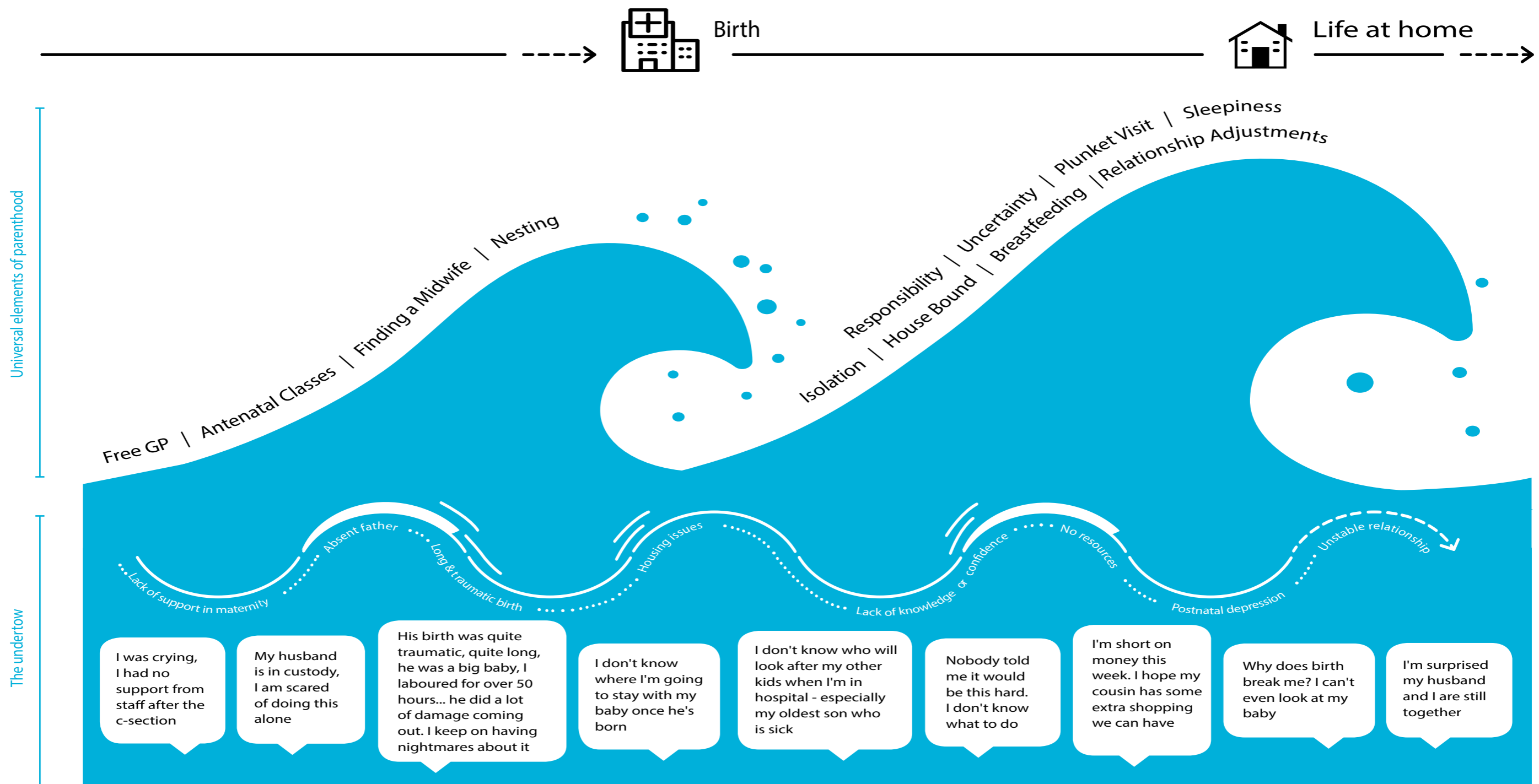
I am a Mum with four children. I share my home with my sister who is great with my teenage girl. I have made the garage into my lounge. It's cold but at least it's a space for me to watch my movies when the children are in bed. Just recently my ex has moved into the garage so I don't have any place to relax now. It's hard him being here, he shouts and drinks. It's not how I want to have my home, I want a violence, anger-free home. I want to build a loving, caring and calm environment for my home, for my children to be. I know he's a good man and he's had a hard childhood and I want to help him be a better person. But I find it hard to manage him sometimes. It's good when he goes to work. Holding my faith close helps me keep strong.

**Gemma**

I am a young mother of one child. I share a room with my partner and son at my grandparents' house so we can save money while I am at university. I did a certificate in health sciences this year and I'm hoping to get into the bachelors course next year. My big plan is to be a doctor. Life is really full on while I'm studying and I don't think I could do it without the the help of my Nana and Papa. They look after my son while I'm at uni. They even let me borrow their car sometimes when I have to be at uni early and I can't get public transport.

# THE TWO WAVES

We heard that mothers experience having a baby in two waves - the first wave describes the time up to and surrounding the birth and the second wave describes what happens when they return home after birth. Each wave impacts the family as a whole but mums felt particularly unprepared for the intensity of the second wave. Although many new mums are anxious taking their baby home for the first time, anxiety was compounded by other life challenges such as post-natal depression, lack of resources and relationship issues. These challenges are experienced as an undertow that creates instability.



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## 4. OUR APPROACH

## THE PROCESS

This research had a secondary purpose: to explore how different ethnographically-inspired research methods can be used to deeply understand lived experiences.

The purpose of this part of the document is to share the design team's experience of engaging with these research activities.

This document follows our process from forming the design team through to developing the insights and creating the visuals. The intent is to provide a 'warts and all' glimpse into our story. The Auckland Co-Design Lab will use these learnings to better understand the appropriate ethnographic methods in other settings and challenges.

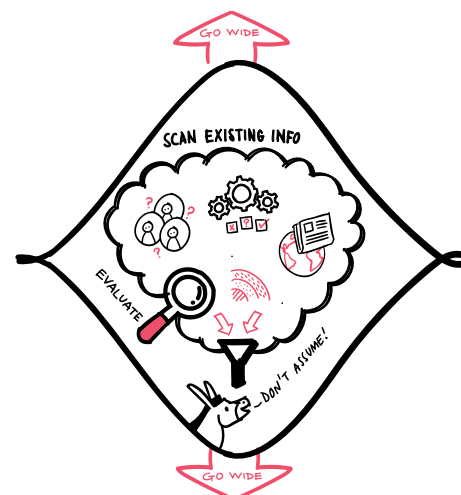
We hope that others will also learn from our experience and develop their own ethnographic practices as appropriate for their work.



## FORMING THE TEAM

The project team comprised staff from The Southern Initiative, Auckland Council, and Auckland Co-Design Lab. Team members had experience in either research, design thinking methodologies or working with South Auckland communities and parents. The different but complimentary experiences of the team was a key strength of the project.

During the project design phase the team worked with a design coach from ThinkPlace to build capability and explore the different dimensions of applying ethnographic principles to research.



## RESEARCH INTENT:

To understand the lived experience of those residing in TSI area parenting children under the age of two

## FOCUSING QUESTIONS:

- What are parent's physical, social, emotional, cultural and spiritual experiences?
- What does their everyday routine look like?
- What formal and informal supports are available to them and how are these supports utilised?
- What things are working well and what things are not working well for them?

## ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS AND TRAINING

Ethnography comes largely from anthropology where people are studied within their own cultural contexts and settings. Ethnographic tools and methods have been adapted by design thinkers to better understand people's realities and lived experiences. An ethnographic approach requires the researcher to adopt a non-judgemental stance that seeks understanding and embraces honest curiosity.

The team uncovered the following benefits of ethnography:

- It can help to uncover the unsaid – people don't always say what they mean, or do what they say
- It uncovers profound and novel insights
- It allows the researcher to explore 'the edges' of everyday life



- It highlights the unarticulated needs of people
- It can help to surface causality and complexity

The team considered a number of ethnographic methods that had the potential to support the Early Years Challenge. These included in-depth open-ended interviews; using journals and photographs to elicit participants' stories; using video tours to provide insights about everyday routines in and out of the home; and participant observation.

While some of these are well used and understood in a range of settings (for example, in-depth open-ended interviews), others are less well utilised. In the following, we reflect on our experience of testing observational methods before describing and reflecting on the methods we used in this research.

## OBSERVATION IN PRACTICE

Observation is the act of observing or shadowing people in their natural context. This can take the form of 'pure' observation where the participant is either unaware they are being observed or where the researcher observes but does not engage with the participant at all. Alternatively, it can be participatory where the researcher immerses themselves into the everyday life of the participant.

The art of observing is more than just watching people in their surroundings. It requires researchers to be deliberate in their observations and to carefully document what they see. The team used the AEIOU framework described on the following page.

# AIEOU FRAMEWORK

AIEOU

TASK FOR THE RESEARCHER

ACTIVITIES

What activities do participants engage in? What time of day does the activity occur? Is it part of their usual routine? Is anyone else involved? Does it appear to be an enjoyable activity?

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Does the participant refer to any environmental factors at home, work or in their neighbourhood?

INTERACTIONS

What interactions does the participant have with others? How frequent are they and how important do they appear to be to the participant?

OBJECTS

What kinds of objects play a part in the participants' daily life? Objects could be special (a photo album) or they might be very ordinary (a television or the fridge for example).

USERS (FAMILY/WHĀNAU MEMBERS)

What are the roles of 'users'? In other words, those people who come into contact with the participant?

# MATERIAL CULTURAL STUDY

The team also explored and trained in another ethnographic method known as material culture studies. This is the examinations of tools, artefacts and object and the act of using these to interpret the habits and routines of the people who use them. It is also used to explore the value of certain objects and the changing value over time.

To explore this method, the team examined the different pantries of 'trusted friends'. We were asked to use the pantries to answer a range of questions about the people who used the items.

- Who lives here?
- What can you tell about the lives of the person or people who live here?

The exercise was also used to identify and park our own judgements and to recognise when we were using judgemental language. For example, seeing fizzy drinks and snacks in a pantry should not as junk food, and we cannot assume that the people who live there are unhealthy. Rather, we merely observe that fizzy drinks and snacks appear in the pantry.

Understanding the context of these items would need to occur through further observation and/or conversation.



# FIELDWORK

## METHOD 1: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Fifteen parents participated in in-depth interviews. These were carried out in places where the parent felt most comfortable, which for many parents meant in their homes. Once the researcher had spent time going through the information and consent forms, the interview began.

Parents were first asked to tell their parenting story, starting wherever they like and taking as long as they liked. This allowed the parents to frame the conversation as they wanted. The team also used a series of prompts to keep the conversation flowing and to ensure the focussing questions were answered. Below are some example prompts that were asked:



Can you describe your normal everyday routine to me?

- Walk me through it - from when you wake, till you go to bed.
- Tell me about a time when you had a really good day. Can you describe it for me?
- Tell me about a time when you had a not so good day. Describe it.

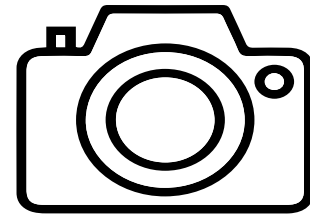
What or who supports you in your parenting, and in what ways?

- Can you describe a situation where [the person or the thing] offered support to you?
- What's good about that support? What's not so good about it?

A map of the local area was also provided and participants were asked to use the map to talk through the places they go, the people they visit and the professional and social networks they utilise. Interestingly, for many parents, the maps provided were never quite big enough to fit in all the places parents went and the distances they travelled.

## METHOD 2: PHOTO ELICITATION

Four parents chose to take photos of their parenting lives. We provided those parents with a digital camera for five days and asked them to capture their experiences. Parents were not limited to taking photographs in their own homes but were invited to take photographs in public places where appropriate. The method provides participants with a different way of telling their parenting story.



Parents were asked to think about the following things when taking their photographs:

- Things that they do as a parent
- Things or places that are important to them as a parent
- Who or what supports them as a parent
- What makes them happy or gives them joy as a parent
- What makes them worried, sad or frustrated as a parent
- How they think and feel about themselves as a parent

After five days, the researcher returned to collect the camera and have the photos printed. A few days later, at a time and place convenient for the parent, the researcher returned to talk about their photos.

These interviews were guided by the photos and the stories of the parents told. Using the photos to elicit conversations allowed them to tell their story in their own words and in their own way.

This method was incredibly useful because it;

- allowed more parents to be involved in a cost-effective way
- was less taxing on team members because they had photographs as prompts
- revealed the different aspects of parents everyday lives that other methods did not reveal
- provided a visual record of the conversation
- It doesn't play a significant cognitive load on the participants

### METHOD 3: VIDEO TOUR

The video tour was to involve participants taking the researcher to places of significance and meaning to them as a parent – either in or out of the home. While touring, the researcher would ask questions about their parenting routines and the role the various spaces served in their parenting practices.

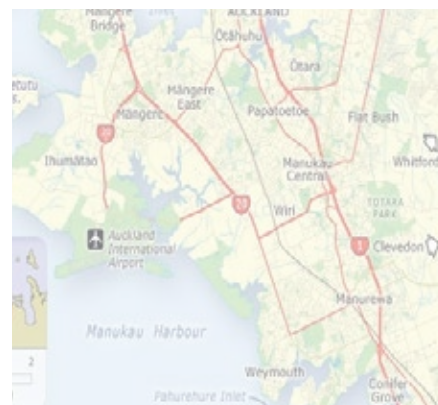
The interviews were not intended to be fixed and were more about responding to the participant, the spaces and the conversation as it unfolded.

The team had anticipated that four parents would take part in this exercise. However, we misjudged how difficult this would be for busy parents and active children.

All but one parent decided that juggling children, driving and the weather at the same time as taking part in an interview (all while being video-recorded) was too demanding and opted instead to be interviewed in their homes.

This was an important lesson for us. Although we wanted to get a sense of what life was really like for participants, and we felt a video tour was an interesting and engaging way to do this, it became clear that we could unintentionally add to the pressures faced by many participants.

We learnt very quickly that we needed to be agile and ready to adapt our research plan in accordance with the needs of a parents' situation and wishes.



## MINING FOR INSIGHTS

Mining for insights from the 20 interviews, photo stories or video tours required a rigorous process. Each parents' audio or video-recorded interview was transcribed verbatim. Each team member was then assigned a number of transcripts, ensuring that each transcript was read by at least two different people (not including the primary researcher who conducted the interview).

An 'insight mining worksheet' was used to provide a framework for analysing the interviews:

### WHAT DID THIS PARENT DO?

What actions and activities did they engage in?

### WHAT DID THIS PARENT USE?

What do parents use to get what they want/need? Services, interactions or work arounds.

### WHAT DID THIS PARENT THINK?

What are their goals or aspirations?  
What do they perceive? What motivates them?

### WHAT DID THIS PARENT FEEL?

What was the impact of these experiences on the person?

### POINTS OF SATISFACTION

What did they talk positively about?  
What things are working well?

### POINTS OF PAIN

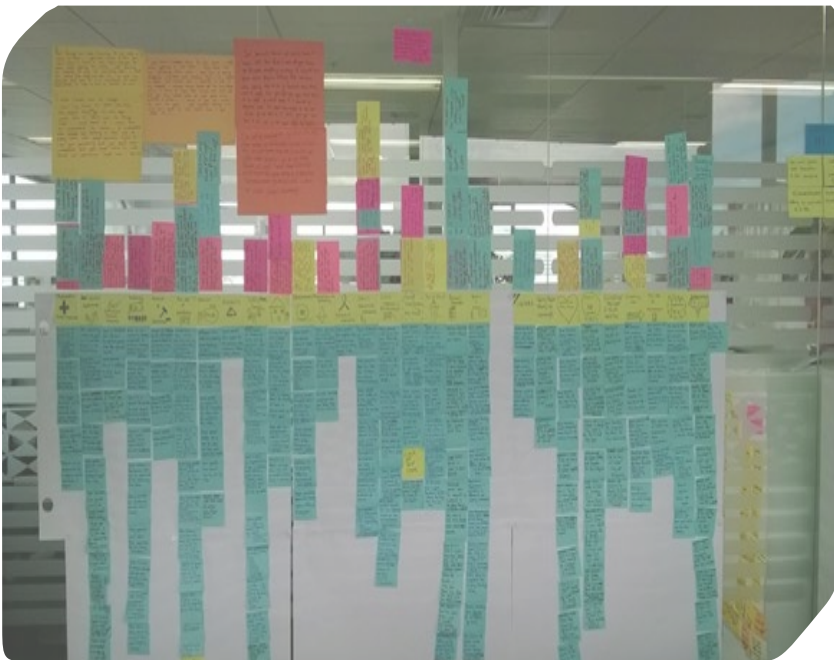
What did they talk negatively about?  
What things are not working well?

### WERE THERE ANY TENSIONS OR CONTRADICTIONS?

### WHAT ROLE DO OTHERS PLAY?

Once complete, the team came together for a two-day workshop to share their collective understanding. The collective insights were analysed thematically and particularly salient quotes were extracted to add richness and depth to the themes.

Further iterations refined the themes to 6 'big ideas' that were further developed into visuals for this document.





# VISUALISATION

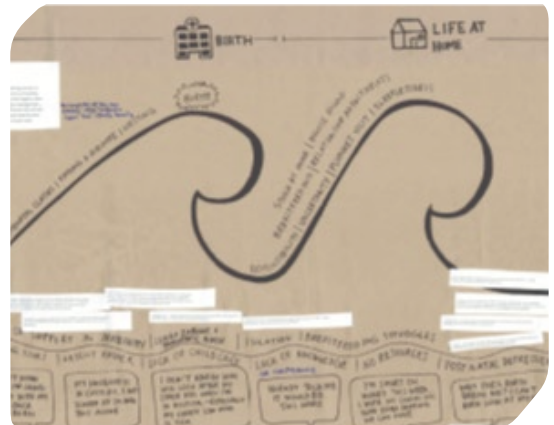
Taking the insights from post-it notes to visuals takes a leap of faith and creativity. It can be one of the most challenging parts of the design process. It is an iterative process that takes the individual stories and lived experiences of participants in order to tell a bigger story, at the same time as retaining the personal feel of the participants lives.

It is often described as a constant process of zooming out and zooming in. During the second, third and fourth iterations, the team pulled in the expertise of a social designer and information designer to support the visual construction.

## ITERATION 1



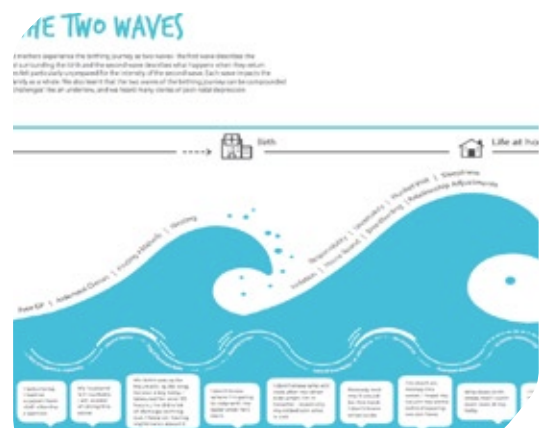
## ITERATION 2



## ITERATION 3



## ITERATION 4



## PARENTS' HUI – 29 APRIL

On 29 April we held a parents' hui at Papakura marae. Eleven parents who had participated in the research joined us to look at the initial insights and consider whether we had fully captured their experiences.

We wanted to support participants to attend the hui so we invited them to bring their children and we provided childcare and transport. We also provided food to help create an open and relaxing space.

The morning was organised around exploring in small groups the five key insights that had been developed at that point. We made it clear that the insights were their stories and they were free to question and challenge what they saw.

Parents identified the 'two waves' and 'making home' as key areas for prioritisation although all of the themes resonated. The relationship between each insight was also considered important. Parents told us they valued being able to share their thoughts in a child-friendly environment and taking part appeared to make them feel heard and validated.

At the close of the workshop we asked parents if they would like to stay involved. Most were keen but provided us with a clear challenge that they wanted their time and commitment to make a difference.

A key learning for the team was the value of creating the right environment for parents to feel safe and comfortable to participate and contribute.



## STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP - 9 MAY



Following the parents' hui we shared our findings with a small group of stakeholders including:

Treasury, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Auckland Council, Manukau District Health Board, Plunket, Foundation North, Healthy Families, COMET and the Ohomairangi Trust.

At this stage the focus was on testing what we had heard from parents with policy makers, funders and front line staff. It provided for a rich discussion and further validated what parents had told us.

Participants unpacked the findings and drew on their own professional experiences to identify a number of emerging focus areas:

- How can we build on existing community resources to create safe, fun and welcoming spaces within walking distance, especially for families who lack these things in their own homes?
- How might we create a more integrated pre & post-natal experience that effectively support families?
- How might we build capability and strengthen the informal networks of new parents?
- How might we make services more family/whānau-centric and accessible?

## NEXT STEPS

Parents in South Auckland have allowed us a privileged glimpse into their lives. Their commitment to creating better lives for their families and the ways they create safe and loving environments, even when their circumstances make this difficult, will inspire and inform the next phase of our work.

We invite you to use these insights as a spring board for creative and collaborative thinking and action.

## CONTACT US

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