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# **Exploring the Acceptability and Accessibility of the Incredible Years Parenting Programme for Pasifika Peoples**

**Max Maiava**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree  
of Doctor of Clinical Psychology, The University of Auckland, 2014

## **Abstract**

The development of parent training programmes has become one of the most widely utilised and cost effective means of prevention and treatment for problematic child behaviours and parenting practices. To date there has been limited research regarding the effectiveness of these programmes for Pasifika people. This study explored the acceptability and accessibility of the Incredible Years Parenting Programme for Pasifika people living in New Zealand. Interviews were conducted with 16 Pasifika parents who had completed the programme, and nine trained facilitators of whom the majority were also Pasifika. A thematic analysis of the data identified six themes and related subthemes. The analysis revealed that the general principles of the Incredible Years programme were considered to be universal and therefore relevant for Pasifika people. However, care was needed to translate programme content in meaningful ways that recognised and integrated Pasifika peoples' values and beliefs, characteristics and qualities. Pasifika people were considered more likely to engage in programmes that are facilitated by other Pasifika people, and there is perhaps a need for both pan-Pacific and ethnic-specific programmes. Interviewees also recommended that cultural adaptations would increase the overall acceptability and accessibility of the Incredible Years programme. Practical and psychological barriers may hinder initial engagement, such as problems with transport and child care, and stigma associated with attending a parenting programme. The implications for future development of the Incredible Years programme with Pasifika people are discussed.

## **Dedication**

*This thesis is dedicated to my Grandpa, Sauafea Ieti Malu Liu, who first taught me about unconditional love and the true source of my strength.*

*E faasaga ae o'u mata i mauga, e oo mai ai lo'u fesoasoani. O lo'u fesoasoani mai ia Ieova lea. Salamo 121:1*

## Acknowledgements

*Ou te vivii atu ia te oe Ieova ma lo'u loto atoa; ou te ta'uta'u atu foi ou vavega uma. Ou te fiafia ma ou olioli ia te oe; ou te pese lava i lou suafa, le Silisili ese. Salamo 9:1-2*

*I am thankful.*

I firstly thank my greatest role model, Jesus Christ. This journey has brought out the best and the worst in me, made known my strengths and my weaknesses, and had me confront some of my deepest fears. Your grace is an amazing thing. Thank you God.

I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to my collective family who have been behind me all the way: Grandpa for your quite strength and wisdom; my parents Rev Iosefa and Selika Maiava for your love and support, your faith in me, and your constant prayers; my brothers and sisters and my wonderful nieces and nephews who have truly blessed our family with joy and laughter; my aunties and uncles for the Sunday feasts and laughs; and my cousins for always keeping it real for me. Thank you also to my parents in law Peter and Lorna Child for all your love and support. And finally, to my wonderful husband Gareth – thank you for keeping our little family unit strong while I was so often preoccupied and self-absorbed! Thank you for getting me through the tough times and for celebrating with me the good times. To my family, I love you all.

To my supervisor and mentor Professor Fred Seymour, I cannot thank you enough. Thank you for your guidance and support throughout this journey of becoming a psychologist and researcher. I am grateful to have had you as a role model. I am also thankful to all the Clinical Psychology staff for their time and support and for the hard work they put in that is often not seen and acknowledged. Thank you also to my wonderful friends and colleagues in the clinical programme, it has been an enjoyable privilege learning and working alongside you all.

I'd also like to express a big thank you to my aiga in the Vaka Toa team at Whirinaki Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in Counties Manukau. Thank you so much for all your support and encouragement during my internship year and during the last (long and tedious) stretch of this thesis. May God continue to bless the amazing work you do with our young people and their families.

I'd like to acknowledge the Werry Centre for proposing a research topic that I could not refuse. I'd especially like to thank Mercy Drummond, who without her help and support I could not have had access to all the wonderful people I have met along the way.

I'd also like to acknowledge the funding I received from the Health Research Council through the Pacific Health Research Scholarship.

Last but not least importantly, I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all the participants who had given up their time to share their experiences with me. My time with you all has been the best part of this research process. *Ia faamanuia Le Atua ia te outou uma.*

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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Parenting is a complex concept, with many internal and external factors that influence how it is perceived, practiced, and understood by individuals and groups. More than being a complex concept it is a significantly relevant one as the influence of parenting or lack of it impacts on the future wellbeing of the generations that follow.

The focal aim of this paper is to respond to the expressed need for parenting programs to cater to the needs of Pasifika parents in New Zealand. My interest in this study emanates broadly from a passion to conduct research central to Pasifika peoples, with the possibility of informing and helping to pave pathways to success for Pasifika people. Personally, this study appeals to me because it firstly attempts to understand the general difficulties inherent in parenting, but also looks at the added stresses and impacts of parenting in a culturally unfamiliar environment; secondly it explores ways in which parenting programmes can provide more effective support to Pasifika parents in terms of meeting their cultural needs as parents and families, and accommodating their cultural uniqueness. My passion for both Pasifika peoples and parenting issues stems from my own personal experiences of being a first generation New Zealand born Samoan, growing up in New Zealand trying to negotiate the two culturally different worlds of western society and my own inherent Samoan culture; and watching my own parents trying to do the same thing having had no prior orientation as I had, as well as managing to provide the necessities for their families. My experiences working for an early intervention family support organisation, Family Start, gave me further insight into the diverse world of parenting. Much of my observations and experiences support the general consensus that the effects of parenting have considerable impacts on the

future wellbeing of children. It is thus a great opportunity and privilege to take part in this research exploration.

Specific to this research study will be the exploration of an evidence based parenting programme called the Incredible Years Parenting Programme, and whether its components are both culturally acceptable and accessible for the Pasifika population in Aotearoa/New Zealand. To do this it is first necessary to give a description or overview of Pasifika peoples in New Zealand and Pasifika parenting, including the effects acculturation has had on parenting since migration. The section following that will detail the available literature around parenting as it is understood from a predominantly western perspective. Of importance in this section is the well supported understanding that parenting practices are associated with future outcomes for children. Then popular parenting programmes and their efficacy will be discussed. This will lead to a discussion of cross cultural applications. Finally, as the current study is focused on a particular parenting programme, a description and review of the Incredible Years will be given before stating the specific aims of the research.

### **Pasifika Peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

Pasifika people is a term of convenience used throughout this paper to collectively describe people from the Pacific nations who have migrated to New Zealand, and also individuals born in New Zealand who identify as Pasifika through ancestry. There are many Pasifika nations that fall under the Pasifika umbrella term; however, in terms of their population presence in Aotearoa/New Zealand the Pacific nations of Samoa, Cook Islands, Tonga, Niue, Fiji, Tokelau, and Tuvalu are the largest (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). It is important to note that the term Pasifika denotes a homogenous population and may imply that the practices, values, and beliefs of the collective are one and the same. However, while

there are many similarities shared in the cultural practices and beliefs of Pasifika people (Kingi-Ulu'ave, Faleafa, & Brown, 2007), there is also much diversity between each Pacific ethnic group as well as within each group (Airini et al., 2010). This must be kept in mind when looking at all studies of Pasifika people; but for the purposes of this paper an attempt is made to focus on areas of parenting practices that may benefit the outcomes of Pasifika people as a whole in New Zealand. Future research will benefit from taking a closer look at the diversity of parenting issues within ethnic-specific groups.

An influx of Pasifika migration to New Zealand occurred in the 1960s in response to labour workforce demands (Gibson, 1983). The Pasifika population has continued to increase since then through a process of migration and natural population growth. Pasifika people now make up 6.9% of the total New Zealand population and have become a well-established part of New Zealand. Pasifika is deemed a rapidly growing ethnic population in New Zealand with estimations that the population will rise to 12% of the total New Zealand population by 2051 (Cook, Didham, & Khawaja, 1999).

Samoans are the largest Pasifika ethnic group, making up almost half the total Pasifika population in New Zealand. Cook Islands people make up the next largest group, followed by Tongans (Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, 2010). The majority (67%) of Pasifika people reside in the North Island, predominantly in the urban areas of Auckland and Wellington.

The 2006 census showed that the Pasifika population is a relatively young one, with a median age of 21.1 years compared to 35.9 years of the total New Zealand population. Approximately 58% of Pasifika peoples are New Zealand born; and about a half of them unable to speak their ethnic language. Data from the census indicated that Pasifika people born overseas (presumably in their Pacific country of origin) were more likely to speak their own language than those that were born in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2010).

Despite leaving Pacific shores of familiarity and comfort in order to establish brighter futures for their families in a foreign land of opportunity, the effects of migration has taken its toll on Pasifika people. Socio-economically Pasifika peoples have always struggled in New Zealand. While positive gains over the years have been made in areas such as education and employment, Pasifika people continue to be overrepresented in unemployment, among the lower-skilled workers, and low income earners compared to the total population (Statistics New Zealand, 2002). Moreover, although more young Pasifika people are staying longer at school, they are still coming out with lower qualifications. In crime statistics Pasifika people, particularly the younger age groups (17-19 years), experience higher rates of conviction and prosecution than the total New Zealand population, and in addition, convictions are reported to have a more violent nature (Oakley-Browne, Well, & Scott, 2006). In addition to this, low socio-economic factors usually contribute to the poorer health outcomes experienced by Pasifika peoples (Oakley-Browne, et al., 2006). The prevalence of mental health difficulties among Pasifika peoples is also higher than the general New Zealand population, particularly in younger cohort aged 16 – 24 years; anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and substance use disorders are among the most commonly experienced by Pasifika people (Oakley-Browne, et al., 2006).

The increasing rate of negative statistics regarding Pasifika peoples in New Zealand gives rise to the question, why are these negative outcomes occurring?

### **Migration effects and differing worldviews**

Immigration into a new country can be an exciting but challenging experience for those that decide to leave their homeland and pursue what they perceive as brighter futures in different countries. The difficulties do not only lie within the group of immigrants who are

tasked with the challenge of living in a culturally different environment, but also with the host country who are faced with the challenge of accommodating new cultures (Berry, 2005).

The migration journey of Pasifika peoples to New Zealand reflects this. The main difficulty for Pasifika peoples adjusting in New Zealand has been the overwhelming differences in cultural worldviews. The dominant Western worldview is known to be one based on valued individualism. In contrast to a Pasifika worldview, there is a strong focus on the self as individuated and independent (Tamasese, Peteru, Waldegrave, & Bush, 2005). Such a cultural view strives for self-reliance and independence, and encourages this in early socialisation of children (Kagitcibasi, 2002; Lamm & Keller., 2007). Although there is diversity amongst Pasifika ethnic nations, a Pasifika worldview centres on the concept of collectivism. The notion of self is referred to as a ‘relational self’ and is defined by the relationships and connections one has with others, families, and wider communities. Here a sense of worth and belonging is gained from carrying out one’s given roles and responsibilities within the various relational structures that they are a part of (Tamasese et al. 2005; Tamasese, Parsons, Sullivan, & Waldegrave, 2010).

Among some of the significant aspects that define culture across Pasifika is the importance that is placed on God, faith, and religion and the manifestation of these things. A model of health and wellbeing for Pasifika peoples therefore is described as maintaining balance in one’s relationship with God, people, and the land/environment (Lui, 2003). A research study endeavouring to gain an understanding of Pasifika models of mental health via correspondence with Pasifika mental health consumers and service providers identified a set of core values common to Pasifika people that guide and govern conduct within various relationship structures (Agnew et al., 2004). These are considered essential cultural principles and includes the concept of *tapu* (sacred bonds), *’ofa* (love and compassion),



*tautua* (reciprocal service), *faaaloalo* (respect and deference), and *aiga* (family) (Agnew et al., 2004; Lui, 2003; K. Tamasese, et al., 2005).

Highlighting these cultural worldviews and principles sheds some light on understanding the adjustment difficulties Pasifika peoples have experienced and continue to experience in New Zealand. Noting these difficulties is not to say that the dominant Western views are incorrect (nor are they as rigid as the definition implies), only that such a worldview is an historically unfamiliar one for Pasifika people, and one that does not always fit well with the values, attitudes and beliefs of Pasifika people.

These adjustment difficulties may be better understood in terms of acculturation. Acculturation is described as a process of learning and adapting to those aspects of a new cultural group, within the context of that new culture (Berry, 1980; Miranda, Bilot, Peluso, Berman, & Van Meek, 2006). Understanding this process may provide a further understanding of the experiences of Pasifika peoples in New Zealand and the impact these experiences may have on parenting.

## **Acculturation**

Berry's (1997) popular model of acculturation proposes four modes of impact on the acculturating group: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Integration is defined as the maintaining of one's own or native culture while still participating within the larger social network (of the dominant culture); assimilation refers to the preference of full immersion into the dominant culture and leaving behind one's native culture; separation occurs when one holds on strongly to their own cultural values and does not integrate into the wider social network; marginalization refers to a lack of maintaining one's own culture as well as a lack of integration with the dominant culture (in marginalisation the lack of maintenance and integration is often seen as a result of the overpowering stance of a

dominant culture, as seen in colonisation). It is also evident that within these modes there are different levels of acculturation (Furnham & Bochner, 1986); for example the extent to which individuals or sub-groups within the acculturating group may assimilate to the dominant culture may vary.

### **Pasifika peoples acculturative experiences**

For Pasifika peoples the process of acculturation has been a difficult one. Particularly, given the significant differences between the worldviews of the various Pasifika cultures and the dominant and competing western worldview, acculturative stress is a likely outcome for Pasifika peoples adjusting to New Zealand.

In considering the acculturation types as described by Berry (1997) it appears that Pasifika people's adjustment mostly reflects integration, assimilation, and separation at varying levels. The complexities of culture and individual or subgroup differences make it difficult to ascribe one type of acculturation process. For example, Pasifika parents place significant value on education and may push their child to integrate with the western education system; however, integration with the western education system also means exposure to western cultural views such as valued independence, and freedom of expression which are concepts contrary to a Pasifika value base. This consequence of integration may lead Pasifika parents to question the credibility and motives of western ideals, forcing them to take a step back from integrating, and sometimes taking this as far as separation in that rigid rules are enforced such as forbidding children to socialise (make friends). Other times parents may resent the level of perceived assimilation demonstrated by their New Zealand born children and fear the potential loss of cultural identity, religion, and Pasifika values (Fa'alau & Jensen, 2006; Meleisea & Schoeffel, 1998).

A qualitative study looking into Samoan perspectives on mental health in New Zealand recounted views of Pasifika peoples' (Samoan peoples in this case) difficulties with acculturation (Tamasese, et al., 2005). The following comments made by mental health consumers and service providers reflect some of the complexities and difficulties discussed:

*There are different values and priorities between Samoa culture and the dominant culture, and these values conflict.*

*Young people don't know if they are Palagi (European) or Samoan, they're confused*  
*One of the biggest reasons especially for the younger generations is the different*  
*cultures and trying to live in the European way....as well as keeping your identity as a*  
*Samoan and playing your role in the family. You've got two (areas) putting a lot of*  
*pressure on you to function out in the community and function in here. (p. 304)*

### **Intergenerational differences**

The longer a group of people have resided in the host country the more likely it is that they will become better integrated with the dominant culture (Berry, 1980). Within the context of Pasifika people's adjustment in New Zealand, this is most evident in the rise of intergenerational differences. Intergenerational differences reflect the changes that occur between migrant parents and the generations that follow. For example, the young Pasifika generation are showing more success in career status compared to the older generation. Likewise it has been noted that New Zealand born parents are less likely to use harsh discipline and more likely to engage in alternative strategies (Cowley-Malcolm, Fairburn-Dunlop, Paterson, Gao, & Williams, 2009). It is predicted that as Pasifika generations continue to grow in New Zealand the process of acculturation will become easier, minimising stress on families, parents and children.

While intergenerational changes appear to show promising results for parenting practices in New Zealand born parents it also leads to assimilation to the dominant western culture. While this in itself is not adverse in terms of positive parenting, taken from a broader perspective, such assimilation risks the loss of cultural treasures such as language, stories, and songs; all ways of expressing cultural uniqueness and sharing cultural values and practices.

### **Acculturative impacts on Pasifika parenting**

It is understood that parenting is a culturally specific activity (Calzada, 2010). Therefore when cultural groups such as Pasifika peoples migrate into a culturally foreign environment, aspects of their culture base are disrupted, including parenting. Research shows that the process of acculturation can influence parenting practices (Barker, Cook, & Borrego, 2010). Studies have found that acculturation affects child rearing practices, disciplinary strategies, and highlights intergenerational differences in parenting (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Buriel, Mercado, Rodriquez, & Chavez, 1991).

The process of acculturation and acculturative stress is likely to have a significant impact on Pasifika parenting. Pasifika parents often need to contend with what is perceived as normative values and practices in New Zealand despite being traditionally unfamiliar with them. An example of this is the responsibility for child care. Traditionally amongst Pasifika families in the Islands child care was assumed by the wider family network. This was made possible in the Islands as families lived within close proximity of each other, literally metres away from each other, so child care was shared by parents, grandparents, and older siblings. Mothers were able to multitask, taking care of daily domestic chores while remaining assured that their child was safe and supervised (Cowley-Malcolm, 2005; Fa'alau, 2011). Within the New Zealand context, both parents often need to work in order to maintain a level of

financial security but families are not able to live in close proximity, making it difficult for them to share child care resources. Where grandparents take on the role of primary care giver to younger children, they are even less acculturated than migrant parents as often migrant parents arrive in New Zealand, gain employment and eventually send for their parents, thus children may experience contrasting parenting practices (Cowley-Malcolm, 2005; Fa'alau, 2011).

Often acculturative factors influence a shift of focus from family nurturance and shared time to the accessing of money as it is perceived that in the western world money is equated with survival. In this respect working parents tend to associate material provisions of shelter, food, clothing, education resources with the demonstration of love and care, as the lack of time, availability, and external stressors of employment now limit time with children. The difficulties of these adjustments can be exacerbated as establishing a healthy balance between work life and family is not traditionally something Pasifika parents needed to contend with.

A few studies have been able to portray the disruption in parental stability and confidence amongst Pasifika as a result of migration difficulties. A study of Island born Pasifika parents in New Zealand ascertained their views in respect to parenting in New Zealand and found that parents worried that the western worldview or model was too liberal (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996). This is evidenced by the process in which the New Zealand's education system places strong teaching value on developing skills such as questioning, critical thinking, and expressing oneself explicitly. Pasifika parents feared that this would encourage their New Zealand born children to challenge and disobey their parents, take up new religions and/or abandon their faith, forget their cultural values and practices as well as their obligations to parents and the wider family community (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996). Consequently, the Pasifika parents and children of this study reported conflicted parent-child

relationships. The struggle Island born parents face trying to maintain their cultural integrity requires them to exert their authority, albeit sometimes in a way that is not received well by their New Zealand born children. Given the reported worries and frustrations of Island born Pasifika parents it would appear that the development of an overly protective, controlled and strict parenting approach would seem likely. Children in Schoeffel and Meleisea's study reported strong resentment to this lack of freedom. One contributing factor to the level of resentment may lie in the fact that often children were not given an appropriate explanation of their parents' decisions and their well-meaning fears, as most children felt that they did not have open communication with their parents (Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996).

A potential problem with highly controlled and strict parenting styles is the risk of using physical discipline or punishment to enforce rules. Among many Pasifika parents there is also the sense of entitlement and sometimes obligation that is rooted in belief statements such as 'spare the rod, spoil the child' or 'we hit to show children the right way....if we didn't hit, we would be failing our children (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2001; Schoeffel & Meleisea, 1996). The children participants in Schoeffel and Meleisea's study all reported that they had been slapped or 'given a hiding' for disobedience; which was another source of resentment for some children. A finding by the Pacific Islands Families Study in New Zealand found that smacking was a commonly used form of discipline by Pasifika parents (Schluter, Sundborn, Abbott, & Paterson, 2007). However, in contrast to this a more recent study on the parenting practices of Pasifika fathers found that the use of harsh discipline was very rare (Iusitini, Gao, Sundborn, & Paterson, 2010), suggesting perhaps that practices and/or awareness were changing. Although it is often assumed that the use of physical discipline is the 'norm' for Pasifika parents, due to the variability of study methodologies and sample characteristics this is not conclusive (Cowley-Malcolm et al., 2009; Schluter et al., 2007). However, the concern regarding the fine line between physical punishment and child

abuse is recognised both nationally and internationally (Cowley-Malcolm et al., 2009); and Pasifika parents are far from exempt from this awareness.

A clear consensus among these studies is the link between a lack of nurturing parenting and socio-economic lifestyle problems. It has been observed that those Pasifika parents who were less nurturing towards their children were also those with problem gambling, excessive alcohol consumption, and lower educational qualifications (Cowley-Malcolm et al., 2009; Paterson et al., 2006; Schluter et al., 2007). As discussed earlier, to some extent, many of these socio-economic disparities and maladaptive behaviours are negative impacts of acculturative stress. Therefore, it is perhaps useful to understand these layers of stress and address them also in order to adequately address parenting issues.

On a more positive note, studies have also found that New Zealand born Pasifika parents are less inclined to use physical or harsh discipline with their children and are more likely to use other strategies such as time-out and a withdrawal of privileges (Abel, Park, Tipene-Leach, Finau, & Lennan, 2001; Cowley-Malcolm et al., 2009; McCallin, Paterson, Butler, & Cowley-Malcolm, 2001). These findings suggest that intergenerational changes are occurring within our Pasifika population. The challenge is making necessary and positive changes to parenting practices and styles while still maintaining the core values and beliefs that uniquely define Pasifika people.

### **Parenting: Western Literature**

#### **Why is parenting important?**

Research suggests that early family socialization experiences, particularly in the area of parenting, strongly influence behaviour, relationships, and overall adjustment in later life for children (Abramson & Alloy, 2006; Calzada, 2010; Hinshaw et al., 2000; Parker, Barrett, & Hickie, 1992; Zayas & Solari, 1994). In light of the significant impact parenting has on the

future wellbeing of young people, it becomes an important issue and one of the main variables in question when looking at poor social and personal outcomes for young people growing up (Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Lee, Daniels, & Kissinger, 2006)

### **How is parenting understood?**

The emergence of research studies examining the link between parenting and later adult adjustment began in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bowlby, 1988; Caldji, Tannenbaum, Sharma, Francis, & Plotsky, 1998; Calzada, 2010; Parker et al., 1992) and is reflected in various developmental and attachment theories. The effects of early socialization experiences are evident in various domains such as mental health (Edward, Holden, Felitti, & Anda, 2003), interpersonal relationships (Collins & Read, 1990), violence and abuse (Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, & Bartholomew, 1994), and parenting (Calzada, 2010; Parker et al., 1992).

The theoretical underpinnings of parenting are primarily based on the attachment theory, developed by Bowlby (1988). Attachment theory proposes that secure attachments within the parent-child relationship lead to the development of emotionally competent children (Carr, 2006). Secure attachment is illustrated by parental responsiveness to the child's need for safety and security while still allowing the child to explore the world around them (Carr, 2006). Baumrind (1991) further adds to this by proposing a typology of four parenting styles each relating to specific developmental outcomes for children. These are authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglecting parenting styles. An authoritative parenting style is characterised by warmth and care, and a moderate degree of control. Children who experience an authoritative approach are likely to develop into secure and confidence adults. An authoritarian parenting style is marked by a high level of demand and control but lower levels of responsiveness to children. The developmental outcomes linked with authoritarian parenting are a lack of assertiveness and initiative taking in young people.



Permissive parenting is sometimes referred to as indulgent parenting and is characterised by excessive leniency in parents and a lack of appropriate expectations for the child.

Consequences of such parenting approaches are seen in children who lack discipline and competence, and who show poor impulse control. A neglecting parenting style is seen in parents who show low levels of responsiveness to their children, and is often associated with physical punishment and abuse. Children exposed to such parenting approaches are at increased risk of developing conduct problems.

### **The impacts of parenting on children: study findings**

In line with the assumptions of attachment theory and the understanding based on Baumrind's typology of parenting, research studies have consistently shown that supportive parenting behaviours such as high levels of warmth and care, monitoring, nurturing, and encouragement are associated with higher self esteem (Lee et al., 2006; Pena, 2000), greater emotional and psychological well-being (Abramson & Alloy, 2006; Maynard & Harding, 2010), and academic success (Jeynes, 2005; Lee et al., 2006) in later life. In contrast to this, parenting characterized by high levels of control, punitive discipline, and low levels of care, positive support, and encouragement are more likely related to the development of problem behaviours and delinquency in adolescence (Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Fearon, Bakermans-Kranenburg, Van Ijzendoorn, Lapsley, & Roisman, 2010; Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2004), depression (Abramson & Alloy, 2006; Barber & Olsen, 2001; Lee et al., 2006), problematic interpersonal relationships (Collins & Read, 1990; Cui, Conger, Bryant, & Elder, 2002; Dutton, et al., 1994; Parker et al., 1992), and overall poorer social outcome (Hinshaw et al., 2000).

The following discussion outlines specific studies that highlight the effect of parenting on the

development of depression, sense of self concept, and externalising problem behaviours in children and young people.

*Development of depression:* Abramson and Alloy (2006) discuss the findings of a study that tested the cognitive vulnerability hypothesis of depression. The cognitive vulnerability hypothesis of depression posits that vulnerability to depression occurs when an individual comes to develop consistent negative attributions by the way in which they have interpreted and processed past negative life events (Abramson & Alloy, 2006). Their findings suggested three central factors related to the development of negative cognitive styles which strongly influence vulnerability to depression; these were childhood emotional maltreatment, low emotional warmth in parenting, and negative inferential feedback from parents. While early traumatic events such as physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in a child's life all contribute to negative cognitive styles and an increased risk for depression, it was found that emotional maltreatment was more likely to lead to negative cognitive styles (Gibb et al., 2001; Rose & Abramson, 1992). Researchers have noted the main rationale to this is that during emotional abuse the child is directly supplied with the negative cognitions such as "you're useless", "you won't amount to anything", however in the case of physical and sexual abuse the situation is more open to the child's interpretations (Rose & Abramson, 1992). While this finding should not take away from the seriousness of other types of abuse, it is useful to be informed, particularly within the context of family relationships (where the exchange of words can often be used loosely), of the severe emotional impact harsh and negative words may have on a child. Abramson and Alloy's (2006) finding that parenting behaviours marked by negative psychological control and a lack of warmth and care leads to increased risk of depression and mental unwellness is consistent with other studies mentioned earlier (Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Hinshaw et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2006; Parker et al., 1992). It was also found that social learning processes such as modelling and inferential feedback

largely contributed to the development of negative cognitive styles in children. Through the process of modelling a child adopts the cognitive styles of their parent. The inferential feedback mechanism posits that children learn negative inferential styles from how their parents infer the causes and consequences of negative life events (Abramson & Alloy, 2006). Some studies have supported these hypotheses with findings suggesting that parents' negative cognitive outlook on the self, others and the world is associated to lower self esteem, negative self concepts, and negative attributional styles in their children through a process of exposure, modelling, and negative inferential feedback (Blount & Epkins, 2009; Garber & Martin, 2002; Stark, Schmidt, & Joiner, 1996).

*Self concept and academic achievement.* While Abramson and Alloy (2006) highlighted the influence negative parenting characteristics and attributions has on the development of negative cognition styles and increased risk of depression in children and in later life, Lee and colleagues (2006) look at the effects of parenting on young people's sense of self concept (self worth and self esteem), locus of control, and academic achievement.

Lee et al. (2006) identified four clusters of parenting practices in which they found to mostly correspond well with Baumrind's (1991) typology of parenting styles. Similarities were found in cluster one parenting practices with Baumrind's authoritative parenting style; this was illustrated by moderate to high scores in collaborative decision making between parent and child, the expectations (parent expectation of child capabilities), and family rules (discipline and family enforced rules) scales, as well as high scores in the discussion (between parent and child), and parent involvement (parent participation in activities with child) scale. Cluster two parenting practices, however, did not correspond to any of Baumrind's parenting styles and was characterized by moderate to high scores in the discussion, parent involvement, expectation, and family rules scales but a notably low score in the decision making scale (parents made decisions). Cluster three was illustrated by

parenting practices with high scores in decision making (made by the child/young person), low scores in discussion, parent involvement, and parent expectations, and very low scores with regards to family rules. This cluster was seen to correspond well to what Baumrind termed as a neglecting parenting style. Finally, consistent with Baumrind's description of an authoritarian parenting style, cluster four, was characterized by low scores in discussion, involvement, and expectation scales, and moderate to high scores in the decision making (made by parents) and family rules. Lee et al. (2006) found that young people in the study who were experiencing cluster one parenting practices (authoritative parenting styles) demonstrated a higher sense of positive self concept and internal locus of control than others, and also experienced markedly higher academic success overall as measured by their Reading and Mathematics skill levels. The behaviour patterns described as cluster one have also been linked with similar effects in young people in past and more recent studies (Fulton & Turner, 2008; Hillaker, Brophy-Herb, Villarruel, & Haas, 2008; Slicker, 1998). The effects of cluster three parenting practices (neglecting parenting style) were associated with a lower sense of positive self concept and internal locus of control in young people, and low levels of Reading and Math. Numerous studies have also noted the unhelpful effects of parenting characterized by a lack of parental involvement and interest, boundaries and appropriate monitoring, and a sense of parental authority (Abramson & Alloy, 2006; Edward et al., 2003; Fulton & Turner, 2008; Gibb et al., 2001; Hillaker et al., 2008; Jeynes, 2005; Maynard & Harding, 2010; Pena, 2000). Again consistent with previous findings, young people who were exposed to cluster four parenting practices (reminiscent of an authoritarian parenting style) also showed a lower sense of positive self concept and internal locus of control, and generally lower academic levels (Dornbusch, Ritter, & Leiderman, 1987; Shumow, Vandell, & Posner, 1998).

An interesting finding made by Lee et al (2006) with regard to cluster two possibly highlights the limitations of putting parenting styles into categories (Baumrind, 1991); it risks

overlooking very different but relevant parenting styles that are utilized by parents (Lee et al., 2006). The children of parents in cluster two were found to have a higher sense of positive self concept and internal locus of control, but lower levels of academic success compared to young people of cluster four (authoritative parenting). In justifying the reality of cluster two parenting practices Lee et al. noted that in many ethnic minority groups while there are high levels of parental involvement in various aspects of their children's lives - such as education - family rules and decision making remain firmly within the authority of parents (Ho, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2004).

*Externalising behaviour problems.* As noted above, negative parenting practices appear to have a strong link to negative internalized problems in children and young people. However, many studies have also shown that a relationship between negative early parent-child experiences and an increased risk of externalizing problem behaviours exists (Aquilino & Supple, 2001; Fearon et al., 2010; Loeber & Hay, 1997; van IJzendoorn, Schuengel, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 1999). In a recent meta-analysis study Fearon et al. confirmed this relationship noting that children with early insecure attachment to parents were associated with non-compliance, aggression, hostility, and antisocial behaviour. In a study examining the relationship between parental control and support and externalized behaviour in a youth sample, it was discovered that risk of adolescent delinquency was related to parent efficacy (Loeber & Hay, 1997; van IJzendoorn et al., 1999), specifically parental control and support (Wright & Cullen, 2001). Wright and Cullen's study emphasized the joint significance of exercising parental control and support within the parent child relationship. The characteristics of control and support were described as the presence of secure parent-child attachment, clear and enforced household rules, and parental supervision. Similar findings were presented in a study that explored parenting as a moderator between youth gang involvement and problem behaviours: minor delinquency, major delinquency, and substance

use (Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2004). Reinforcing the findings of Wright and Cullen's meta-analysis study, Walker-Barnes and Mason found that parenting practices characterized by behavioural control and parental warmth was negatively related to gang involvement and problem behaviours in youth. Specific to Pasifika outcomes, Anae (2002) found that first generation New Zealand born Pasifika children who experienced harsh parenting and a lack of parental support were more likely to engage in risky behaviours, become involved in gangs, had poor education outcomes and higher mental health problems.

### **What does this mean for Pasifika parenting?**

The international literature on the various effects associated with parenting practices raises issues about the potential impact Pasifika parenting is having on young Pasifika people and their overall adjustment. As previously mentioned, a recent New Zealand study has revealed that Pasifika people are experiencing higher rates (25%) of mental disorder compared to the total Aotearoa/New Zealand population (20.7%), with the most prevalent of these being anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and substance use disorders (Oakley-Browne et al., 2006). Furthermore, it was found that the younger cohort of Pasifika peoples experience higher rates of mental disorder than older Pasifika peoples. In addition to this, it has been identified that the Pasifika population is the most at risk ethnic group in New Zealand for developing problem gambling behaviours. Coupled with this is the overrepresentation of Pasifika peoples in the lower socio-economic brackets.

These negative findings may at first seem to reflect poorly on Pasifika parenting and ultimate outcomes for younger Pasifika people. However, findings again need to be interpreted with caution and not taken to represent a causal link. Consideration of acculturation effects also need to be considered as explanations for the above mentioned disparities. Nevertheless, what remains important is the findings clearly suggest that the

issue of parenting is a worthwhile area of focus and practical implementation of support resources and interventions, and relevant social policies are needed.

### **Parenting Programmes**

Parenting programmes, parent training programmes (PT), or parent management training (PMT) are all terms used to describe interventions focused on improving the relationship between parents and their children (Cowley-Malcolm, Nakhid, Helu, Erick-Peleti, & Grant, 2008), and have been largely based on social learning principles (Dunnachie, 2007a). Among the various rationales for the development of parenting programmes Anderson, Birkin, Seymour, & Moore, (2005) identified that parenting programmes are usually based from the following ideas: parents are logical agents for change; parents are the experts of their child; parenting programmes provide intense intervention resources at low costs; and parenting programmes are likely to reduce parental stress as an outcome of improved child behaviour management.

A substantial amount of research suggests that effective parenting programmes are associated with a reduced risk of problem behaviours in children and future delinquency (Chronis, Chacko, Fabiano, Wymbos, & Pelham, 2004; Cousins & Weiss, 1993; de Graaf et al, 2008a; Harachi, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1997; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992), an increase in school achievement and improvements in family interactions (Long, Forehand, M, & Morgan, 1994; McMahon & Forehand, 1984; Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984; Spoth, Redmond, Haggerty, & Ward, 1995; Webster-Stratton, Kolpacoff, & Hollinsworth, 1989). Furthermore, the effects of parenting programmes are seen in the increase of protective factors such as improved communication, decision making skills, and parent-child bonding (Harachi, et al., 1997; Sanders and McFarland, 2000; Spoth, et al., 1995; Webster-Stratton, et al., 1989).

To date parenting programmes broadly operate from one of two main frameworks (Stiefel & Renner, 2004): behavioural and non-behavioural, also known as relationship based parenting programmes. The behavioural framework of parenting programmes is usually based on Social Learning Theory and the fundamentals of Applied Behaviour Analysis. Parenting programmes utilising a relationship focused framework are derived from humanistic, family systems, and psychodynamic models (Gottman & DeClaire, 1997; Stiefel & Renner, 2004). Relationship focused parenting programmes are based on the premise that a fundamental need is the need to belong (Stiefel & Renner, 2004). Such programmes focus their attention on life skills such as resilience, respect, patience, concern for others, problem solving, responsibility, and cooperation; these aspects are encouraged in the parent-child relationship by developing and strengthening active listening skills, communication skills, and empathic skills (Stiefel & Renner, 2004). There appears to be significantly more empirical research for behavioural based parenting programmes (Assemany, 2002; Kazdin, 1997), however the emergence of parenting programmes that have combined both these frameworks have shown promising results (Webster-Stratton & Hancock, 1998).

### **Programme structures and delivery modes**

From their conception in the 1960's the popular use of parent training programmes has since grown rapidly and the various structures themselves continue to change and diversify (Kaminski, Valle, Filene, & Boyle, 2008; Kazdin, 1997). In its beginning stages parent training was offered individually in clinical settings, however it has developed into group administered programmes with the addition of videotaped material to further facilitate discussion, and explore the captured themes, principles, and procedures with parents (Kazdin, 1997; Webster-Stratton, 1998). Furthermore, parenting programmes have addressed a range of child behaviours (e.g., oppositional behaviours, hyperactivity, eating disorders, mental



disorders, developmental disorders and teen parents, single parents, low income families) (Kaminski et al., 2008; Kazdin, 1997). Kaminski et al. point out its diversity in delivery settings, from individual or group sessions to home visits, the varying delivery techniques, from discussions and role plays to homework exercises. In addition to this, programme content may vary significantly across different parenting programmes with varying degrees of emphasis placed on identified key concepts such as parenting self-efficacy, communication skills, and behaviour management strategies (Kaminski et al., 2008).

Many programmes have and continue to address the diverse challenges that come with the development and dissemination of an effective parent intervention programme. However, the Triple P-Positive Parenting Programme, first developed by Matthew Sanders in 1979, is the only parenting programme that utilises a multiple-level system whereby the intervention can be targeted towards different levels and needs of a population (Sanders & Ralph, 2005). Primarily a behavioural based programme, its five levels range from a universal media-based campaign, to group parenting programmes, and intensive individual based programmes, all with the creative utilisation of various resources and communication channels.

The constant evolving of parent training programmes suggests a very flexible resource and probably one of the more transferrable therapy interventions available. A disadvantage of this flexibility in programmes (as well as the flexible nature of life situations) is the complexity of variables to contend with in evaluation and comparative studies.

### **Efficacy studies**

A review of 28 parent training studies from 1976 to 2001 noted that overall findings were positive and that parenting programmes were an effective treatment intervention for children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and their parents

(Chronis et al., 2004). Similar findings were made by Anastopoulos et al. (1991; 1993), and they made an important mention that while parenting programmes were not the core treatment for children diagnosed with ADHD, however it promoted the development of effective coping skills for parents which in turn had a positive effect on children. Several studies on the effectiveness of parenting programmes with a wide range of anxiety disorders in children revealed positive results (Eisen, Raleigh, & Neuhoff, 2008; Thienemann, Moore, & Tompkins, 2006; Wahler, Cartor, & Lambert, 1993). Moreover, improvement gains were still evident at follow up. Studies by Barret, Dadds, and Rapee (1996), and Spence (2000) found that positive improvements in anxious children were maintained at 12 month follow up and approximately 95% of children no longer met the clinical criteria for anxiety. In the latter studies parent training programmes were coupled with cognitive behaviour therapy for the child; it was found that parent training combined with cognitive behaviour therapy yielded the most positive results. These studies indicate a confident level of efficacy in parenting programmes when working with both externalised and internalised behaviours. Generalisability cannot be assumed just by looking at these studies, however, there is evidence that suggests parenting programmes are proven useful when working with a range of externalising (e.g., non-compliance, anti-social behaviour) and internalising (e.g., depression) behaviours (Dunnachie, 2007a; Forehand & Long, 1988; Long et al., 1994; Webster-Stratton, 1998).

Larger and more comprehensive reviews and meta-analyses have also been conducted in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of parenting programmes, and have found varying results (Kaminski, et al., 2008; Kazdin, 1997; Lundahl, Risser, & Lovejoy, 2006). A meta-analytic review of 26 studies involving non-behavioural parenting programmes found an effect size of 0.03 suggesting no difference in improvements between the treatment groups and the control groups (Cedar & Levant, 1990). Improvements in parental behaviours

revealed a slightly larger effect size of 0.37; however upon follow up a moderate treatment effect of 0.53 was gained in child behaviour improvements. A similar review of 26 behavioural-based parenting programmes reported large treatment effects (0.86) in general child outcomes while moderate treatment effects were seen in parental behaviour and adjustment (0.44) (Serketich & Dumas, 1996). A more recent and larger meta-analysis study also compared parent training outcomes of behavioural-based and non-behavioural-based programmes; and in addition examined specific factors that made parent training programmes more or less effective (Lundahl et al., 2006). Lundahl et al. found that for both behavioural and non-behavioural parent training programmes treatment effects were small to moderate. Furthermore, follow-up results for behavioural programmes yielded small effects, whereas no results were obtained for non-behavioural programmes due to a lack of studies in this area. In line with other research Lundahl et al.'s study found parent training programmes were less effective for families of lower socio-economic status (Kazdin, 1997; Reyno & McGrath, 2006; Webster-Stratton, 1998). In addition, an interesting finding in the study noted that socio-economically disadvantaged families gained more benefits from individual parent training rather than group delivered programs. Such a finding warrants future evaluation as currently there is little information in the literature that can back this up.

In addition to studying the overall effectiveness of parent training programmes Kaminski et al.'s (2008) meta-analytic study also set out to determine which programme components were more or less associated with positive outcomes in parent training programmes. Specific components in parent training programmes that were associated with significantly larger effect sizes included creating positive interactions with the child and getting parents to practice new skills with their child during session. In addition, parenting programmes that included training in emotional communication were more beneficial for parents, and those that taught techniques such as time-out and responding consistently to

children's behaviours were found to be more beneficial for children with externalising behaviours only. Another finding was the nil effect that supplemental services and supports had on parent outcomes. This result is supported by the meta-analysis studies of Lundahl et al. (2006) and Serketich and Dumas (1996) but appears contrary to those findings suggesting the effectiveness of multimodal treatment approaches (Dunnachie, 2007a; Fonagy, Target, Cottrell, Phillips, & Kurtz, 2002).

Kazdin's (1997) early review of several outcome studies drew the following conclusions: parent management training has had significant positive effects on child behaviour based on parent and teacher reports, home and school observations, and institutional records; in cases of conduct problems the improvements reached a level of significance where children no longer met the clinical level of conduct problems; long term maintenance of 1 to 3 years have been documented with the gains noted in Long et al's (1994) study to have been maintained 10 to 14 years later; and finally there is sufficient evidence to indicate that improved child behaviours were generalised to the improved behaviours of siblings and a reduction in maternal depression.

In terms of evidence-based parenting programmes, some of the most extensively researched and empirically supported, with increasing utilisation in New Zealand, have been the Incredible Years Parenting Programme and the Triple P-Positive Parenting Programme (Arkan, Ustun, and Guvenir, 2013; Fergusson, Stanley, and Horwood, 2009; Sanders, 2012; Webster-Stratton, 2005).

## **Conclusion**

It is apparent that despite extensive research undertakings on parenting programmes and their usefulness for parents, children and families, findings have been inconsistent. However, it appears that behavioural-based programmes are more effective than non-

behavioural-based programmes. It could be that there is a paucity of research looking into the benefits of non-behavioural or relationship-based parenting programmes and the research in this field is yet to make that shift. It is noted, however, that some programmes combine both behavioural-based and relationship-based models, which is the case with the Incredible Years programme developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton.

Relevant to the Pasifika context, the majority of reviews were based on western populations and failed to include studies of ethnic minority parenting groups. It could be assumed that given the difference between western worldviews and those of ethnic minority populations, results may vary considerably in efficacy studies, particularly when looking at specific programme components and the possible benefits of additional support for non-western populations.

### **Parenting Programmes and Cross Cultural Applications**

There is paucity of research with regard to Pasifika peoples in general and in particular in the area of parenting. In fact current literature highlights the dearth of parenting research with ethnic minority groups on an international level. There is however a growing awareness of this and a few recent studies have emerged highlighting the need to incorporate significant cultural aspects (within ethnic minority parenting) into mainstream parenting programmes (Calzada, 2010; Lau, 2006; Barker et al., 2010). Certainly within New Zealand there is a need to address and evaluate the cross cultural application of parenting programmes in order to ensure that such programmes are meeting the needs of the target population, in the case of this thesis, Pasifika people.

It is a generally accepted notion that parenting is a cultural activity. The rules, beliefs, communication styles, and levels of competence with different cultures invariably lead to different parental values; and it is these values that are thought to be reliable predictors of

parenting practices (Barker et al., 2010; Calzada, 2010). Considering the various cultural differences between Pasifika peoples (and other ethnic minority groups) and the dominant western culture, it is understandable that parenting behaviours would differ based on the emphasis of each culture's value base. Several approaches have been proposed in an attempt to incorporate culture into parenting programmes and thus improve engagement of ethnic minority families. The following methods of cultural adaptation (of parenting programmes) convey suggestions for the improvement of mainstream parenting programmes.

### **Incorporating cultural values**

Recent studies on parenting programmes with Latino families living in the United States of America reveal some similarities to Pasifika peoples in New Zealand; not only in terms of acculturation experiences and impacts but also with regards to the cultural values that are held important to these ethnic groups. Calzada (2010) discusses two core cultural values that play a significant role in parenting among Latino families: *familismo* and *respeto*. *Familismo* refers to the feelings of loyalty, solidarity, and reciprocity among family members and holds with it four key components: (a) belief that family comes before the individual; (b) familial interconnectedness; (c) belief in family reciprocity; and (d) belief in familial honour. *Respeto* is understood as the importance of respect and obedience of authority; knowing how to be courteous and respectful in relation to others' age, sex, and social status, all as a means of preserving harmony within the family community. These two cultural values, held highly amongst Latino peoples, can be likened to the core cultural principles of Pasifika peoples as described by Agnew et al. (2004), Lui (2003), and Tamasese et al. (2005). The concepts of *ofa* (love), *tautua* (reciprocal service), and *aiga* (family) can collectively embrace the Latino notion of *familismo*, while *respeto* is very much in line with Pasifika peoples notion of *fa'aaloalo* (respect and deference).

Based on the rationale that core cultural values play a central role in parenting, recent studies emphasising the need for cross cultural applications strongly suggest that these core values be included and emphasised in the content of parenting programmes (Barker et al., 2010; Calzada, 2010). It is further posited that such programme adaptations will increase the acceptability of parenting programmes for ethnic minorities and therefore better engage parents. This is perhaps an area to further explore with regards to improving the acceptability and thus accessibility of mainstream programmes for Pasifika families in New Zealand.

### **Matching facilitator and programme participants**

It is also understood that given the influence of culture on parenting practices, it makes sense that programmes targeted at parenting behaviours must consider the cultural factors of ethnic groups they are working with (Barker et al, 2010; Calzada, 2010; Lau, 2006). Obvious factors such as ethnicity differences, language barriers, and cultural belief differences may predict difficulties in interaction and finding common grounds of engagement between programme facilitators and ethnic participants. Other factors include the socio-economic status of programme participants and the various stressors related to this such as discrimination, high-crime neighbourhoods, financial and employment difficulties (Barker et al., 2010). The rationale of matching a programme facilitator's characteristics with that of programme participants comes from clinical literature and is based on the assumption that matching therapists' and clients' ethnicity was thought to be an effective way of establishing comfort, rapport, and trust between the two parties given their shared knowledge and experiences and similar cultural belief systems (Sue & Sue, 2008).

It has been proposed in relation to the provision of mental health services in New Zealand that ethnic matching between clinician and patient is likely to increase engagement and therefore positive outcomes (Pacific Health Research Centre, 2003; Southwick &

Solomona, 2007). Internationally, recent findings have also supported the ethnic matching of programme facilitators and target population (Baumann, Rodriguez, & Parra-Cardona, 2011; Parra-Cardona et al., 2012). It was noted in these evaluation studies of group based interventions with Latino families in America that matching was not limited to ethnicity but included a facilitator's understanding and experiences of issues such as immigration, acculturation, and general stressors. In their evaluation of a culturally adapted evidence based parenting programme for the Latino population in urban America, Parra-Cardona et al. reported high rates of engagement and retention, as well as parent satisfaction. It is important to note that facilitator and participant matching was one aspect amongst a host of cultural adaptations made to specifically meet the needs of the ethnic minority population of Latinos' in America.

However, contrary to these findings, another study looking at ethnic, socio-economic, and belief matching between parents and programme leaders found that while socio-economic matching improved attendance and retention rates, other results were less significant in relation to overall engagement and parent outcomes (Dumas, Moreland, Gitter, Pearl & Nordstrom, 2008). They concluded that programme leader and parent matching was not as warranted as often assumed.

### **Programme Delivery**

Programme modality is an area that affords slightly more freedom in terms of adaptation to suit the needs of the target population. This is because the fidelity of most parenting programmes lies in the content of the programme and less on the delivery. However, the way in which a treatment programme is delivered is significant. An aspect of delivery that has received much attention in research is the role of the therapist or facilitator in parenting programmes. Most of this research highlights the importance of facilitators



having skills such as leadership, therapeutic and relationship building skills, and skills using specific techniques and methods as related to the programme method and principles (Scott, Carby, & Rendu, 2008; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2010). In her recent paper about multi-cultural collaboration in the delivery of the Incredible Years programme, developer Carolyn Webster-Stratton stresses several specific principles that support this (Webster-Stratton, 2009). Some of these principles discuss the necessity for programme deliverers to respect and affirm cultural differences, understand and take time to explore cultural, socio-economic, and other barriers, provide modelling that represents diverse cultures, do more practicing and less talking, and work collaboratively with interpreters.

A range of other suggestions have been made by researchers in terms of effective programme delivery. These have included provision of transport for participants, making childcare available, the presence of food, addressing basic social needs (e.g., referral to budgeting services), conducting programmes in churches or other community facilities, and including all those family members who play a significant child-care role (Calzada, 2010; Lau, 2010; Webster-Stratton, 1998)

On face value many of these aspects of programme delivery appear necessary and relevant for Pasifika. Many Pasifika participants will come from lower socio-economic families and will most likely need transport, advice and support regarding basic needs; food has also been a means of bringing Pasifika people together. In addition to this is the traditional Pasifika child-rearing practice whereby the extended family or village helps raise a child; within the New Zealand context it is most likely grandparents, sometimes Aunties and older cousins who take on a large part of the care-giving role. In order for children to receive maximum benefits of parenting programmes it is critical that all those who play a significant child-caring role be included in programmes. Finally, the majority of Pasifika peoples in

New Zealand identify with the Christian faith; given this the comfort and familiarity of church locations is more likely to place participants at ease and more readily to engage.

Again while there is little empirical support for such approaches having influence on programme outcomes, the assumption is made that because such factors do not affect the content and fidelity of parenting programmes, they can be considered as means to increase positive outcomes for participating families..

A general overview of cross cultural applications in parenting programmes suggests that many culturally relevant ideas are emerging to help increase participation and overall effectiveness for ethnic minority families. However, currently the necessity of these culturally relevant approaches is debatable with critics stating that cultural adaptations are often based on practitioners' views and opinions of ethnic cultural needs rather than on empirical data (Lau, 2006). Further research of parenting programmes with ethnic minority groups is required to strengthen current arguments.

### **Incredible Years Programme**

As this study focuses on the acceptability and accessibility of the Incredible Years parenting programme an explanation and review of the programme is relevant. This section outlines the components of the Incredible Years BASIC Parenting Programme.

The Incredible Years is an evidence based parenting programme developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton in the 1980's. The original aim of the programme was to facilitate a treatment approach for children and young people with Conduct Disorders (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2007), however the use of Incredible Years programme has extended into other populations (Dunnachie, 2007b). The Incredible Years parenting programme is primarily based on social learning theory and can be classified as a cognitive behavioural

programme that utilises the collaborative relationship approach that is central to many non-behavioural relationship based programmes.

The BASIC parenting programme is made up of four consecutive sections with each one building on the learning gained in the preceding section: Part 1 focuses on building positive parent-child relationships through play; part 2 looks at helping children learn through the use of praise and incentives, part 3 supports parents with strategies for positive discipline and effective limit setting; and part 4 explores the handling of misbehaviour using logical and natural consequences. These four sections are delivered within 14-18 weekly sessions depending on the need of each parent group. Sessions are run in a group setting with a maximum of 14 participants. It is primarily aimed at children aged from 0 to 12 years with programmes packaged separately according to age brackets 0 – 3 years, 3 – 6 years, and 6 – 12 years.

The specific training methods used and incorporated into the programme are:

Videotape modelling – the use of vignettes depicting various family scenarios/parent-child interactions that are then used to generate group discussions and draw out relationship and/or behavioural principles. Role playing and rehearsal – focuses on encouraging parents to practice newly acquired behaviours with each other. Weekly homework activities – to help parents transfer learning from group sessions to the home environment, they are given practice tasks and reading materials, and asked to record their thoughts and feelings relating to these. Buddy system – each parent is paired with another ‘buddy’ with the objective of supporting one another outside of group sessions (phone conversations). Phone calls and makeup sessions – this is an additional support system whereby the facilitator calls parents every two weeks for a check in and to discuss possible concerns. Weekly evaluations – attempts to address immediate parent concerns about the programme are done so by asking them to complete a weekly evaluation form (Webster-Stratton, 2008).

Upon first glance it appears that the Incredible Years is well structured, evidence based, very western type parenting programme, with no evident emphasis on culturally specific aspects. However, Webster-Stratton (2009) states that the principles integral to the programme provide opportunities to address and discuss attitudinal and cultural barriers that may be present within the group. She further states that this key strategy and process enables Incredible Years to effectively work with culturally diverse groups of parents. Webster-Stratton does stress the important role that facilitators play in integrating and validating cultural diversity within the programme, in terms of how cultural issues are addressed, discussed, and reflected in the core principles of Incredible Years (Webster-Stratton, 2009).

### **Incredible Years: Efficacy Literature**

The Incredible Years parenting programme is one of the most well documented and empirically supported parenting programmes available (Dunnachie, 2007b). A review of the literature points to ample studies supporting the efficacy of the Incredible Years programme, most of which were led by developer Carolyn Webster-Stratton but with a growing number of independent studies. There is evidence of Incredible Years being used globally and with positive outcomes in countries such as United States of America, England, Wales, Sweden, Norway, and Canada. Axberg, Hansson and Broberg (2007) found significant reductions in behaviour management problems in 113 Swedish children. Similarly, in a study of 127 Norwegian children, Larsson et al. (2009) found a reduction in problem behaviours of individuals with Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder symptoms. Other areas of improvement noted in the various international studies include increased parental positive affect, increased positive family communication and problem solving, reduction in harsh parental discipline and reduction in parental depression (Webster-Stratton, 1998; 2005). One study of Korean American families found that Korean mothers increased in positive

disciplinary strategies and reduced harsh disciplinary approaches after having completed the Incredible Years program (Kim, Cain & Webster-Stratton, 2007). Dunnachie (2007) notes in her review, that many of these studies have undergone sound and rigorous tests, and are proven to be effective long term treatments. However, she also points out that in addition to being limited to a very young population, the efficacy of Incredible Years may in part depend on whether or not families are experiencing other difficulties and life stressors that dominate their priorities at the time (Dunnachie, 2007b).

There are several New Zealand studies involving the Incredible Years programme. A study by Fergusson, Stanley and Horwood (2009), indicated promising effects in a study using 214 parent reports. Fergusson and colleagues found that overall, parents were satisfied with the Incredible Years programme, and the level of satisfaction was consistent across Maori and non-Maori. It is noteworthy that Fergusson's study did not use a control group and relied on data from agency records, with no data from those who dropped out of the programme. A small study conducted by Lees and Ronan (2008) in New Zealand found improvements in child behaviour problems and parental confidence in single mothers and their children with ADHD. In a qualitative report into Maori and Non-Maori retention rates, Dunn (2012) found that the majority of participants valued the Incredible Years programme. Reported barriers for these participants were transport costs, the need for more intense individual help for those parents that had children with additional needs, difficulty understanding homework tasks and disliking the buddy system. Particular to Maori participants, the study highlighted the struggles they had connecting with non-Maori facilitators.

Overall, evidence suggests promising results with the continued use of the Incredible Years programme. However, to further confirm the generalisability of these results for ethnic minority groups (including Pasifika families) future research needs to focus on the

effectiveness of Incredible Years with more non-western based populations, as well as looking at accessibility and acceptability issues with regard to cultural diversity.

### **Research Aims**

Considering the dearth of research pertaining to Pasifika parenting the primary aim of this research study is to gather information and gain a comprehensive understanding of the current needs of Pacific Island parents in terms of parenting programmes and more specifically, to determine whether the Incredible Years parenting programme is considered both acceptable and accessible to this group. By the terms acceptable and accessible the researcher means a programme that is perceived as culturally responsive, relevant, practical, and ultimately effective for Pacific Island families.

The study will look at relevant cultural factors that may impact on programme recruitment, participation, and retention with an overall aim of increasing Pasifika involvement in effective parenting programmes. Specifically, the study will look at those aspects of the Incredible Years parenting programme that are open to negotiation and cultural adaptation, and make appropriate suggestions based on the cultural and parenting needs of Pasifika families.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Method**

#### **Overview**

The specific aim of this study was to examine the usefulness of the Incredible Years programme for Pasifika parents by assessing the level of accessibility and acceptability of the programme for these participants. More generally, the study aims to gain a more detailed understanding of the needs of Pasifika parents with regard to parenting programmes.

Taking into consideration the historical and current context of Pasifika peoples in New Zealand, the study sought to address the above objectives by documenting and attempting to understand the experiences and perceptions of those Pasifika parents who had engaged in an Incredible Years parenting programme, and those that facilitate the programme to Pasifika populations.

To do this the study employed a programme evaluation method within an action research framework, using qualitative research data.

#### **Methodology**

Action research focuses on gathering information with the intention of bringing about social change (Hoshmand & O'Byrne, 1996; Seymour & Davies, 2002). It is an important part of evaluating the usefulness of any given programme and as such needs to involve collaborative work between all those involved (Seymour & Davies, 2002, Patton, 2002). The perspective and knowledge of both researchers and participants in such a process is crucial in both identifying areas in need of improvement and problem solutions (Hoshmand & O'Byrne, 1996). Given this, action research is considered a flexible and practical methodological framework that allows for a deeper understanding of individuals' experiences

within a setting as well as giving rise to possible practical resolutions that inform necessary action changes (Winter & Munn-Giddings, 2001; Hoshmand & O'Byrne., 1996).

During the course of this study progress was fed back to the group of programme facilitators, and preliminary findings and emerging themes were presented in various forums and at different stages of the project. As part of this process all those that were involved were given the opportunity to express their specific interests, concerns, and recommendations about the evaluation process and likely outcomes and implications of the study. A final report, in the form of the completed thesis will be provided at the finish of this process.

It is common in Action Research to employ the methods of programme evaluation, which is defined by Patton (2002) as “*the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programmes*”. Patton further elaborates on this definition and includes the importance of clearly identifying the *intended users* and the *intended uses* of the evaluation. In order to best identify and understand these critical points of the evaluation process Patton advises that the evaluator works collaboratively with the various stakeholders involved. Patton refers to this as *utilization-focused evaluation*. Therefore, during the early stages of the current study discussions were held with various groups and individuals who were identified as possible stakeholders; that is, the Werry Centre who are a mental health workforce organisation involved with driving the training and delivery of the Incredible Years programme nationwide, and Pasifika facilitators of the Incredible Years programme. From these discussion meetings it was identified that Pasifika facilitators and other deliverers of the programme were the main *intended users* as the information outcome of the current study would directly impact on their desire and decision to carry on delivering the programme and/or implement necessary changes to it.

The process of data collection and analysis was also strongly influenced by a Pasifika focused methodology, *Talanoa* (Vaiolleti, 2006). The Talanoa approach seeks to understand



the meaning of participants lived experiences, and is defined by Vaioleti as “*a personal encounter where people story their issues, their realities and aspirations*”. Talanoa can be informally described as a conversation/discussion that does not have to adhere to a rigid framework. Understanding that relationship is the foundation of which most Pasifika peoples construct their internal, external and interactional experiences, the talanoa approach asserts that there is an authentic and collaborative interaction between researcher and participant by the sharing of knowledge, experiences, and importantly, their emotions (Vaioleti, 2006). Therefore it is important that the researcher is an active participant in the research process, and not merely an interviewer and analyst (Vaioleti, 2006)

### **Qualitative Analysis**

In qualitative research, the researcher should make clear the epistemological stance that undergirds the design, process, and analysis of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative methods within this action research study sit within a critical realist perspective, whereby the assumption is that reality and truth exist (Patton, 2002); these realities and truths are different for each individual; therefore knowledge can be gained either directly or indirectly via the relationship between language, meaning, and experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton 2002). It was considered that this theoretical framework allows participants’ to not only give voice to their realities, but also to theorise and interpret the varying meanings these realities may hold.

The framework for which data collection and analysis is conducted was directed by Braun and Clarke’s (2006) guidelines for thematic analysis. The process of identifying, analysing and describing themes within the data is one that requires a number of considerations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These considerations include how a theme is derived, and at what level it is identified. Two distinct ways in which themes can be

determined are by process of inductive or deductive analysis. An inductive approach draws out themes from the data during the coding process without presupposing what these themes are. In contrast a deductive approach identifies themes based on a predetermined coding frame structured by the research questions asked (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2002). It is possible to utilise both strategies interchangeably in analysis as often research studies may start off with a broad inquiry requiring an inductive approach, and move onto specific questions that need a deductive analysis, and possibly then move back to an inductive approach to analyse any unanticipated factors that arise within the data (Patton, 2002). Thus, the current study adopts this flexible procedure. A deductive approach is used to provide a framework in which data could express the varying ways participants perceived the terms “acceptable”, “accessible”, and “effective”. From there the analysis is largely inductive in order to identify themes and patterns from the individual and unique experiences of participants, and thus allowing for a more detailed description and understanding of the needs of Pasifika parents in New Zealand.

Themes can be identified at two levels: the semantic or latent level. The semantic level goes no further than reporting the explicit meaning of the data and is thus considered descriptive. Themes that are identified at a latent or interpretative level however involve the interpretation of data in an attempt to make sense of the meanings and implications behind it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke suggest that ideally the analytic process should progress from a description of themes at a semantic level through to the interpretation of themes. This process was used in the current analysis to first describe the experiences of parent participants and facilitators, and later to understand the significance and implications of these experiences with respect to parenting from Pasifika cultural perspectives and how best to work alongside these perspectives.

## **Incredible Years in New Zealand**

The Incredible Years basic parenting programme is run predominantly as a mainstream programme (it is made available to parents of all ethnicities, and commonly in mixed groups) and through social services organisations (both government and non government) throughout New Zealand. It is most commonly accessed by parents via recommendations from such services, however, it is open to voluntary self referrals for any parent or primary caregiver that may be interested in participating. Although recently there has been a national drive to promote parenting programmes, specifically the Incredible Years and Triple P, through government funding, most parents still access the programme through a process of service recommendation and referrals, and not through self-referral.

Over the last few years Pasifika and non Pasifika facilitators of the Incredible Years programme and agencies have focused on promoting the programme with Pasifika families in the hopes to increase their engagement. Consequently there has been an increased interest to deliver the programme to groups of predominantly Pasifika families. In New Zealand, Pasifika peoples mostly populate the Auckland and Wellington-Porirua areas; given this the current study focused on accessing participants of these regions.

## **Participants**

Two separate participant groups were involved in the research: parent participants and facilitators of the Incredible Years programme. Certain criteria were required of the separate participant groups. Pasifika facilitators were considered ideal participants as they had significant experience delivering the programme to Pasifika parents either due to their specific role but primarily because of their personal interests to work alongside their Pasifika people. Non Pasifika facilitators who had significant experience delivering Incredible Years to Pasifika families were also invited to take part in the study. All facilitators had received at

least the basic training for Incredible Years that was facilitated through the Werry Centre. Due to the specific aims of the research study it was necessary and appropriate that parent participants had to identify as being Pasifika and having Pacific ancestry. Parent participants also must have had completed and graduated from the Incredible Years program with no more than two sessions missed. There were no strict criteria in defining the role of a parent, as such parent participants included grandparents or any adult that had a significant role in the day to day care of a child.

### *Parent participants*

All 16 parent participants that took part in the study identified as a Pacific Islander. The majority of participants (75%) identified as Samoan, two identified as Cook Island Maori, one as Niuean, and one as Tokelauan. Of the parent participants eleven were mothers, 5 were fathers, and 3 were grandmothers who did not identify as the primary caregivers but nevertheless played an important caregiver role within the family setting. The majority (75%) of the parents interviewed stated that they were born in the Islands and had migrated to New Zealand, and four were born in New Zealand. One participant was born in New Zealand but was partially raised in the Islands before moving back to New Zealand. Parent participant ages ranged from 19 – 65 years, with the majority of parents aged between 25 years and 54 years. The demographic characteristics of the parent participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

*Demographic characteristics of parent participants*

<b>Parent Participants</b>	<b>Age Range (yrs)</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>
P1	30-34	F	Samoan	Pacific Islands
P2	15-19	F	Tokelauan	NZ
P3	55-59	M	Samoan	Pacific Island
P4	25-29	F	Samoan	Pacific Islands
P5	25-29	F	Nieuan/NZ Euro	NZ
P6	40-44	M	Samoan	Pacific Islands
P7	40-44	F	Samoan	Pacific Islands
P8	35-39	M	Samoan	Pacific Islands
P9	50-54	M	Samoan	Pacific Islands
P10	50-54	F	Cook Island Maori	NZ
P11	30-34	F	Samoan/NZ Euro	Pacific Islands
P12	60-64	F	Samoan	Pacific Islands
P13	40-44	F	Cook Island Maori	Pacific Islands
P14	25-29	F	Samoan	NZ
P15	30-34	M	Samoan	Pacific Islands

*Incredible Years Facilitators*

Of the nine facilitators that were interviewed two were males and seven were females. Six identified as Samoan, two as Niueans, and one as New Zealand European. Four were born and raised in New Zealand and five were born in the Islands. The age range of facilitator participants was 30 years to 59 years. Participants included both Pacific and non Pacific facilitators. Five facilitators expressed that they were bilingual (speaking both English and their language of origin). All Pasifika facilitators expressed that they held strong values and affiliations to their specific ethnic culture, and had a good understanding of their

own culture. Non Pacific facilitators expressed that they had significant experience delivering the Incredible Years programme to Pasifika parents; they were also recommended for the research study by other Pasifika facilitators who acknowledged their experience.

The demographic characteristics of facilitator participants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

*Demographic characteristics of facilitator participants*

<b>Facilitator Participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
F1	40-44	F	Maori/Samoan	NZ	NGO
F2	55-59	F	Samoan	Pacific Islands	MoE/NGO
F3	55-59	F	Niuean	Pacific Islands	NGO
F4	35-39	F	Samoan	NZ	NGO
F5	55-59	M	Samoan	Pacific Islands	MoE
F6	35-39	F	Niuean	NZ	MoE
F7	55-59	F	Samoan	Pacific Islands	MoE
F8	40-44	F	Samoan	Pacific Islands	CAMHS
F9	45-49	M	NZ/Euro	NZ	CAMHS

CAMHS = Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

NGO = Non Government Organisation

MoE = Ministry of Education

## **Interview Schedule**

Two separate semi-structured interview schedules were used for each participant group. The semi structured format was designed to explore participants' perceptions and experiences within the parameters of parenting, culture, and the Incredible Years programme. The flexibility of the semi structured interviews allowed for the opportunity to thoroughly explore topics that were particularly significant for participants, as well as identify and explore any unanticipated areas of discussion (Patton, 2002). Therefore, in most cases the

interview schedule was not strictly followed and instead served more as a guideline in order to cover relevant areas that best answer the overall research question. The interviews with both participant groups were conducted in a conversational manner, with the perspective that all participants were the experts within the given context and about their experiences.

In order to foster an open space to allow varied discussion within the interviews, it was important to start the questioning process with open ended questions. This was also especially important in that it allowed participants to give their own account of their experiences – in their own words. The following excerpts are examples taken from the parent interview schedule and the facilitator interview schedule.

Parent Interview:

*How was your experience of the Incredible Years programme?*

*What parts did you find useful/not useful for you?*

Facilitator interview:

*In what ways do you think the Incredible Years programme is suitable/unsuitable for Pasifika families?*

*What have you observed to be some of the barriers that prevent Pasifika families from accessing and engaging in the programme?*

It was also necessary to include close ended questions that were likely to elicit a clear and straight forward answer. These types of questions often preceded the direction in which the following open ended questions would take. For example:

*Do you think Incredible Years programme has been a culturally appropriate/responsive programme?*

- *In what ways was it*
- *In what ways was it not?*

Full interview schedules are presented in Appendix A and Appendix B

## **Procedure**

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the University of Auckland Human Participants and Ethics Committee (Ref: 2010/155).

As described above, this study originally grew out of an interest by the Werry Centre (a workforce development, teaching, and research centre for child and adolescent mental health) to look at how the Incredible Years programme was meeting the needs of Pasifika parents and families in terms of access and engagement. To begin this process the researcher attended the Incredible Years basic training programme (organised through the Werry Centre) in order to gain an understanding of the Incredible Years programme.

From the initial meeting with Werry Centre management and the Incredible Years team an opportunity arose to attend an annual Incredible Years hui/meeting that focused on the progression of the programme within indigenous populations, namely Maori and Aboriginal peoples in Australia. This meeting facilitated the introduction to a group of Pasifika Incredible Years facilitators who were keen to promote engagement of the programme with Pasifika families within New Zealand. Through this networking process organisations and agencies that delivered the Incredible Years programme were identified; with a specific focus on organisations that served and worked alongside Pasifika families. It was considered that organisations based within the Auckland and Wellington-Porirua areas would be most appropriate to contact, that is, Ministry of Education, Pacific non government organisations, Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, and Family Start Manukau.

Information sheets about the research study were sent via email to both organisations and facilitators, inviting them to take part in the study and also to forward onto relevant networks. This process initiated the recruitment of facilitator participants for the study. Parent participants were then invited to partake in the study via facilitators.



### *Interview Setting*

Interviews were held at a neutrally agreed setting, either at the home of the participant or within a university or workplace setting. Generally, food was made available and offered to participants as a way of creating a relaxed setting and offering thanks to the participant for their time. As this began the process of interviewing it was common at this stage to say a prayer of thanks for the food and to formally open the forum by asking for God's grace and guidance during the process.

Following this a detailed introduction was usually made by the researcher and the same opportunity given to the participant. The researcher gave an account of her own cultural background as a New Zealand born Samoan and explained the significance of the study and her own personal interest in the research. Confidentiality was explained and consent discussed and given by the participant.

Interviews were 60 – 90 minutes long. In cases where a Samoan participant had difficulty articulating their experiences in English the interview was conducted in the Samoan language. For those participants who were not Samoan, it was established prior to the interview meeting whether they needed a translator. No participants expressed a need for a translator.

### *Consultation*

Throughout the course of the research study regular consultation was held with the Incredible Years Pasifika group. A presentation of the aims and proposed methods of the study was given to the team during the early stages of development, whereby they discussed and advised on culturally appropriate methods when conducting this research and on historical and present cultural issues pertaining to Pasifika parents. A similar meeting was also held with the Pasifika team at the Porirua mental health service.

The feedback and discussions held with these teams was invaluable throughout the process of this study. These consultation opportunities assisted in shaping the current research study from its development and recruitment stages through to the understanding of the data and findings.

## **Data analysis**

Data was analysed according to Braun and Clarke's six step guideline for thematic analysis.

Interviews were audio-taped and listened to in their entirety before being transcribed. Transcribing was completed in part by the researcher and by a Samoan psychology graduate student. A confidentiality form was explained and signed before giving out the recorded interviews to be transcribed.

Once transcriptions were completed they were read over several times in order for the researcher to be thoroughly familiar with the data. The data was organised into two separate data sets according to parent and facilitator participant groups. Initial summaries were generated at this stage so as to get a general idea of what the researcher considered to be salient and important themes within the data.

Beginning with the first transcript, initial codes were generated and recorded in the margins of a word processing document. Once this was completed a separate document was created with a list of the initial codes. The remaining transcripts were then worked through systematically to identify points that were consistent with the initial codes and also to generate new codes. These were systematically added to the original document and built on the existing codes. At this stage points of interest within the data were organised semantically and broadly categorised under the objectives of the research while at the same

time drawing out new, yet relevant and significant points that pertain to the overall research aim.

Once all initial codes were generated they were transferred into separate word documents. Specific coded extracts were entered into what was considered the relevant themes. Each document was read and compared with one another in order to refine the coding system. Those codes that appeared to contain similar contents were combined into potential themes. During this stage it was important to closely study the potentially different meanings of seemingly similar content so not to risk missing out on what could be important themes.

Identified themes were then organised into what is classified as main themes and sub themes. These were regularly reviewed in consultation between the researcher and research supervisor; necessary revisions were made to refine themes and sub themes. From a cultural perspective it was also deemed necessary to consult with a Pasifika supervisory figure regarding the cultural relevance and appropriateness of themes. This consultation process was made with an experienced Samoan clinical psychologist. Final themes were considered to have accurately reflected the data and addressed the important objectives of the research study.

## Chapter Three

### Results of the Thematic Analysis

This chapter details the results of the thematic analysis conducted with both Pasifika parent participants and facilitator participants – all of who identified as Pasifika with the exception of one facilitator who identified as New Zealand/European but had been working closely with the Pasifika community in the areas of parenting and mental health for over a decade. Throughout the analysis process it was decided that data for both parent and facilitator participants would be analysed together as there were more similarities identified in their experiences than there were differences. Comments made by each set of participants are identified by the following references (*P1=Parent participant 1*); (*F1=Facilitator 1*).

The main aim of this study was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current experiences and therefore needs of Pasifika parents in relation to accessing and accepting information and support provided by the Incredible Years programme. The current analysis identified six main themes. Each theme is expanded upon with subsequent subthemes. Due to the large amount of information pertaining to each theme and for easier reference, an outline and description of the themes are illustrated in Table 1. Following this, the results of the thematic analysis are described in detail.

Table 3.

*Outline of Themes and Subthemes*

Theme No.	Theme description
<b>Theme 1.</b>	<b>Principles and Concepts of the Incredible Years Programme are Universal and Therefore Relevant to Pasifika Parents</b> <b>Subtheme:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The emphasis on relationships within the Incredible Years programme resonates strongly with Pasifika parents</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2.</b>	<b>Principles and Concepts of Incredible Years Need to be Translated in Culturally Meaningful Ways</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Translation of building positive relationships by promoting positive interactions</li> <li>▪ Translation of praise</li> <li>▪ Understanding play</li> <li>▪ Explaining time-out</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3.</b>	<b>There are Specific Characteristics of Pasifika People that Need to be Recognised</b> <b>Subthemes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pasifika people share a set of common characteristics, qualities, and valued concepts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Christianity</li> <li>▪ Singing and storytelling</li> <li>▪ Humour and laughter</li> <li>▪ Talk/Talanoa</li> <li>▪ Extended family structure</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ There are also important differences within the Pasifika cultures that need to be considered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programmes need to understand and consider acculturation impacts amongst Pasifika</li> <li>▪ Ethnic and language specific programmes are a good thing</li> <li>▪ Pan-pacific programmes are a good thing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Theme 4.</b>	<b>Delivery: The Role of the Facilitator is Important</b> <b>Subthemes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Facilitator skills and qualities, and their effective interaction with parents are important for engagement</li> <li>▪ Pasifika people to facilitate Pasifika Incredible Years programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 5.</b>	<b>There are Content and Process Aspects of the Incredible Years Programme that can be More Flexible</b> <b>Subthemes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adapt resources and activities to relate better to Pasifika parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pasifika parents struggle with homework tasks involving written and reading material</li> <li>▪ The Buddy system is difficult</li> <li>▪ Vignettes do not directly relate to Pasifika parents</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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**Theme 6. There are Practical/Socio-economic Related Barriers and there are Psychological/Emotional barriers**  
**Subthemes:**

- Practical/socio-economic related barriers
    - Impact of work commitments and financial difficulties
    - Transport problems
    - Child-care difficulties
  - Psychological and emotional barriers
    - Stigma around parenting and programmes
    - Pride and shame
- 

**Principles and Concepts of the Incredible Years Programme are Universal and therefore Relevant to Pasifika Parents**

Most facilitator participants spoke of the Incredible Years principles as being universal in that they are principles that have always been embedded in Pasifika culture, and therefore not new to Pasifika culture. In this sense participants accepted the principles of the Incredible Years programme as culturally acceptable and relevant.

*For me as a Samoan, for every concept that the IYP brought up I can almost always find an equivalent Samoan proverb for it...which meant this is our way of life, we're just labelling, putting names to it, cutting it up into chunks, sessions, when really this is our life, this is who we are ... .... the content is nothing new to us when we really look at it. (F2)*

*When looking at IY principles you're also looking at cultural principles. (F8)*

*I mean I could fit IY into the fonofale (a Pasifika model of health and wellbeing) because those things you, you just have to look at those models and you can easily see where it fits. (F1)*

*There is a scripture in the Bible that says train your child when he is young in the*

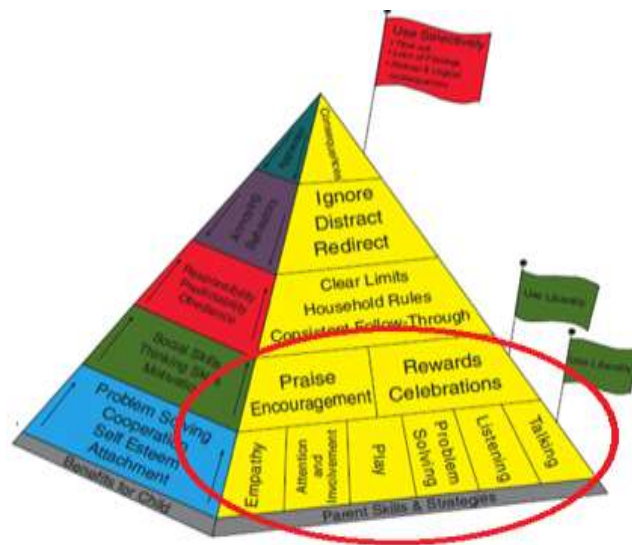
*way he should go, so when he grows up he won't depart from it. Incredible Years principles align with my Christian values, and shows us good ways of teaching.*  
(P12)

The principles of the Incredible Years programme include forming good relationships, strong parent-child attachments, and ideas based in Social Learning Theory that behaviours are learned and can be changed through the interactions that parents have with their children (Webster-Stratton, 2008). When talking about the principles of the Incredible Years programme, facilitator participants all referred to the concepts outlined near the base of the Incredible Years parenting pyramid (see Figure 1).

*In Incredible Years ....we spend more time on principles like praise, like play and quality time, communicating and how important all this is for relationships. (F4)*

*The Maori people talk about their turangawaewae. Do you understand that? Their foothold, you stand where you stand, where you belong because when this is firm, you know where you stand. It doesn't matter what comes at you, you are firm because you have a foothold. It is exactly the same with us Samoans or Pasifika. When you know yourself here at the base of the pyramid, it doesn't matter what barriers come to you, whatever difficulties come your way, you will know what to do because you are firm here (principles and concepts at the base of pyramid). (F2)*

Figure 1. Incredible Years Parenting Pyramid



Almost all facilitator participants discussed these (pyramid) principles in the context of building relationships with their children and other family members, and with the concept of respect being the underlying driving force.

*A lot of stuff in the programme that they (parents) already do...but it's sort of an in depth look at how we, and how our children should be valued more. (F4)*

*Those key pieces of play and praise and celebrating are all about relationships.....because this is where the respect is too...this is where we're teaching them (our kids) about respect and relationship. (F2)*

Many of the parent participants also conveyed this sense of understanding the principles of the Incredible Years programme as universal, as if they were being reminded of the basic fundamentals of family relationships.



*Respect, praise,... its universal. Everybody needs praising, everybody needs acknowledgement, everybody needs relationship. (P8)*

*Well I think, I think it is a way for us to start, not diverting our way of thinking.....but to enhance the things we know and love about each other, making stronger our relationships. That's what I think about the programme and how the (facilitators' name) have run it. (P3)*

*Like I still have a lot of my Island traits that I carry with me as opposed to my other (half-caste) siblings. So I think with IY it's about practicing those values I was taught as an Islander...we care for our family, we sacrifice for them..... we're giving people...and I mean, in the Island way we learn everything through respect...teaches you how to care about other people, about other people's feelings. And when we talk about concepts in IY, this is essentially the stuff we're talking about (P2)*

Since many of the participants felt that the principles discussed in the programme were concepts that they were familiar with, they referred to this as a process of 'getting back to the basics'.

*Yeah I mean it's the basics, parents know giving them the attention that they need and noticing the good stuff is gonna go a long way in your relationship with them. (F1)*

*Takes us back to basics, and in our culture the basics is the respect we hold for the "feagaiga" (covenant/relationship) we have with each other. (F7)*

*Now you and I both know Samoans basic of child raising, rearing is 'O le tama a le*

*tagata e fafaga i upu, a'o le tama a le manu e fafaga i fuga la'au', strictly translated*  
*'The young of people are fed with words while the young of the birds are fed with*  
*seeds'. (F2)*

*We've got to change ourselves, back to our earlier ways of thinking and how naturally*  
*we'd instilled certain things like showing love in its simple form - like spending time*  
*together, getting to know them better and valuing them (P5)*

**The emphasis on relationships within the Incredible Years programme resonates strongly with Pasifika parents.**

A significant aspect of the programme that appears to make it more acceptable and accessible to all participants was the emphasis placed on relationships. Pasifika peoples are known to be relational people and to operate comfortably within a collectivist system; this essential nature associated with Pasifika peoples is an aspect that is strongly promoted within the structure of Incredible Years.

*Because it's all to do with the relationship of one human being to another human*  
*being and how you honour that human being, bigger or smaller, old or young. To me*  
*that was the basis of our group programme. (P9)*

*I believe in the programme, believe in how children can be nurtured and how parents*  
*can be up skilled and have that skill, how to relate and build relationships.*  
*Attachment stuff. (F8)*

*It's (IY) very much about relationships, yeah. I suppose, well just coming from our*  
*experience of delivering, we often do talk a lot about relationships and we do quite a*

*lot of talking about historical relationships and their impact on how you might be parenting now. (F1)*

*The programme, it's to do with relations, parenting is relational...it has to be a relational thing.....And if that heart is there you will do everything to make your relationships with your children and family better. (P8)*

The benefits of focusing on the relationship principle were not limited to the parent-child relationship. Some participants reported a generalised improvement in their relationships with partners and spouses.

*It's been great for the children, but the best thing it helps with us, is our own (husband and wife) relationship more than anything else. (P7)*

*My husband didn't join, but he saw my relationship with our baby was different, so he became interested and he started spending more time with us too. Now me and my husband have a better relationship too, we argue less and talk more, and if we're not happy we talk away from the kids. (P4)*

*IY is not only for the children and parents. It's been great for partners too and their relationships. (F4)*

## **Principles and Concepts of Incredible Years Need to be Translated in Culturally Meaningful Ways**

All of the facilitators who were able to speak a Pacific language reported that they translated many of the concepts discussed in Incredible Years. They felt that this was necessary in order to convey the concepts accurately as well as meaningfully so as to make better connections with group participants. Although this process of translation was made easier for Pasifika facilitators who shared a common language with group participants, it was noted that even with parents who understood the English language there often needed to be a lengthier discussion in order to convey Incredible Years principles and concepts in a context that Pasifika parents better understood.

*As long as you're able to translate these concepts right...and meaningful to their worldview, or make sense of it as Samoans, then we're talking about the underlying principles. (F8)*

*You have to adapt the meaning to the context aye? So our parents are understanding, really understand what the programme is saying, what it's wanting to convey to the parents, and that's where we Pasifika people need to look at our language, how we explain things, to adapt the language we feel is more appropriate and culturally sensitive to our Pasifika parents. (F7)*

*But our (Samoan) language is comprehensive, so it's how you explain to our people. Because our language, it's deep....once you say it, it touches, but once you say it in English it's surface, and our people look at it from the surface, we need to spend the time to look at it deeper. That's how I think. (P1)*

Some concepts were identified as needing more time, explanation, and deeper discussions in order for parents to be better informed about the meaning and purposes of these. The most significant examples were identified to be the linguistic translations and the broader significance behind the concepts of building relationships, praise, play, and time out.

*Translation of building positive relationships by promoting positive interactions:* The first two parts of the Incredible Years programme looks at building positive parent-child relationships/bonds by promoting positive interactions. To illustrate this within the Incredible Years programme a visual metaphor of a piggy-bank is used in which coins correspond to principles such as caring, playing, talking, praising, loving, supporting, etc, and are deposited into the bank in order to increase one's investment of positive feelings, interactions, and relationship. A few facilitators felt this metaphor was not one that Pasifika parents would naturally relate to; furthermore it linked the valued growth of relationships with concepts that they did not intrinsically value (i.e. financial investments). Consequently they replaced this with a biblical metaphor relating to the growth of the mustard seed (Bible references Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:19).

*You have to have something that our people can relate to.....Metaphors, biblical quotes, proverbs about children, thinking about children - how the children are mentioned in the Bible, and think about the mustard seed rather than a piggy bank. Because that concept of having a piggybank, it doesn't really suit Pacific people? But if you look at the mustard seed you've got to water it, put it in the sun, give it love and watch it grow so you can kind of.... that mustard seed could be a child. Give a child love and nurture. (F8)*

*Our cultural advisor suggested that instead of talking about the emotional piggy-bank, because that might be an odd idea from the Pasifika point of view, that if you*

*use the metaphor of the mustard seed – little seed grows into a big tree and you need to water it every day. And so I guess biblical metaphors like that would be more accessible – so you can change the kind of metaphors you're using to convey the same message. (F9)*

*Translation of praise:* Many of the participants understood the linguistic translation of the word praise as worship. For many participants, the concept of praise was synonymous with the act of worshiping God; more importantly, praise and worship was reserved for God and not people. Most facilitators and parent participants agreed that a lot of time was spent discussing and debating this concept. However, most parents came to understand the term encouragement (and its equivalent translations in other Pasifika languages) as acceptable.

*"... from the group participants point of view the word praise for some people from a Samoan point of view - that's what you do to God. So you don't praise your kids you praise God. What I think was really interesting was how the group's process unfolded. The group process allowed a conversation about the cultural point of view and because the way that the programme's set up you have brainstorming about the pros and cons of praise. And then we put up, I think we might put up a Samoan proverb to start this discussion on and then various people would say well this doesn't really fit with my upbringing, kids never got praised and all that kind of stuff and there was a debate about whether it was a Samoan thing or not... And then (a participant) might have come up with some biblical quotes about that that encouraged the idea of praise. So there was the conversation and then we would do the brainstorming about pros and cons of praise. Then we'd get them to try but because they'd been able to articulate this doesn't come naturally from a Samoan point of view and then they figured out that actually encouragement, well that's okay to encourage your kids". (F9)*

*Praise was a difficult one because..... because traditionally the word praise is always associated with God right? And so we talk about and discuss that and it's very hard to come away from that mindset. It took some time. (F5)*

*I do not dwell so much on the word praise but try to use other words that are culturally appropriate a? I use encouraging and congratulate them for what they're doing a? Other words in Samoa are fa'amalo, ia manaia lau galuega..... So that's the thing that we need to teach them about... these things eh? Teach them the kind of words they can use, encouraging words. (F7)*

Some parent participants spoke about praise being more of an action rather than a verbal communication. And again, there needed to be discussions around this in order to validate both these forms of praise.

*...the Palagi's (European) perspective of delivering the programme and then bringing up the praise bit... But you know we never got praised and to hear that that this was in the programme and how important the praise is for the baby and the child? That's a new thing because we never, my father never said I love you and there was no praise, thank you, all that, but it was almost like you felt the love in your family that you didn't need it. Like the Pakeha (European) says you've got to praise them do this but because I'm Cook Island, in my family we didn't need the praise or "I love you", those sort of things because we felt it..... But you can still get your messages across because praise? Easy one, just say thank you, well done etc.... and that's what was good about the Incredible Years too because we practice on ourselves and we had to say something nice about another person that was there, so that it becomes repetition. (P13)*

*Because praise is not very normal in the Island, back in the Islands for us. But there's the action of our parents, there's different actions of our parents doing this.... you can feel it.....the way that we show love and praise and respect back in the Islands, the way we showed, it was mainly through actions .(P15)*

*Understanding play:* The concept of play as demonstrated in the Incredible Years programme is a one on one interaction in which the parent gives their undivided attention to the child, while following the child's lead. Many of the participants noted that particularly for traditional or Island born parents this form of play is quite different from their own experiences of play.

*There are certain things that Samoan parents from a traditional background would struggle with. They might struggle with the concept of playing with your kids because they haven't really grown up with that, they haven't really experienced it? (F9)*

*I remember when growing up and the kinds of things I went through myself being brought up by my grandparents; we used to fish and he'd let me do things myself so I can learn but I was always safe because he was there.... so you know, that was my "play", I enjoyed it, I was spending quality time with my grandpa. With our kids, it's like we have to have a different kind of play because it's a different kind of environment...same principle I guess. (P6)*

*(of quality time and play) When growing up in Samoa we have my family, my parents and my grandparents. We have different ways of showing, of doing these sort of things; like we would go and do things together and that's our play time, or even when*



*we go to the plantation - because we do things together and we laugh, we sing, and we do things....and it's our time. Not so much sitting down and play with the toys sort of thing because the toys we had in those days were just breadfruit and taro, the trees and the beach.....But the programme brought me back to this idea - in regards to applying what we already know, to here, to this different location. (P8)*

Many facilitators noted that parent participants were more accepting and open to the Incredible Years concept of play when it was discussed in the context of establishing strong relationships through spending quality time with their child/children.

*Hmm. Is the concept of play relevant to Samoan worldview or Pacific worldview? I'm not sure but what I'm sure of is that the underlying principle is about; in this case the model is play to establish relationships. I say that we don't have to use "play" but we use other similar... such as, it's about spending time....the principle is about establishing those relationships. (F5)*

*Explaining time-out.* A few of the facilitator participants identified time-out as one of the most difficult concepts for parents to accept, and difficult to translate into ideas common to Pasifika people. Similarly, a few of the parent participants found time out to be a foreign concept to them and one that they would not readily utilise.

*I think the only thing that's ever come up is time out or more like especially in Pacific cultures what's been the theme has been saying well we'll take time out for ourselves but it's not common to put a child somewhere and get them to sit there for a while it's better just to walk away. (F1)*

*You look in and take whatever is appropriate and you feel suits you, and leave alone what doesn't work. Time out/naughty corner...we never had one so that strategy was never used, never considered, never see the value of it.....When they don't listen the TV gets turned off and they're forced to go etc. (P7)*

*There are some things that sort of challenges me in regards to the way I think as a Samoan, especially the time out.....my way of thinking is there are different ways of disciplining, not to be control but to actually make the kid understand what they're doing is not acceptable. The time out should be for the parent if they feel they're too stressed or angry. (P8)*

However, most of the facilitators that discussed the difficulties around time out also noted that it was a concept discussed in terms of alternative strategies for continued undesired behaviour. The distinction was made to parents that time out was a strategy to use sparingly (top of the IY pyramid) as opposed to the core principles that are emphasised as the foundation of good relationships (bottom of pyramid).

*And probably the good thing about the Incredible Years' time out it's not about being punitive, it's not about shoving a child there and going now you've got to say sorry to me and all that sort of stuff. It's just about extending the arm of ignoring. (F1)*

*We give parents the idea that if you develop the foundation and build the foundation to strength, then there is very little need for you to go up to the pyramid where there's discipline and consequences of behaviour. (F2)*

### **There are Specific Characteristics of Pasifika Peoples that Need to be Recognised.**

This theme attempts to bring together the common characteristics shared amongst Pasifika peoples, whilst also recognising the diversity within Pasifika culture, and more importantly, the need to integrate and be mindful of these when delivering the Incredible Years programme to Pasifika parents. Subsequently, these similarities and recognition of differences are expanded in the following subthemes.

### **Pasifika peoples share a set of common characteristics, qualities, and valued concepts.**

Most parent and facilitator participants referred to themselves as either in their specific Pasifika ethnicity (Samoan, Tongan, etc) or as a Pasifika person. They also used phrases such as “you know us Pasifika people” or “you know our people” when talking about certain characteristics held in common. This was interpreted to mean that most participants perceived a sense of inclusiveness and sameness in relation to certain characteristics, qualities and concepts they have. The following characteristics, qualities and concepts were identified by many participants as common and considered somewhat unique to Pasifika people. Moreover, these were aspects that many participants perceived as important to them and therefore needed acknowledgement and integration into the programme.

*Christianity:* Most parent participants identified as Christians, or acknowledged having been raised and having an understanding of the Christian religion and faith. Many of the facilitator and parent participants asserted that Christianity was a strong part of their culture and therefore felt that a culturally responsive programme was one that effectively acknowledged and integrated this.

*I le faasamoa, e taua tele the faakerisiano. (In faasamoa, Christianity is very important). (P12)*

*Most Samoans, when you're really Samoan grounded; you are automatically a Christian because it becomes a part of you regardless of what Christianity beliefs that may be. It may have been introduced by missionaries, but it has become us...In terms of IY, our Pasifika families relate well to it, there's just a lot of unpacking to do. (F2)*

*Yeah I think for me the important thing I learn from the programme was that faith you have in yourself and that faith that you have in God that keeps you going....and we sharing about that faith. Yeah... and you know most of us Pasifika have this faith.....but I'm not sure about some other (non-Pasifika) mums there (in the group), but somehow I feel that they were very interested when we talked about our God and our faith. (P11)*

As discussed above, many of the parent participants related well to proverbs and examples taken from biblical stories or excerpts. Being able to relate concepts within the Incredible Years programme to Christian values that were familiar and revered by parents helped parent participants better understand and also accept these concepts.

*E tele a ona fa'aaoga quotes mai le bible...e aoga tele, you know, ua malamalama lelei ai matou matua i le feau lea e aumai from the Incredible Years. (Quotes from the Bible were used a lot, this was very useful, you know, we parents had a better understanding of the messages in the Incredible Years). (P16)*

Many parents and facilitator participants felt that it was right to start and end the programme in prayer. Many of the participants conveyed that this fostered a sense of respect, trust, and comfort within their groups.

*Opening up with an acknowledging, in prayer and also finishing in prayer..... at the same time, because most of the parents, all parents there were all Pacific Islanders, so.... and you know that our inner being as Pacific Islanders are interwoven with the gospel so you can't really separate us from that . It was a good thing, but not only that, it also brings the respect and the trust amongst us. (P8)*

*Things like saying a lotu (prayer) you know, to our Pacific people it is a must because if you don't, it feels like it's not,... yeah, like something's missing . (F3)*

*Singing and storytelling:* As with the importance placed on incorporating Christianity into the programme so as to establish connection and understanding with Pasifika parents, communication in the form of narratives such as singing and storytelling were deemed valuable for many participants. Many participants spoke about enjoying these aspects of their group sessions, alluding to the notion that these narrative approaches created a sense of ease, fun, and interest while making connections.

*What I liked about our programme is that we were able to take a lot of concepts, and take them back to our roots - we talked about scriptures, fa'agogo's (bedtime tales of myths and legends). It made things interesting, made me more interested in learning. And it reminded me of tales I could go back and tell my kids, because I had forgotten about those treasures before. (P13)*

*We enjoy the folklores, the songs, the singing, the bible.....our treasures are passed down to us through songs and dance, and poetry. (F2)*

*Humour and laughter:* Most participants reported that they enjoyed groups that had a lot of humour and laughter. Several parent participants mentioned that it was important for a facilitator to have a sense of humour and for them to understand the unique sense of humour of Pasifika people. Most facilitators recognised this also. In an attempt to summarise the characteristics of this ‘unique’ sense of humour possessed by many Pasifika people – based on participant data information, observations during the process of talanoa (conversation) in interviews with participants, and my own experiences of being Pasifika – it seems to be light, easy going, having an ability to laugh at oneself, or make light of minor blunders, and a sense of light wit that does not have the result of offence.

*This group... being predominantly Pasifika, a lot of them being Samoans and everything, was so real and open and we'd just crack jokes and that, whereas in mainstream, the people you know they're not completely opening or sharing something, there's only just so much. (P5)*

*And plus, (facilitators names) understand a lot.....and they bring their experiences too, with ours. Yeah and we talk about potentials, something we haven't seen for us but it might happen for our kids, and then refer back to the old times back home...and we all laugh that we missed out on that. (P1)*

*The role plays were really good, I liked them....sometimes we'd be serious and trying to do it right, sometimes we'd just laugh at ourselves and our mistakes.(P2)*

*Laughter is really important...they laugh so much....but the alofa (love) and the va fealoa'i (respect for the relationship) is there. Participants laugh because they remember the things that happen back home, or when they were little, and sharing*

*that is made fun. But they're learning at the same time. (F8)*

*Talk/talanoa:* The notion that Pasifika people take time to process and love to talk came across strongly during interviews. Many facilitator participants pointed out the need to let the talanoa process happen without interruption. Many of the parent participants appreciated the time and space given to have discussions, and in those cases that lacked this, they advocated it for future programmes.

*There's a balance because, you know, Pacific people love to talk and so, you know, when something comes up, when we're talking about families or what's happening...we can just go on and on and on. (F3)*

*But you don't keep it brief (homework review) with Pacific parents because they've got to tell you the history, the context behind the play first, and so what we do is we let them talk a bit about the context, the history, and then at the appropriate time say so what part of that fits with your goal of what you were going to do. (F1)*

*Really good....after a few times coming together we start talking openly and share experiences, and then.....Pacific Island people, we're always talking, it's always a lot of discussion before anything happens. It's part of our process. (P9)*

*Extended family structure:* Many of the participants felt strongly that a Pasifika family unit was more than a set of parents and the child/children, but included the wider family, significant family members who have a strong presence and role in a child's life.

While the principles that govern the Incredible Years were beneficial for parents, many participants felt that this needed to be expanded to include their perspective on what

parenting and family structure looked like.

Some parent participants made this point clear by highlighting the essential nature of Pasifika people to be relational and communal.

*Pacific Island people are more communal, that's their way of living. They're more communal, more family oriented, so the whole capturing of the upbringing of the child is not just two people, two parents - husband and wife, there has to be that collective of a family and that has to be taken into consideration as well.....And Pacific Island people, well, my own experiences of us Samoans - we always have that kind of wider relationship rather than just an immediate family and the more the child is connected to that broader family the more enriching his or her life would be. (P9)*

*This is a programme for every adult, because it's not only the mother beside the child...it's the father, the grandparents, older siblings...they need to come to this programme for the sake of the younger kids. (P10)*

Some facilitators specifically mentioned the important role of grandparents in the children's lives; also the ever increasing role they have taken on as caretakers while parents work.

*Recommend to parents...and grandparents too because...many times grandparents are looking after the grandchildren while the parents are working eh. (F7)*

*It's been really good to have grandparents in the programme, which we've had a few....you find there's something special about them, really respectful and they're very knowledgeable... they have a big part in the children's lives. (F8)*



**There are also important differences within the Pasifika cultures that need to be considered.**

As illustrated by the above themes, many participants identified the similarities shared by the various Pasifika cultures. However, several participants also noted that there are some important differences that should be recognised and acknowledged in delivering the Incredible Years programme.

*Programmes need to understand and consider acculturation impacts amongst Pasifika:* This subtheme highlights the different positions in which parents stand in terms of an acculturation process, and how this has affected their perspective on culture and parenting. It encapsulates the observations facilitator participants made in relation to intergenerational differences among Pasifika parents.

The process of acculturation recognises that the experiences and perspectives of parents change over time and across generations. Several facilitators note that New Zealand born parents are more likely to separate from their culture, or are struggling to integrate the values and traditions of their native culture into the western one in which they live.

*Some of our New Zealand born parents seem somehow disconnected with their culture...you see the ones that are either totally disconnected and almost resent their parents and culture, or you get the ones that are trying to balance the two different worlds they're a part of here...you know the western culture and the Pacific culture.*  
(F4)

*NZ born parents seem to struggle with their parents' perception of how they should behave and their own perceptions of how they should behave.....and so in some ways they're even struggling with their own culture. (F1)*

The older generation of Pasifika parents appear to have a stronger resistance to assimilating the ideas of a programme that is seemingly foreign; thus several facilitator participants have found that these parents are more set in their ways and appear to need more time and orientation in order to marry 'foreign' concepts to their value and belief set (see earlier theme on characteristics of Pasifika parents). Island born parents who have migrated more recently appear to be at a more vulnerable stage of integration.

*The older parents born in the Islands, they are more set in their thinking and we have to do a lot of talking to get them to open up their thinking....Then you have the first or second generation New Zealand born parents, they either don't want to be in the programme at all to start off with, or they are the ones that are asking questions and challenging first. Then you have the younger parents from the Islands, they're a bit more open to learning but everything is so new and different for them. It's an interesting dynamic if you get them altogether. (F8)*

*You definitely know there's a clear gap you see in the first couple of weeks, you know between the older generation and the younger parents.....The older generation and some Island born parents are very set in their ways...in how they were brought up...listening, obeying, and respecting were a given, so they expect the same of their children. New Zealand born parents are more open to discussions about alternatives; they ask questions more boldly in groups. (F7)*

In highlighting these differences, some of the facilitator participants attempted to convey the challenges they are tasked with in facilitating the Incredible Years programme to Pasifika parents. However, their comments have also made a point of noting that these differences

create an opportunity to foster a supportive community and a collaborative understanding between Pasifika parents who are at various stages of their lives.

*.....and so what I find really valuable about young ones coming with much older grandparents or parents is that they soon hear a different message about their culture. And that's something that I notice when we have young and old, that it's really good...especially among Pacific, it's really important because we've got, yeah, just having much older women and young ones – they seem to end up supporting each other. (F1)*

*To me, people are more important than the programme and we need to meet the different needs that all generations of parents come with. To do that, we have to take the time to have those conversations that help us understand each other, value each other, so we can support each other. When I see it...oh, it's a beautiful thing. (F7)*

*Ethnic and language specific programmes are a good thing:* The main difference identified by many of the participants was language. The significance posed around the language difference centred on the idea that when one's native or predominant language is used there is a deeper sense of understanding. The language barrier is most evident amongst the older generation of Pasifika parents and those parents who have recently migrated from the Islands.

*It'll be more useful to us as parents to do different ethnic groups on their own...do Samoans, do Tongans, do separately because the discussions will be very much on the same level of understanding. (P8)*

*The benefit of delivering to a Samoan group only was.....we were all at the same level.*

*We understood where we were coming from in background, language, and the culture. (F2)*

*Pan-pacific programmes are a good thing:* Apart from the language differences, most participants felt that having a group of mixed Pasifika ethnicities had many benefits. The basis of this was about having the opportunity to share the similarities and differences in cultures and how this has impacted on parenting in New Zealand. There appears to be a sense of value in sharing parenting experiences and then collectively sharing resolutions.

*The benefit however, I think, of also doing mixed groups is that the learning is greater.....we come in with assumptions you know? And when you're in a group with a mixed group of Pasifika people, actually, there's an opportunity to break down some of those preconceived ideas about Palagis (Europeans) are better, they're better at parenting. You know so there's.....a lot of ways that can be affirming for all our Pacific parents. (F6)*

*I think there's a good benefit in that (mixed Pasifika groups) too; you learn from other cultures as well while you're doing the programme the same time.....because in the programme we have the Samoan, Tokelauan, Maori's, and they all bring their background, their way of doing things and you mix them up and you hear, oh they're very similar the way they do things...the cultural things. There's a little bit of difference but they're all similar. I think that's a good thing about it, provided you speak English well so that you can understand. (P3)*

In concluding this overall theme it appears that Pasifika parents have more in common than they do differences. Moreover, these differences can be seen as opportunities

and further reason to bring Pasifika parents together in an environment that cultivates a shared and supportive understanding of parenting and culture.

### **Delivery: The Role of the Facilitator is Important**

Much of this theme focuses on delivery of the programme in terms of relating and forming successful relationships between the key messages of the Incredible Years and the understanding and acceptance of these messages. In this respect, the role of the messengers or facilitators becomes central to making the Incredible Years programme both accessible and acceptable to Pasifika parents.

The following subthemes refine this overall concept of delivery into the general skills and qualities desired in programme facilitators, and noting that the success of delivery does not end here, but carries on to convey a sense of genuineness that comes from a place of *'ofa* (love and compassion).

### **Facilitator skills and qualities, and their effective interaction with parents are important for engagement.**

Most parent participants spoke about the abilities of a facilitator to engage them and to understand them, as an essential part of why they thought the programme was successful for them. The following skills and qualities that were strongly identified by parent participants and supported by facilitator participants were those of being non-judgemental, unassuming, non-directive, respectful and genuine. Further, the ability to work collaboratively while acknowledging and validating parents experiences, delivering Incredible Years in a non-prescriptive manner, having a sound knowledge of the Incredible Years principles and effectively integrating cultural significance into the programme. In

summary it seems facilitators require specific skill sets and qualities that effectively balance knowledge and empathic engagement.

More importantly, how these are conveyed and reciprocated between facilitator and parents determines the effectiveness of engagement. The following extracts illustrate these points in more detail.

Some participants noted that a common reaction to parenting programmes was to question what they were doing wrong as parents, invoking feelings of being judged and threatened.

*Most parents are apprehensive about starting a programme like this, or sometimes defensive....so it's very important that you deliver the message that it's not about judging. I make sure the parents and others believe this. (F5)*

It was therefore understandable that in terms of qualities several parent participants valued those facilitators that were non-judgmental and unassuming in their delivery.

*I find their techniques very special, (facilitator's name) used space very effectively, he talked very slowly, he looks puzzled sometimes, he doesn't portray that he knows all, he's very clever and he doesn't refuse or careful not to point out wrong or right....it's very nice the way he did it. (P6)*

*The effective thing for me is, you don't feel threatened, and you don't feel like you're being told that's just how you do it. (P10)*

Many participants also valued a facilitator's ability to be respectful and genuine.

Furthermore, the way in which these qualities were shared seemed to reciprocate a sense of openness and trust within and amongst parent participants. Parents seemed to value a sense

of “real presence”, and although there was a lot of discussion generated by both facilitators and participants around religion and the strong sense of spirituality in groups with Pasifika parents, this also extended to mean the genuine care and consideration facilitators and members had for each other.

*If saying a prayer is important, then we need to feel it too...not just think you read from the book, you there's a spirit within the running of the programme. (F3)*

*There's a way of talking to families, you know, you show your respect for being there and appreciate the family. (F7)*

*For me personally, I think it would be because of, first of all the person or the people who have the heart and the goal to deliver...to share what they believe.....You feel they (facilitators) care about you and how you do. That means a lot. (P11)*

*The facilitators sort of made things simpler to understand, so they were not really pushing the programme.....but were honest and real about our experiences...and you feel that you can open up and trust them. (P5)*

Many participants explained in some way or another that they valued a collaborative and validating approach that was natural and non-prescriptive in its process.

*So even though the programme is like a script, we need to be flexible with it to help our parents understand. (F7)*

*It was a good balance, because once it becomes a lecture then who wants to listen? (P10)*

*They just let the programme roll...we were guided by the process rather than by them which is quite nice.....it was just more like river flow scenario, you just ride it and learn along the way. (P7)*

*It was non lecture so it was never a direct talk from them, more like, if somebody brought up an issue we put it up and share, share, share. We do lots of different activities together – we did role plays, and then you come back and share some more. Our facilitator guided this process well. (P6)*

As mentioned in earlier themes, acknowledging and integrating cultural values and concepts into a programme was considered highly important for all parent participants. Extending on this, several participants pointed out the importance of having knowledge of both one's culture and of the programme principles, and then the skill to integrate and effectively deliver this as a harmonious whole. Although mentioned by many parent participants, one participant summed this idea up most succinctly.

*I think with a good facilitator - a facilitator with respect and a knowledge of the group and the programme is the best way of getting through to our people. If you have knowledge of the programme and the way we were brought up, our values and what's important to us..... the way you have some people in the Samoan way – we are told not to stand up and talk, it's very disrespect to talk in front of people standing up or eating standing up – that sort of thing; if you have all those knowledge of our culture like respecting, and knowledge of the programme, it's good. (P3)*



*Pasifika people to facilitate Pasifika Incredible Years programmes.* It appears that Pasifika parents are more likely to engage and continue with a programme when they have a common and genuine connection with facilitators. This connection is more likely to occur with Pasifika facilitators who have an understanding of what it means to be Pasifika. All parent participants expressed that they preferred a Pasifika facilitator based on these reasons.

Some parent participants felt uneasy in mainstream programmes run by non-Pasifika facilitators, noting that there is a lack of understanding that is difficult to explain and define.

*Weak programme if it's run by non- Pacific, mainstream services.....it's being run by people who have little understanding of where we come from. (P14)*

*In mainstream, the people you know they're not completely opening and sharing, there's only just so much. You just get that feeling, they've got a different culture, a different way of seeing life I guess. That's what I liked about (facilitators' names), they got us. (P5)*

Several parent participants pointed out that it is not necessary for a Pasifika facilitator to speak their native language, only to understand their Pasifika connection and be able to relate to the people. This ability to relate encourages Pasifika parents to be more open and less intimidated by their perception of the western world.

*Even if you don't know your language, you have some understanding of who you are as a Pacific person – that's a connection. (P13)*

*She only spoke English but she had a Samoan connection. Otherwise if it was a Palagi, we won't be able to understand fully; I won't be able to communicate comfortably. I'll just sit there and take the Palagi versions of it, and if I try to*

*communicate my Samoan culture to connect to the programme itself, I might find it too hard to express myself or pass on the message of how I mean it. (P1)*

**There are Content and Process Aspects of the Incredible Years that could be more Flexible.**

There are several core aspects of the Incredible Years programme that need to be adhered to in order to maintain fidelity. This theme identifies the main difficulties participants experienced with various content and process aspects of the programme that were less flexible and perhaps need to be.

There was a general consensus among facilitator participants that the Incredible Years is a flexible model. In talking about this flexibility facilitators have primarily meant that they were able to adapt and convey the principles and concepts of Incredible Years in ways that were more culturally acceptable and accessible. This is illustrated in the comments below.

*IY...it's a very flexible model, I guess in terms of the way we present the model. When I'm talking about the flexibilities.....it's that we can apply, provide and apply all those things that we need, that are meaningful to us into IY, such as, in our group we start off with a lotu (prayer) and finish off with a lotu. The other thing is that every concept that we discuss we sort of ask okay what's that like in the reality of Samoa or other Pacific Island. (F5)*

*But actually there are core things in it like the video material, doing role plays, home activities and then there are nuances to the way that you run the programme which could be quite flexible. (F9)*

In terms of content and materials the Incredible Years programme provides a comprehensive

structure and outline that is then delivered. The following subthemes look at the specific struggles or desired adaptations that participants have identified in relation to programme content and material.

### **Adapt resources and activities to relate better to Pasifika parents**

Many participants felt that the resources and activities within the Incredible Years programme package could be changed or adapted in order to reflect their Pasifika culture. Given the historical tendency of Pasifika people to relate better in narratives, some of the metaphors and visual resources used in the programme can seem odd or difficult to relate to. Most participants expressed a desire to have more culturally specific resources. Some also felt that the resources and materials should be translated into specific languages.

*I think we need pictures and activities that relate more to Pacific parents, for example, there's the piggy bank concept of building your account up with respectful statements, for some of the Maori groups they use the picture of a kite (flax basket) with the proverb "with your basket and my basket the people will thrive" and that's really useful because I think it relates better to our parents. (F4)*

*It would be great if we could translate a lot of the resources in IY, cause when it's done in our own language there's so much more meaning to it. (P7)*

*We (our group) got creative with toys, and we used things that would've been used in the islands, e.g., seashells, stones. I thought about using sand with my boy.....but we also used things that our kids of today are familiar with. The older parents enjoyed the island stuff, and I did too cos it reminded me of my time in the islands. (P2)*

## **Pasifika parents struggle with homework tasks involving written and reading material**

Many of the facilitator participants observed that Pasifika parents within their groups struggled with the homework tasks. They found that parents were actually completing the practice tasks but had difficulties with reading and articulating their thoughts onto paper. Most facilitators noted that much of the homework tasks were best reviewed verbally and discussed in depth during group discussion.

*I had one mum, she couldn't read very well, so I said don't worry about homework let's talk about what you're going to do and you'll put it down for your goal. So we do things like that, talking about what was the sum up instead of getting her to read the stuff because she said to me "I can't read this, it's just too hard for me to read" ..... so we just changed that a little bit. And she was the one who ended up probably taking the most out of it. (F1)*

*Every time we finish the programme there's a set of homework we have to do and then when you get back with your homework you need to feedback. Lots of our people do not write down their homework and their goals and things. They're more good at sharing you know? So we need to capture that instead of telling them to write down the homework.....they're good at feeding back verbally.....our parents really like to talk about their experiences especially when they do their homework. (F7)*

## **The Buddy System is difficult**

During the programme each parent is paired with another. These buddy pairings are set up for parents to provide each other support outside of the programme by making contact each week. Most facilitators commented that parents did not want the buddy system and in most cases did not engage in it. Reasons cited included not feeling comfortable enough to

share or feeling shy about imposing one's burdens on another; this was especially the case when Pasifika parents were in a mixed ethnic group with non-Pasifika parents.

*Our pacific parents will only contact another parent when they feel comfortable with them...that kind of relationship takes time. (F4)*

*I'd still only known them a few weeks you know, I didn't want to share to a stranger...it was only after the group that I kept in contact. (P2)*

*I'm too shy.....I'm ok to share with other Pasifika people, they know what I'm talking about...but I just won't call.... (P4)*

Even when group dynamics appear to have reached a point of safety in terms of sharing, most parents would prefer to share with family members or wait until group discussions to share.

*Parents don't want the buddy system but they always bring their experiences back to sessions. (F8)*

*When I need to talk to someone, I prefer to talk to my family. I loved our group but at the end of the day, it's my family that are always going to be there for me. (P14)*

### **Vignettes do not directly relate to Pasifika families**

Vignettes are a core part of the Incredible Years programme and convey various scenarios of parent-child interactions that group participants then discuss. While no objections were made about the usefulness of the experiential learning that is promoted by the vignettes, many participants felt that Pasifika parents would relate better to vignettes that better depicted their experiences and culture.

*You pick up when it doesn't, or they don't understand, or it's so unrealistic to what's*

*happening in our homes. (F6)*

*It would just be nice to see something that's more relevant to us you know, I mean yeah we all have those same problems or interactions with our children but our context it different you know....all of that seems to, I think, would make a little difference. (P7)*

*Well not just the translation but the actors also Samoan as well makes you connect.....Samoan people have their own tone of voice and have their way of presenting and communicating. We're not Europeans, we have our way of saying to our children. (P9)*

Vignettes would be especially difficult to understand for those Pasifika parents who struggle with the English language.

*For our older parents or the ones that have just come from the Island, the language is always a big problem, not just the DVD's but the whole programme. (F5)*

*My only objection is the language, because it's American and you have to listen hard to understand what people are saying. (P3)*

**There are Practical/Socio Economic related Barriers and there are  
Psychological/Emotional Barriers**

One of the limitations of the current study was the lack of exploration around the perspectives of Pasifika parents who chose not to attend or dropped out of an Incredible Years programme. However, the parent participants in this study commented on their initial reservations about the programme. They also commented on reasons why they believed their fellow Pasifika parents did not or would not engage. Facilitators also commented based on their observations and experiences.

In analysing the various barriers it became evident that there were two distinct types: Practical barriers that were related to socio-economic difficulties and psychological and/or emotional barriers that prevented parents from seeking out or accepting the programme. These two groups of barriers are often interwoven and perpetuate further disengagement.

**Practical/socio-economic related barriers**

Various factors of socio-economic deprivation contributed to difficulties in accessing the Incredible Years programme. Participants commented on the main struggles being work commitments and financial struggles that have a significant impact on accessing time, transport, childcare and general support networks.

*Impact of work commitments and financial difficulties:* Parent participants often prioritised work, not by choice but as an important means of provision and survival for their families. This is a difficult priority to shift as parents' perceived hierarchy of needs are naturally to survive and get by. Striking a balance between family time and provision for family was noted by many parents to be a significant challenge.

*Those social issues, poverty is a big one, a messy one – for example, because of poverty mum has to go to work so the relationship of mother and child as we've always known it (as Pacific Islanders) it is not there, so you don't have that quality time anymore. (F5)*

*Parents are told to go out and work so now parents are spending more time working than looking after or having that time with their kids. Now I stop work and take my kids to school and pick them up....spend time with them. It's a big change with my kids but it's a bigger financial challenge. (P15)*

Work and other commitments often make it difficult for parents to attend programmes, and therefore there needs to be care taken in the times that programmes are scheduled.

*We need to be more flexible with our times because most of our parents work i taimi e fai ai courses (during times our programmes are run). (F7)*

*Transport problems:* Most facilitators identified transport as a common problem with parents accessing the programme. Many commented that providing transport for families had been helpful.

*Common issues are transport .....there are always problems with transport. (F8)*

*Sometimes if we can provide transport that makes a big difference because of petrol costs and things. (F9)*



*Child-care difficulties:* Similarly, issues with child care were a common barrier.

Many of the parent participants found it difficult to find child care.

*Finding someone to look after them is really hard, otherwise I would have to take them to the programme which means it's just gonna be too late for them and they'd be unsettled and I wouldn't be able to concentrate. (P11)*

*O leisi faalavelave o le leai o seisi e vaiaia tamaiti. Manaia pe'a iai tagata e babysitter, ae faamumulu mai matua e fai le course. (The other problem is no childcare. It would be good to have babysitters so this could free up parents to do the course). (P15)*

This is especially hard when Pasifika parents have little family support around them.

*It's hard when we don't have family around...we have six kids, both our parents have passed away, no brothers and sisters nearby. (P14)*

### **Psychological and emotional barriers**

The main barriers identified by participants related to a stigma surrounding parenting and parenting programmes, as well as negative emotions around pride and shame.

*Stigma around parenting programmes:* Participants identified that there is a strong perception that parents should naturally be good at parenting.

*I think Pacific parents are under the belief that they should be good parents; that it comes naturally so they don't need it. (P6)*

Many participants noted that suggestions to attend a parenting programme were often met with defensive responses.

*No, but that's the way I felt when I was told that here's a parenting course you can attend. All I could think was that, are you trying to tell me that I'm a bad parent....what am I doing wrong? (P2)*

*I think there's the whole thing about parenting programmes being stigmatised; there's something wrong with me, there's something wrong with my kids. So I think in our Pacific communities I think there's still a lot of that. (F6)*

All participants made positive comments about the programme once they attended, and none identified ongoing feelings of being judged or stigmatised. However, several parents commented that the language around how a parenting programme is marketed should be changed to help elicit a less defensive response.

*I think if they want parents in, it's in the way they've gotta explain it. I think it's just the initial selling of the course. It's hard to initially sell the course because it's a parenting course; nobody wants to do a parenting course because they think they'll be told what to do, what they're doing wrong. (P2)*

*Give parenting programme a new language...extend on the name Incredible Years, not as a parenting programme but a chance to talk about getting the most out for children and family. (P10)*

*Pride and shame:* Many parents identified pride as an emotional barrier, commenting that they didn't want to be told what to do, that there was a better way, or feel embarrassed about how they were parenting. These were the initial perceptions they held of the Incredible Years programme.

*I think its pride; I think it has a lot to do with pride. Because we've been brought up by our parents and their parents, and you know generations have been brought up this way so who wants somebody else to come along and say you're doing it wrong.*  
(P11)

*We're a proud people, something to do with pride, something to do with belief in ourselves rather than someone coming and tell you this is how you do it. (P1)*

Similarly, shame was a strong emotional barrier that made it difficult for parent participants to accept the programme initially. Many parents felt that this was further preventing other Pasifika parents from engaging.

*You don't want to be looked down on because you had to do a parenting course, to fix whatever you were doing wrong.....It's embarrassing. I don't feel embarrassed that I've done it but like people will think like that. (P5)*

This shame was strongly linked to a lack of confidence to put oneself out there in group settings.

*I was stuck in my comfort zone; I didn't have the confidence to get out there. I was shamed I might say the wrong thing, or I didn't know as much as the others...that sort of thing. (P14)*

*Even though we've made a big change to move over here but we don't have the confidence to move on and grab the opportunities ....E fetagofi a tatou tu'u tatou i lalo (we put ourselves down), because that's what happened to me a lot within myself.*  
(P1)

The barriers that impede on successful recruitment of Pasifika parents appear to be strongly related to low socio-economic factors and the psychological burden that is experienced in conjunction with these. Although not identified explicitly by them, parent participants spoke of these barriers as experiences and challenges they face as part of a migrating and acculturating process.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Discussion**

#### **Overview**

To date there has been limited research specifically pertaining to Pasifika peoples in general. More specifically, there is a dearth of research that endeavours to explore the experiences of Pasifika people in the various arenas in which they are distinctly over-represented according to national health and wellbeing statistics. There is undoubtedly a clear link between parenting and the successful development and wellbeing of individuals in later life stages. Parenting therefore is considered an essential area of research exploration for Pasifika.

The primary aim of this study set out to explore the experiences of Pasifika parents and facilitators within the Incredible Years Basic Parenting Programme. Further, this study sought to examine aspects of the Incredible Years programme that either supported or hindered the accessibility and acceptability of the programme for Pasifika parents, especially in relation to cultural responsiveness. This chapter summarises the study findings in relation to previous research. Implications of the findings will be discussed as well as limitations, and will conclude with directions for future research.

#### **Connecting the Incredible Years Programme with Pasifika Parents**

The current findings show that the content information within the Incredible Years programme is perceived as relevant and valued by Pasifika parents. The principles of the Incredible Years programme as understood by both facilitators and parents were deemed universal and resonated strongly with Pasifika parents. This is especially true of the emphasis that is placed on relationships. The value that is placed on the concept of

relationships for Pasifika people has been highlighted in earlier studies that have not only confirmed the essential nature of Pasifika people to be relational but to hold sacred the various relationships within this structure (Tamasese et al., 2005; Tamasese et al., 2010). It has become evident from these findings then that facilitators of the Incredible Years programme for Pasifika parents should look at how best to connect its principles with the way in which relationships are understood and operationalised within Pasifika culture.

Further to this, the interviews revealed that in order for Pasifika parents to readily accept the information offered by the Incredible Years programme, facilitators needs to first align with programme participants' inherent belief systems and value base. These encapsulate the concepts collectively described earlier by Agnew et al. (2004), Lui (2003) and Tamasese et al. (2005) as *tapu* (sacred bonds/relationships), *'ofa* (love and compassion), *tautua* (reciprocal service), *faaaloalo* (respect and deference), and *aiga* (family). The argument that core cultural values play a central role in parenting and thus need to be incorporated in parenting programmes has been supported in previous studies with Latino parents (Barker et al., 2010; Calzada., 2010). The Incredible Years programme content aligns itself effectively by emphasising the value of relationships; however, to enhance this further it needs to integrate the above valued concepts into its theoretical teachings and behavioural strategies. At the least, in the delivery of the Incredible Years programme care should be taken to not contradict these belief and value systems, but compliment and add to its significance. For example, while discussing a problem of a pre-schooler being able to separate from a parent to attend preschool, a rationale may be given that children should develop a sense of independence and autonomy. Such a rationale may appear appropriate in a western context, but may be received by Pasifika parents as in conflict with their cultural beliefs. While the benefits of such a goal are obvious, if not explained meaningfully and

within the context of Pasifika values and beliefs, it risks further misunderstanding and disconnection.

This leads to the important discussion of translating the principles and concepts of Incredible Years in culturally meaningful ways. In their review of cultural competence of parenting programmes used by Latino families, Vesely, Ewaida and Anderson (2014) found that programmes needed to do more than translate materials, they needed to incorporate Latino values in order to establish a greater connection between Latino families and services/programmes. This is supported by the findings of the current study. The translation of principles and concepts is very much connected with the need to understand and acknowledge core values held by Pasifika peoples. Effectively conveying the messages of Incredible Years is not limited to accurate linguistic translations but involves a necessary connection to the cultural values and lived experiences of Pasifika parents and parenting. For example, participants identified the difficulties in accepting concepts like praise, play, and time-out. Findings suggested that many of these concepts need to be unpacked and discussed in the context of Pasifika parents' experiences and attitudinal beliefs around these. Recognising and validating Pasifika parents' long-held beliefs and attitudes around parenting and relationships will essentially aid programme developers and facilitators to understand them better and overcome potential barriers to parenting concepts. Having an empathic understanding of Pasifika peoples' attitudes and beliefs around parenting and their practices will increase and support engagement as well as motivation to change those practices that maybe maladaptive to building strong secure relationships with their children. Similar conclusions were reached in a review of research about parenting programmes and Latino families in America, by Zayas (2010).

In this study several core characteristics and concepts were identified by Pasifika parents and facilitators that may go some way to assist in understanding the beliefs, values,

attitudes, and behaviours that are more often than not, common amongst Pasifika people. These were a spiritual sense that came from the *Christian faith, the importance of the extended family structure*, the narrative approaches of *singing, storytelling, talk/talanoa*, and the importance of *humour and laughter*. Participants in this study felt that these components were significant and valuable, and therefore needed to be meaningfully incorporated into Incredible Years programmes for Pasifika parents. The importance of spirituality and the Christian faith for Pasifika people has been well documented in previous research regarding Pasifika; so too has the value placed on immediate and extended family structures (Lui, 2003; Tamasese et al., 2005; Tamasese et al., 2010). Pasifika culture is also an oral culture, one that has been practiced and passed on over time through various forms of narratives. It is conceivable then that communication and learning is most comfortably achieved when including singing, storytelling, humour and laughter, and allowing space for a talanoa process.

### **Ethnic-specific and pan-Pacific programmes**

Research has shown that acculturation processes have a significant influence on culture and parenting practices, and that these practices evolve over time and across generations (Barker et al., 2010; Calzada, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993). In terms of the Incredible Years programme, it was identified that the older generation of Pasifika parents tend to initially show more resistance and less acceptance, and thus required more time and orientation to the concepts of the programme. Recently migrated parents share similar challenges to the older generation, however, seem more open to new learning when these are facilitated within a specifically Pacific forum. New Zealand born Pasifika parents are even more likely to readily accept the new concepts from the Incredible Years programme. These findings highlight the varying needs even within Pasifika culture. It was identified that ethnic



specific programmes (groups with one specific Pasifika culture) were especially beneficial for older and migrant parents who struggle with cultural integration and language barriers, as well as participants having a shared understanding of their particular culture; while pan-Pacific programmes (groups with mixed Pasifika ethnicities) were valued as it presented opportunities to learn from and share with other Pasifika cultures while still maintaining a collective understanding and sense of ease that emanates from sharing common experiences and cultural aspects. This suggests that both ethnic-specific and pan-pacific programmes for Pasifika parents are both valuable and beneficial. The preferred group make-up of an easily acceptable and accessible Incredible Years programme was one with predominantly Pasifika participants and not a mainstream programme (a programme that is strongly influenced by a western worldview of understanding and practicing and catering to predominantly New Zealand/European parents).

### **The role of the facilitator**

Previous research has recognised the important role of a facilitator in the delivery of parenting programmes (Scott, Carby, & Rendu, 2008; Webster-Stratton, 2009; Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2010). Most have illustrated the importance of facilitator skills and knowledge; however, in line with many of the recommendations made by Webster-Stratton, this exploration highlights the value participants placed on clinical knowledge, therapeutic and facilitation skills, as well as empathetic qualities. It was acknowledged that facilitators required specific skill sets and qualities that effectively balance knowledge and empathic engagement. These were identified as having sound knowledge of the Incredible Years programme and the underlying principles that govern it; the ability to work collaboratively, to facilitate and reciprocate the learning process between group members and themselves; to be non-judgemental, unassuming, non-directive, validating, respectful, and genuine. While most

of these skills and qualities have been espoused in previous research, and are not specific to the effective engagement of Pasifika parents alone, it is imperative to expand on the key components of respect and genuineness. For Pasifika parents in the study, it was perceived that this sense of respect and ‘realness’ is conveyed more readily by fellow Pasifika facilitators who have an inherent understanding of the values, characteristics, behaviours, and nuances of Pasifika culture. This study therefore found that Pasifika parents believe that having Pasifika facilitators (who are both knowledgeable and culturally connected) would further enhance engagement, acceptability, and accessibility to the Incredible Years programme.

Several findings within the Pacific health research field suggest that ethnic concordance between clinician and patient is predictive of increased engagement, specifically that Pasifika clinicians have a deeper understanding of the Pasifika culture and how this impacts on health and wellbeing (Pacific Health Research Centre, 2003; Southwick & Solomona, 2007). However, the issue of ethnicity matching in treatment programmes is debatable, with a study by Dumas et al. (2008) finding no significant differences in parenting outcomes and engagement as a result of matching facilitator and parents’ ethnic culture. Given the strong endorsement of culture matching by parents and facilitators in this study, and by other commentators, it seems right to retain culture matching. Further research is needed to further determine its usefulness.

### **Adjusting the Incredible Years programme**

While the general consensus among participants was that the Incredible Years programme was a flexible one in that Pasifika facilitators were able to adapt and convey the principles and concepts in ways that were more culturally acceptable and accessible, this process would be made easier should a few adjustments be made.

Given that Pasifika culture is predominantly an oral culture (that is knowledge has been passed on orally and not documented), components such as written homework and reading tasks are essentially difficult to engage in. English as a second language and low education levels are barriers that also add to this difficulty. Participants preferred learning methods that were in the more practical form of role plays, experiential learning through the vignette scenarios, practising tasks at home and discussing all these aspects through a talanoa (talking) process. Expectations of completing written and reading tasks that parents' struggle with, and then disengage with, is likely to diminish any sense of achievement gained within the programme.

While Pasifika parents enjoyed the experiential learning through the use of vignettes, most identified that they would better relate to vignettes that more closely depicted their culture, experiences, and style of communicating. There was also the problem of struggling to understand the American accent and use of language. Again, this highlighted the various nuances of Pasifika culture that differentiates from western norms.

The Buddy system was also a component of the programme that Pasifika parents were less likely to engage in. Given the strong familial values and ties most Pasifika people have, they preferred to consult and share with their own family members as opposed to imposing their problems onto other group members who they had not yet formed strong enough relationships with. This perhaps supports a view expressed by many participants that the Incredible Years programme should not be limited to the parent-child relationship but include extended family members that play a significant role in a child's life.

In addition to this, findings suggest that the resources and activities included in the packaged programme need to be Pasifika specific and culturally relevant. Much of this related to the translation of materials into specific ethnic languages and revamping activities/resources so they were better understood and more relatable to Pasifika culture

## **Barriers**

The practical barriers parents identified are common to those cited in other studies and often relate to low socio-economic struggles (Dunn, 2012; Lau, 2010; Webster-Stratton, 1998). These included financial difficulties and priorities, work and family commitments, transport problems, and child-care difficulties. Webster-Stratton and Reid (2010) promotes the provision of food, transport, and child-care services within the delivery of Incredible Years programmes. Based on the current findings, these recommendations are supported.

Emotional and psychological barriers experienced by Pasifika parents include a stigmatising view of parenting programmes. This may be linked to a perception that parenting programmes imply defective parenting and dysfunctional families. Participants usually found that this perception dissolved once engaged in the Incredible Years programme, but there is likely to have been an impact on willingness to engage in the programme in the first place. Further concerted efforts by service/programme providers and communities are needed to help dispel this stigma. Emotional barriers such as pride and shame were also associated with this. A sense of pride and shame often holds parents back from seeking parenting support in the initial stages. It also perpetuates a reluctance to participate in supportive programmes.

Although the identified barriers cannot be considered specific to the Pasifika population, it is considered that the various impacts of acculturative stress and struggles have influenced a somewhat cautious and self-doubting mentality with regards to engaging in western-based initiatives.

## **Limitations**

The first notable limitation of the current study is that the sample population used may not be representative of the Pasifika population as a whole in New Zealand. All parent participants of the study were from the Wellington and Porirua areas while facilitator participants were recruited from both the wider Wellington and Auckland areas. While the Wellington area has the second largest Pasifika population in New Zealand, the inclusion of a more geographically representative sample may have highlighted potential differences in the experiences of Pasifika parents throughout New Zealand.

A second limitation regarding the sample population was the lack of balance representing the generational differences across Pasifika parents. The current study was able to supplement this lack of first hand representation with the experiences and observations facilitators had of generational differences. However, the majority of parent participants in the study were migrant parents born in the Pacific Islands. While this is useful in helping to understand the impact of strong cultural values as well as the impact of early acculturative challenges upon parenting perspectives, it does not adequately convey the perspectives of New Zealand born Pasifika parents, and how they may have differed from their counterparts. This would have been especially useful given that the Pasifika population in New Zealand is primarily a young one with over half being New Zealand born.

A final limitation of the study is the omission of exploring the perspective of Pasifika parents who chose not to engage in an Incredible Years programme when offered, or had dropped out of an Incredible Years programme. Their perspectives would have added significantly to further understanding recruitment, retention, and overall engagement issues for Pasifika parents and the Incredible Years programme.

## **Future Research**

Future research of a similar nature would benefit from focusing on a larger and more geographically representative sample of Pasifika parents. Consideration should be given to the generational differences among Pasifika parents and how this may variably impact on current parenting beliefs and practices. Of significance is the need to acknowledge that there is much diversity across distinct Pasifika ethnic groups. It is considered that the current study can offer a broad and initial overview of the perspectives of Pasifika parenting in relation to Incredible Years and other parenting programmes. However, there will need to be further research to explore the specific perspectives and needs of the individual ethnic groups in relation to parenting and parenting programmes.

Finally, given the current findings it is recommended that future research look at adaptations to the current Incredible Years programme specifically for the Pasifika population. There is an expressed need for an adaption of the Incredible Years programme to be more inclusive of wider family members and to implement culturally specific components. Trialling these adaptations will require outcome studies to determine their usefulness. Furthermore, any future research pertaining to this should ideally focus on how this not only impacts on parenting satisfaction and behavioural improvements, but also on attendance rates, drop- out rates, and quality of engagement.

## **Appendix A**

### Parent Interview Schedule

**Guide for Interviews with  
PARENT PARTICIPANTS**

1. How did you find the Incredible Years programme?
  - What parts did you find useful for you?
  - What parts were not useful for you?
  - Did it meet your needs/goals?
2. In your opinion what aspects make a parenting programme more effective?
3. Do you think Incredible Years programme has been a culturally appropriate one for you?
  - What does culturally appropriate mean for you?
  - In what ways was it?
  - In what ways was it not? What would you have liked to see?
4. Were there any concepts in the programme that you had a hard time understanding?
  - Were you helped to understand this?
  - Could this have been done in a better way?
5. How comfortable did you feel with the facilitator? Consider style, skill, cultural knowledge, interpersonal stuff, ethnicity, language etc
  - If you could change this how would it look
6. How comfortable did you feel around the other parent participants? Consider ethnicity, culture, language, background experiences etc.
  - If you could change this how would it look
7. What made you come to the programme? (draw factor)
8. What made you continue with the programme?
9. What do you think stops other parents like yourself from participating in the Incredible Years programme?



## **Appendix B**

### Facilitator Interview Schedule

**Guide for Interviews with  
FACILITATOR PARTICIPANTS**

1. Do you think the Incredible Years programme is suitable for Pacific Island Parents? (talk about strengths and weaknesses)
  - Accessibility/engagement
  - Relevancy
  - Efficacy
2. What do you think are the needs of Pasifika people in terms of positive parenting practices?
  - Do you think Incredible Years addresses those needs adequately?
3. Do you think the Incredible Years programme is culturally appropriate for Pasifika parents? Why/why not?
  - What does it mean to be culturally appropriate? (Resources/concepts/delivery?)
4. What do you see are the barriers that may prevent Pasifika parents from accessing and engaging in a parenting program?
5. How do you think we can break these barriers
  - What are the enabling factors you might have seen?
6. Is there anything about the program that you would alter if you could? E.g. resources/tools used; cultural relevance/connections
7. What are the most effective strategies you are using currently when delivering Incredible Years to a Pasifika group.
8. Have you seen any differences and/or commonalities in the **needs** (in terms of what they can get out of a parenting program) of New Zealand born Pasifika parents and migrant Pasifika parents?
9. Have you seen any differences and/or commonalities in the parenting practices of New Zealand born Pasifika parents and migrant Pasifika parents?
10. What have your experiences been in delivering Incredible Years to a group of the same Pasifika ethnicity compared to delivering Incredible Years to a mixed Pasifika ethnic group?
11. What main differences do you see when delivering Incredible Years to a Pasifika group compared to a non-Pasifika group? i.e. differences between Palagi, Maori etc

## **Appendix C**

### **Participant Information Sheet – Parents**

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Parents)**

**Project Title:** Exploring the acceptability and accessibility of the Incredible Years parenting programme for Pasifika people.

**Researcher:** Miss Max Maiava

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Kia orana, Malo e lelei, Fakalofa lahi atu, Bula vi naka, warm Pacific greetings.

My name is Max Maiava and I am a Samoan Doctoral student of the Doctor of Clinical Psychology programme within the University of Auckland Psychology Department. I am currently undertaking a research project in the area of parenting and the Pasifika population.

### **Research Introduction**

The Incredible Years is a well known parenting programme that has been used around the world and in New Zealand. The main goal of this programme is to help parents learn more about positive parenting, dealing with their children's challenging behaviours, understanding the importance of early and secure attachment in families, and looking at relationship and emotional issues around parenting.

There has been a lot of research that tells us that the Incredible Years parenting programme has worked very well for many parents and families around the world. However, we do not know how well the Incredible Years programme will work with Pasifika parents and families.

In this research project, we want to find out more about this. Your experiences, views, and opinions are very important, so we would like to hear about your experiences as a parent in the Incredible Years parenting programme. I am really interested to hear about what you think the strengths and weaknesses of the programme are and whether the programme was experienced by you as culturally acceptable and useful.

### **Invitation**

You are invited to take part in this research study that will help me to identify areas in which the Incredible Years parenting programme can be enhanced in order to better meet the needs of our Pasifika parents and to better engage our Pasifika people.

### **Participation Involvement/What do I have to do?**

You will be asked to take part in a face to face interview with myself, Max Maiava.

It is considered that as a Pasifika parent who has taken part in Incredible Years, you have much to offer the research in terms of your talking about your experiences.

The interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will take place at a site that has been mutually agreed upon between you, the interviewee and myself, Max Maiava.

Interviews will be audio-taped to ensure the accuracy of information gathered.

Participation is completely voluntary (it is your choice). If you decide that you do not want to take part in this study, this will not affect your relationship with your facilitators/organisation. Participants can withdraw the information they provide up until 6 months before the writing up of the report.

### **Confidentiality**

No material which could personally identify participants will be used in any reports on this study. The identity of participants is confidential, the information only will be used in my research report.

In the unlikely event that a participant experiences psychological discomfort or distress during the interview, assistance will be offered in the form of a referral to a qualified counselor or psychologist.

Please note that if any information that puts an individual or child at risk of physical or emotional harm is disclosed, I have an obligation to notify the appropriate authorities. In these cases, the process will be as transparent as possible and I will talk with the individual/s involved first.

### **Results**

This research will be published as a doctoral thesis as part of the requirements of the Doctor of Clinical Psychology programme. If you wish to know the results of this study, they will be made available to your facilitator or organisation and you may access this information from them. Otherwise, you are welcome to tell me you want to receive a summary report directly, and I will send this to you once the study has been completed.

### **Data storage**

All information collected from participants will be stored and safely locked away within the University of Auckland premises. Data will be stored for a minimum of six years once the research study has been completed. After this time all the information gathered about the study will be destroyed.

### **Thank you**

Thank you for making the time to read about, and consider taking part, in this study. Please feel free to contact the researcher if you have any further questions about this study.

This research is helped funded by the Health Research Council Ref: HRC 10/098

**Contacts:****Researcher**

Max Maiava  
Phone: 021 1032340  
Email: [max.maiava@gmail.com](mailto:max.maiava@gmail.com)  
Department of Psychology  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland

**Supervisor**

Professor Fred Seymour  
Phone: (09) 373-7599 ext. 88414  
Email: [f.seymour@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.seymour@auckland.ac.nz)  
Department of Psychology  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland

**Head of Department**

Dr Douglas Elliffe  
Phone: (09) 373-7599 ext 88557  
Email: [d.elliffe@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:d.elliffe@auckland.ac.nz)  
Department of Psychology  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 22 APRIL FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2010/155

## **Appendix D**

### **Participant Information Sheet – Facilitator**

Department of Psychology  
Tamaki Campus  
200 Morrin Rd  
Auckland, New Zealand  
(09) 373 7599 ext 88556

The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland, New Zealand

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (Facilitator)**

**Project Title:** Exploring the acceptability and accessibility of the Incredible Years parenting programme for Pasifika people.

**Researcher:** Miss Max Maiava

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Kia orana, Malo e lelei, Fakalofa lahi atu, Bula vi naka, warm Pacific greetings.

My name is Max Maiava and I am a Samoan Doctoral student of the Doctor of Clinical Psychology programme within the University of Auckland Psychology Department. I am currently undertaking a research project in the area of parenting and the Pasifika population.

### **Research Introduction**

The Incredible Years is a well known skill based parenting programme that has been used around the world and in New Zealand. The main goal of this programme is to help parents learn more about positive parenting, dealing with their children's challenging behaviours, understanding the importance of early and secure attachment in families, and looking at relationship and emotional issues around parenting.

There has been a lot of research that tells us that the Incredible Years parenting programme has worked very well for many parents and families around the world. However, we do not know how well the Incredible Years programme will work with Pasifika parents and families.

Parenting is an important issue, especially when looking at future outcomes for young people growing up and the impact parenting practices may have on these outcomes. In this research project, I want to find out more about this. Your experiences, views, and opinions are very important, so I would like to hear about your experiences as a facilitator of Incredible Years and delivering this parenting programme to Pasifika parents.

### **Invitation**

You are invited to take part in this research study that will help me to identify areas in which the Incredible Years parenting programme can be enhanced in order to better meet the needs of our Pasifika parents and to better engage our Pasifika people.



**Participation Involvement/What do I have to do?**

A face to face interview will take place with individual facilitators of the Incredible Years parenting programme. Facilitators will have had experiences in delivering Incredible Years to Pasifika parents.

It is considered that as a facilitator you have much to offer the research in terms of your experiences as a Pasifika person and/or specifically your experiences with working alongside Pasifika parents and families.

The interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will take place at a site that has been mutually agreed upon between you, the interviewee and myself, Max Maiava.

Interviews will be audio-taped to ensure the accuracy of information gathered.

Participants can withdraw the information they provide up until 6 months before the writing up of the report.

**Confidentiality**

No material which could personally identify participants will be used in any reports on this study. The identity of participants is confidential, the information only will be used in my research report.

In the unlikely event that a participant experiences psychological discomfort or distress during the interview, assistance will be offered in the form of a referral to a qualified counselor or psychologist.

Please note that if any information that puts an individual or child at risk of physical or emotional harm is disclosed, I have an obligation to notify the appropriate authorities. In these cases, the process will be as transparent as possible and I will talk with the individual/s involved first.

**Results**

This research will be published as a doctoral thesis as part of the requirements of the Doctor of Clinical Psychology programme.

The results of this research project will be available to you. I will arrange to send you a summary of this upon completion of the project.

**Data storage**

All information collected from participants will be stored and safely locked away within the University of Auckland premises. Data will be stored for six years upon the completion of the research. After this time all data will be destroyed.

**Thank you**

Thank you for making the time to read about, and consider taking part in this study. Please feel free to contact me or the following people if you have any questions about this study.

**Faafetai lava ma ia manuia.**

This research is helped funded by the Health Research Council Ref: HRC 10/098

**Contacts:****Researcher**

Max Maiava  
Phone: 021 1032340  
Email: [max.maiava@gmail.com](mailto:max.maiava@gmail.com)  
Department of Psychology  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland

**Supervisor**

Professor Fred Seymour  
Phone: (09) 373-7599 ext. 88414  
Email: [f.seymour@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:f.seymour@auckland.ac.nz)  
Department of Psychology  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland

**Head of Department**

Dr Douglas Elliffe  
Phone: (09) 373-7599 ext 88557  
Email: [d.elliffe@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:d.elliffe@auckland.ac.nz)  
Department of Psychology  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373 7599.

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS  
ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 22 APRIL FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2010/155

## **Appendix E**

### **Consent Form – All Participants**

## **CONSENT FORM**

### **THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS**

**Project Title:** Exploring the acceptability and accessibility of the Incredible Years parenting programme for Pasifika people.

**Researcher:** Max Maiava

I have read the Participant Information Sheet, have understood the nature of the research and why I have been selected. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to take part in this research study.
- I understand that by consenting to this study, I am agreeing to being interviewed by Researcher Max Maiava
- I understand that participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time
- I understand that I can withdraw any of the information I have provided up until 6 months before the writing up of the report.
- I understand that no material which could personally identify me will be used in any report on this study.
- I understand that the interviews will be audio-taped
- I understand that data will be kept for 6 years, after which they will be destroyed.
- I am aware that my participation or non participation will not affect my role with the organisation.
- I understand that I can request to be given a summary of the final report

Thank you for your time.  
Faafetai lava ma ia manuia.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

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ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 22 APRIL FOR (3) YEARS REFERENCE NUMBER 2010/155

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