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**PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY-
BASED PARENTING INITIATIVES: ENGAGING
EVERYDAY PARENTS TO PREVENT
MALTREATMENT**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science (Psychology)

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ABSTRACT

A population initiative to improve parenting knowledge and support is important for preventing child maltreatment. Traditional parent training programmes are expensive and unacceptable to many New Zealand parents, thus an alternative is indicated.

Common change principles and proposals from research suggest that interventions use supports for self-determination - relatedness, competence, and autonomy - as well as relevance, flexibility, and inductive qualities and attention to specific engagement factors. The SKIP population-based initiative uses many of these principles in their efforts to engage and support New Zealand parents. This project investigated two types of SKIP initiatives by assessing parents' perceptions of their efficacy and acceptability, and the factors that contributed to these perceptions.

Study 1 analysed the impact of a booklet disseminated to shoppers, and provides some evidence that supports for relatedness and autonomy, and an inductive approach, contributed to its effects. These included positive thoughts and feelings about parenting, reflection on parenting values and an intent to reflect more in future, as well as increased parenting confidence and decreased parenting stress.

Study 2 investigated parents' perceptions of two community-based parenting groups: their effects and the factors that contributed to them. It provides strong evidence that all of the aforementioned principles were important to the outcomes. Parents described an increase in parenting

knowledge, confidence and support, and increased comfort with talking about parenting with others. Other common factors that contributed to success in these initiatives are discussed also.

This project suggests that initiatives such as these, with alternative conceptions of how to achieve education and support, can be highly acceptable and beneficial to 'everyday' parents, who might not engage with traditional parent training programmes.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	7
FOREWORD.....	13
INTRODUCTION.....	17
Overview	17
Parenting: What it is and Why it is Important.....	18
What is Good Parenting?	19
Attachment Theory	20
Baumrind’s Parenting Styles.....	20
Self-Determination Theory	21
Hoffman’s Inductive Parenting	22
Grusec’s Integrating Theory	23
Cultural Differences in Optimal Parenting.....	25
Influences on Parenting.....	25
Parental Factors.....	26
Contextual Factors.....	29
Traditional Parenting Interventions.....	32
Recent History	32
Factors Important to Population Initiatives.....	35
Current Principles of Psychological Change	36
Integration of Five Current Models of Change	36
Implications for Parenting Initiatives	40
Current Messages From Research	41

Relationship-focussed.....	42
Autonomy-supportive.....	43
Strength-focussed	44
Relevance and Sensitivity.....	45
Inductive	45
Adherence to a Model of Change.....	47
Increasing Emotional Communication	47
Encouragement of Natural Supports.....	47
Practitioner Attributes.....	48
Universality.....	48
Engagement Factors	49
Issues and Conclusion.....	50
Newer Initiatives.....	51
Optimisation of Traditional Parent Training Models.....	51
Contemporary Models	53
Current Issues	56
The SKIP Approach.....	56
The Current Project.....	58
STUDY 1: THE IMPACT OF A BOOKLET ‘CELEBRATING BEING A MUM’	61
Introduction.....	61
Rationale.....	63
Expectations	64
Design	65
Method.....	66
Setting	66
Materials and Measures	66
Participants.....	67

Procedure	67
Data analysis	68
Results	69
Demographic information.....	70
Resource-related information	72
Quantitative Responses to the Resources	74
Current Levels of Parenting Thoughts and Behaviours	76
Perceived Change Following Exposure	77
Awareness of SKIP and Desire to See More.....	80
Correlations	80
Qualitative Responses.....	83
Effect of Booklet on Parenting Thought/Reflection.....	87
Correlations of Theme Processes with Outcomes	90
Discussion.....	91
Engagement.....	91
Changes Resulting from This Initiative	92
Processes by Which Change Occurred.....	94
Previous Awareness of and Current Desire to Engage with SKIP.....	95
STUDY 2: PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTING GROUPS	97
Introduction.....	97
Rationale	100
Expectations	101
Design	101
Method.....	102
Recruitment.....	102
Setting	103
Procedure	106

Materials and measures	107
Data analysis	109
Results - Fathers Group.....	110
Participation.....	110
Pre-/Post Reports.....	110
Verbal Retrospective Reports.....	112
Qualitative Responses.....	113
Results - Young Parents Group.....	138
Participation.....	138
Pre-/Post- Reports	138
Verbal Retrospective Reports.....	140
Qualitative Responses.....	141
Discussion.....	170
Engagement Factors	170
Changes Invoked by the Groups	174
Factors that Contributed to the Changes.....	177
Other Findings.....	181
OVERALL DISCUSSION.....	187
LIMITATIONS	197
CONCLUSION.....	200
REFERENCES.....	203
APPENDICES	223
Appendix A: Integration of Models of Change	223
Appendix B: The ‘Mum’ Booklet (Study 1).....	228
Appendix C: Survey (Study 1).....	229

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet (Study 2)	231
Appendix E: Participant Consent Form (Study 2)	233
Appendix F: Transcript Release Authority (Study 2).....	234
Appendix G: Interview Schedule (Study 2).....	235
Appendix H: Pre-/Post Test (Study 2, Fathers).....	239
Appendix I: Pre-/Post Test (Study 2, Young Parents).....	241