

Violence-free homes help children grow into healthy, happy people. It is so important for children to realise there are others like them in the same situation.



Aviva exists because we care

We support individuals and families/whānau to not only become safe, but begin a journey towards a fulfilling, violence-free life.

To do this we offer a range of support options to children, women and men to overcome family violence.

Please visit www.avivafamilies.org.nz to see our full range of services including:

- **Aviva Women's Services**
- **Aviva Children and Youth Services**
- **Aviva Men's Services – ReachOut**

Aviva is an independent Canterbury charity first established in 1973 as Christchurch Women's Refuge.



(formerly Christchurch Women's Refuge)

Address: PO Box 32 034, Christchurch 8147

Phone: 0800 AVIVA NOW
(0800 28482 669) or 378 3847

Email: enquiries@avivafamilies.org.nz

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www.avivafamilies.org.nz

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*Not their real names



Putting children first



Every child deserves a life free from family violence. Sadly, that is not the reality for many children. If your child, or a child you care about, has experienced or been exposed to family violence, getting the right support for him or her is important.

The journey to a violence-free future does not need to be travelled alone. Aviva (formerly Christchurch Women's Refuge) offers support to children and their family/whānau – every step of the way.

Family violence in a child's world

Family violence hurts everyone in a family, especially children. Experiencing, or even just seeing or hearing violence towards another person can severely damage a child's emotional and psychological wellbeing.

When a parent or sibling is being terrorised and diminished, a child's sense of security and trust in the world are also damaged. Even if the child is not present when the violence occurs, living with the consequences of family violence can mean living with a broken home and a broken heart.

Children are not resilient to family violence; they won't just 'get over it'

Children are never too young to notice. When a child's developing brain is exposed to a pattern of abusive and controlling behaviour, or they are living in an environment of fear about the next angry outburst, the effects on the child can be carried through the rest of their life.

Witnessing family violence is the strongest risk factor that a child will repeat violent behaviour as they grow up, start their own relationships and perhaps become parents themselves.

Is family violence hurting your child?

Family violence doesn't always involve physical violence; it can include emotional, economic or sexual abuse and for children, it can be experienced directly, or witnessed.

Do you recognise any of these signs of possible family violence in your child, or a child you know?

Anxiety disorders; excessive fears; nightmares	Yes / No
Cruelty to animals and other people	Yes / No
Attention seeking behaviours	Yes / No
Suppressed feelings and failure to relate well to others	Yes / No
Isolation and withdrawal	Yes / No
Self-harm or suicide attempts	Yes / No
Frequent sickness; failure to thrive	Yes / No
Inability to concentrate	Yes / No
Disruptive behaviour; tantrums; bullying	Yes / No

If a child you know is showing any of the above behaviours, they may need support.

Call 0800 AVIVA NOW (0800 28482 669) to talk about whether they might be experiencing family violence. Support is available 24 hours and it's free.

“My son did the programme for children and it was a real turning point. He has gone from a kid who hung his head and wouldn't look anyone in the eye to a boy who is really starting to fly.”

Rhonda* (reaching for a violence-free future with her son Luke*)

Breaking the cycle of family violence

Children rely on the adults in their world to stop the cycle of family violence. By putting your children first and getting support for them you are claiming a violence-free future for your child.

We offer a 10-week education and support Tamariki programme for children who have experienced, or are experiencing, family violence.

Course content is delivered in a fun, child-centred and informal way, designed to be a positive experience for each child. Children will:

- develop their own plans to stay safe
- learn about healthy relationships
- be supported to build their self-confidence and self-esteem
- share with others and break the secret
- have positive, trusting experiences with others
- find appropriate ways to deal with their own anger
- learn what to do when they recognise abuse

Programmes are available in Christchurch and Rangiora for children aged 5-12 years and are approved by the Ministry of Justice. Assistance with transport may also be available.

One-on-one support for individual children, sibling groups and young people aged 13 – 17 is also available.

Aviva's services for children and young people are delivered by compassionate, professionally qualified Aviva Family Support Workers who understand family violence and how it affects children. Our staff all hold professional qualifications and are members of relevant professional bodies. Most importantly, they are passionate about supporting children and families/whānau to become safe and recognise their potential.

To find out more about how Aviva supports children, call 0800 AVIVA NOW (0800 28482 669) or visit www.avivafamilies.org.nz.