

28 November 2024

Rodney Parsons
fyi-request-29188-d6717e55@requests.fyi.org.nz>

Tēnā koe Rodney

Thank you for your email of 13 November 2024 to Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki), requesting information relating to the 2023 Section 78 report on the Oranga Tamariki website. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

You have requested:

Your website has the 2023 s78 report but not the 2024 one. Are you able to update the website with this?

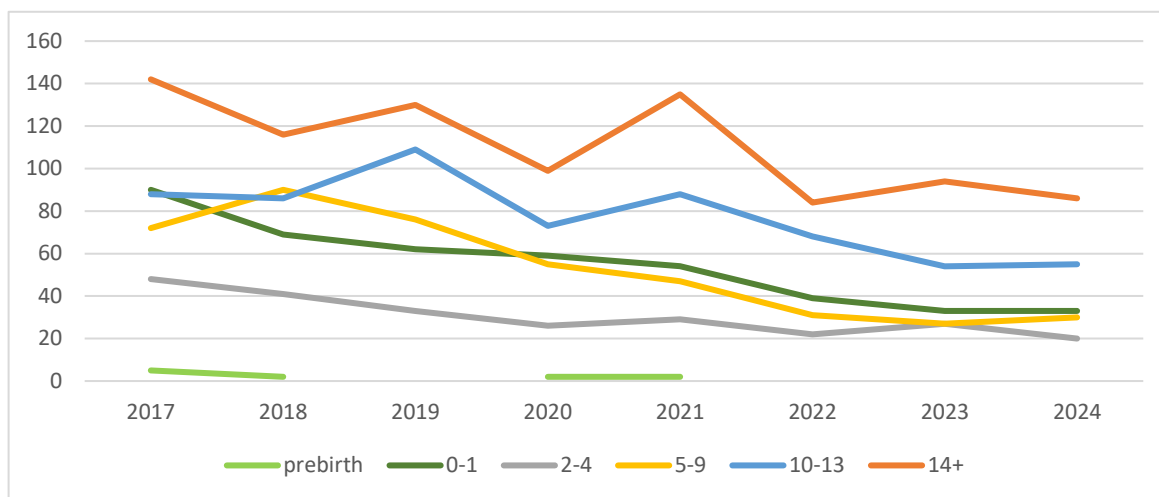
Throughout the last several years there's been a reduction in cases. Without using the technical language, this presents the appearance that removals are reducing in children. Has there been a corresponding increase in the use of non-statutory instruments such as voluntary-care arrangements that have contributed to this, so that these children are still being removed from their natural parent but just not by using a statutory mechanism such as s78?

The latest Oranga Tamariki report into the use of section 78 orders with unborn and newborn babies is included as Appendix A to the Oranga Tamariki Annual Report 2023/24. A copy of the Oranga Tamariki Annual Report 2023/24 can be found [here](#).

In response to the second part of your request, the latest report into the use of section 78 orders for unborn and newborn babies (under 30 days old) shows that the volume of section 78 orders issued for babies annually reduced significantly between the 2016/17 and 2020/21 financial years and has remained stable at this lower level for the past four years.

Oranga Tamariki operational data suggests that this has not correlated with an increase in entries to care under temporary care agreements (section 139 and section 140 of the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989).

Please refer to Figure 1 below that shows the annual trend of entries to care under care agreements for distinct tamariki by age group between the 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years.



*Source: Oranga Tamariki operational data

Oranga Tamariki routine monitoring of practice with unborn and newborn babies who enter care under a section 78 order has identified several areas in which practice improvements have been made in our work with these babies and their parents, families and whānau. These include early engagement with families and whānau, high rates of whānau searching to provide babies with every opportunity to be cared for within their family/whānau, and support services being offered or provided with a focus on preventing the need for removal of babies from their parents and/or family/whānau.

More information on the findings of this monitoring work can also be found in the Oranga Tamariki Annual Report 2023/24.

Oranga Tamariki may make the information contained in this letter available to the public by publishing this on our website with your personal details removed.

I trust you find this information useful. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise them with Oranga Tamariki. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Information about this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by contacting them on 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ND', enclosed in a light gray rectangular box.

Nicolette Dickson
Chief Social Worker DCE Professional Practice