



**families** commission  
kōmihana ā **whānau**

# moving on

CHANGES IN A YEAR IN FAMILY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

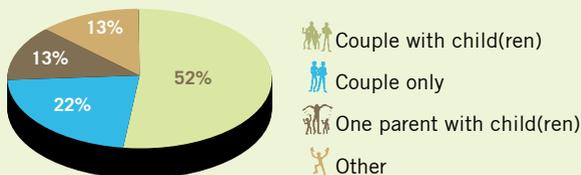


## *changes in families*

**Families form, grow and sometimes separate. The Families Commission has used new information from Statistics New Zealand to look at the way family living arrangements change from one year to the next. Most changes are part of the natural evolution of a family – young people move out of home, new partners move in together, babies are born.**

The information has been separated into four family types: 'couple with children', 'couple only', 'one parent with children', and 'other' (single people living in an extended family, living alone, living with flatmates).

### FAMILY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE NEW ZEALAND POPULATION IN 2003



Just over half of the population (52 percent) was living in a 'couple with children' family in 2003. The second most common arrangement was 'couple only' (22 percent) followed by 'one parent with children' (13 percent) and 'other' (13 percent).

# Family living arrangements

**Between 2003 and 2004 one in 10 people changed their family type.**

# changes in 12 months

TRANSITIONS IN AND OUT OF FAMILY TYPES BETWEEN 2003 AND 2004



76,500  
entered

**COUPLE ONLY**  
**713,800 stayed**

117,400 left



105,000  
entered

**COUPLE WITH  
CHILDREN**  
**1,772,200 stayed**

149,100 left



72,100  
entered

**ONE PARENT  
WITH CHILDREN**  
**395,500 stayed**

70,800  
left



138,400  
entered

**OTHER**  
**444,800 stayed**

54,700  
left

# life-cycle changes

Most changes in family living arrangement relate to the life cycle that is common to many families.

Young people move out of home. Over the year, 10 percent (35,100) of 15 to 24-year-olds left home to become a 'couple only' or to go flatting/live alone and enter the 'other' family type category. At the same time many parents (28,600) between 45 and 64 years old went from being a 'couple with children' to a 'couple only' family.

Becoming a couple. About 23,700 adults under 35 years old switched from a household where they were living without a partner to become a 'couple only'. A somewhat larger number who had been living as a 'couple only' (31,100) split up from their partners and moved into a new living arrangement.

Having a first child. Of the 25- to 54-year-olds in a 'couple only' family in 2003, 11 percent (35,500 people) became a 'couple with children' family in 2004.



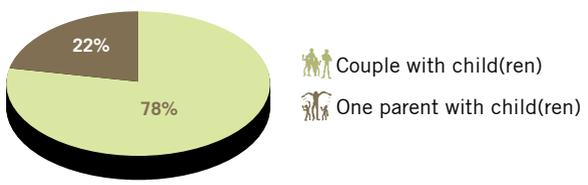
# changes by age

Young people are more likely to change family living arrangements than older people. Approximately one in five 15 to 34-year-olds changed family type over the year. By comparison, just one person in 20 aged 65 or older changed their living arrangement. Those aged 55 years or older were the least likely to change family type.

# changes for dependent children

In 2003, 78 percent of dependent children were living in a 'couple with children' family type.

## FAMILY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN 2003



Over the year, six percent (58,200) of children and young people were affected by a change in their parents' circumstances. Ten percent (23,200) of children who were living with sole parents became part of a 'couple with children' family. Meanwhile, four percent (35,000) of children who were living with both parents became a 'one parent with children' family.

# other changes

The family type least affected by change was the 'couple with children'. Over the year, eight percent of people in this family type changed living arrangements.

The family type most affected by change was the 'one parent with children'. Over the year 15 percent of people in these families moved into a different living arrangement. Men were more likely to make this change than women.

Just over half of the people who moved into the 'other' family type were young adults (15 to 34 years old). Many were young people who'd moved out of home to go flatting or to live alone, or were people whose relationship had ended.



# families are forever changing

Babies are born, people die, children leave home, couples separate and people find new partners. Exploring these family dynamics helps us all to understand how families are changing in New Zealand. The Families Commission is particularly interested as these changing dynamics have enormous implications for government policy and family services.

This brochure shows a new way of looking at family living arrangements and follows *The Changing Face of New Zealand Families*. This research-based series of brochures provides information and insights into family formation and change.

## Read the full report

The full report, *Moving On: Changes in a year in family living arrangements* is available on our website and in hard copy upon request.

## Contact us

Visit our website [www.nzfamilies.org.nz](http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz) to find out more about the work we are doing or email us at [enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz)

## Join us on The Couch

We want your views on issues affecting New Zealand families. You can join our online panel, The Couch, at [www.thecouch.org.nz](http://www.thecouch.org.nz) and provide us with regular feedback on various topics.

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