

# Supporting Children During Ramadan



Save the Children

The exact dates of the Islamic Holy month of Ramadan change every year because Islam uses the lunar calendar. It usually occurs between March, April and May.

Ramadan is a time for reflection, prayer, good deeds, family time and helping the community and people in need. During the month of Ramadan, Muslim people don't eat between sunrise and sunset to allow greater devotion to their faith. Children, pregnant women, the elderly and people who are ill do not have to fast, although they may wish to do so. At the end of Ramadan, the Eid al-Fitr festival marks the breaking of the fast, when the new moon is seen in the sky. Often children are given presents and new clothes as a part of the celebrations.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) is an agreement by countries who have promised to protect children's rights. Article 14 states that children have the right to practise their religion, and the right to think and believe what they choose. As teachers, it is important that we support our students to practise their religion safely in our schools.



# TIPS for Supporting Students During Ramadan



- **Speak** with the family about the child's individual fast. Some children will be expected to fast the whole day, some will be allowed water, some will be fasting only until midday. Find out the **individual** expectations and **support** without judgement.
- **Respect** the wishes to fast and don't show pity. It is a huge achievement to complete Ramadan and children feel proud of this. Support them and **speak positively** about Ramadan.
- Stock your class library with **books** about Ramadan. **Watch** The Gift of Ramadan by Rabiah York Lumbard [here](#).
- During eating times, allocate a duty teacher to an optional **"safe space"** for fasting students that is away from the sights and smells of other students eating. This could be the library, the computer lab or a classroom. Let them engage in something fun together in this space that distracts them from thoughts of food. Where possible, try not to plan food-based activities in class during Ramadan.
- Give extra **understanding** to children who may be more tired and sensitive than usual. Children are also waking up earlier than usual in order to eat breakfast before the sun rises, so they may be tired.
- Let children have a **rest** if they need to, particularly in the afternoons.
- **Celebrate!** At the end of Ramadan, recognise the strength and devotion that the child has drawn on throughout the month.

## VOCABULARY and PHRASES

**Suhoor - The meal just before dawn.**

**Iftar - The meal directly after sunset.**

**Eid al Fitr - The festival of the breaking of the fast, held when the new moon is seen in the sky.**

**Eid Mubarak - This means blessed Eid and is what you can say to your Muslim students and families at the end of the month of Ramadan.**





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## CHILD, YOUTH AND SCHOOLS PROGRAMME NEW ZEALAND

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** is an agreement by countries who have promised to protect **children's rights**. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. Aotearoa New Zealand has ratified this convention, which means the government has an obligation to ensure these rights are fulfilled. Save the Children New Zealand's new programme aims to **empower tamariki, kaiako and whānau** to learn about, respect and uphold **children's rights**.

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