



Grandparents

raising grandchildren NSW

... where do you go
for HELP?



www.raisinggrandchildren.com.au



a message from our benefactor

"I was raised from the age of six by my grandparents. When they took over primary caring responsibility for me, my grandparents were in their late fifties. They had previously raised two daughters and I am sure they never imagined that they would be spending their later years looking after the grandson that they loved so much.

They cared for me, guided me and in many ways, created the person that I am today and I will always be incredibly grateful for their love and support during my formative years. They passed away in 2000-01, but their memory lives on and this project is very much a legacy to them. I am sure that it will provide much needed information and support to other grandparents who are raising their grandchildren in our increasingly complex community.

I am very pleased to be supporting this important project through the fund I have established as part of the Sydney Community Foundation."

David Hardie

■ About Grandparents Raising Grandchildren NSW

GRG NSW represents an alliance of grandparents who have fulltime care and responsibility of their grandchildren across New South Wales.

It is an initiative of **Council of the Ageing (COTA) NSW** and has come about following seven years of research and collaboration with grandparent support groups and community service representatives in particular: **Van Kinship Care** and **Western Sydney Grandcarers** in Penrith, **GAGS** in Orange and the **Samaritans** in the Hunter.

This booklet is made possible by a grant through the **Sydney Community Foundation**.



... where do you go for HELP?

Although you have been a parent before, becoming a parent again is more of a challenge than most grandparents expect.

You want to provide a safe and stable family so your grandchildren can have the best start in life that is possible.

You may feel as though you are on your own and therefore you have to cope.

You are not alone and help **is** available... you just have to know where to find it!

■ You can use this booklet as a guide

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■ For more detailed information

COTA (NSW) 02 9286 3860 or 1800 449 102
and visit www.raisinggrandchildren.com.au

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... where do you go for HELP?

- For free confidential telephone information and referral contact:

LawAccess NSW	1300 888 529
Women's Legal Services Limited (NSW)	02 9749 5533
Legal Aid Commission	1300 366 611

- handy hints

Before you consult a solicitor visit your local Community Legal Centre or Chamber Magistrate.

They give free confidential advice and you may not need a solicitor after all.

**LawAccess NSW can refer you
1300 888 529**

The federal government has created telephone services as well as **Family Relationships Centres** across Australia for families affected by relationship or separation issues. They offer free confidential information, advice and mediation services to help resolve disputes within families. They can assist you to develop a Parenting Plan that may be legalised without having to go to court.

The **Family Relationship Advice Line** can offer confidential in-depth advice over the phone
1800 050 321

■ For legal representation

Legal Aid may represent you in court. Apply to the **Legal Aid Commission 1300 366 611**. Most clients pay some money towards costs of Legal Aid representation as it is means and merit tested.

Pro bono solicitors are available for free or reduced rate legal assistance. LawAccess NSW or the **Pro Bono Scheme 02 9926 0364** can give you details.

Do you have a will?

Have you thought about changing your will, setting up a Power of Attorney or Guardianship?

LawAccess NSW can provide free information.

■ handy hints

Looking for a lawyer?

The Law Society of NSW can provide you with a list of lawyers who specialise in Family Law.

02 9926 0300 or 1800 422 713

Welfare Rights Centre (NSW) specialises in social security law. The centre provides advice and representation on Social Security matters. It is entirely independent of Centrelink **02 9211 5300** or **1800 226 028**.

The **Community Services Commission 02 9384 4999** or **1800 060 409** and the **State Ombudsman 02 9286 1000** or **1800 451 524** can assist with complaints against government departments and services.

■ For more information

Contact **COTA (NSW) 02 9286 3860** or **1800 449 102** or visit the GRG website:
www.raisinggrandchildren.com.au

... where do you go for HELP?

For **pensions, benefits and allowances** make an appointment with a **Centrelink** social worker on **13 1021**

The **Family Assistance Office 13 6150** can provide you with information on benefits and allowances. They have offices in Medicare, Centrelink Customer Service Centres or any Tax Office shopfronts.

■ handy hints

Make sure you **tell Centrelink you are a grandparent raising your grandchildren** - you may be entitled to added services such as a Foster Child's Health Care Card and Grandparent Child Care Benefit

Centrelink also has a **Financial Information Service** officer available **13 23 00**

Your grandchildren should be able to go onto **your Medicare Card - Medicare Enquiries**

132 011

If you have a problem ask for the Public Relations section. They can help

If you are having problems with **school costs** - make an appointment with the school Principal and ask about the **Student Assistance Scheme** for uniforms, books and excursions.

The **Salvation Army, Smith Family** and other charities can help too.

The Wesley Mission has a **Credit Helpline: 1800 808 488** for free financial advice, counselling and referral: 9.30am - 4.30pm Mon - Fri

■ Did you know the Department of Community Services has a Supported Care Allowance?

The allowance is based on the age of the child and is the same amount as is paid to Foster Carers.:

0 - 4 years = \$374 5 - 13 years = \$420 14 -17 years = \$564

Grandparents raising their grandchildren need to be assessed for eligibility by a caseworker from the Department of Community Services and conditions apply. Contact your local DoCS Office or the **DoCS Helpline 13 2111**.

If your grandchildren suddenly come into your care, and you are struggling financially as many families do – help is available through:

Salvation Army	13 72 56
St Vincent de Paul	02 9560 8666
Anglicare	13 26 22

The Smith Family has a **Learning for Life Program 02 9085 7191** that may assist, as well as Op Shops for furniture and clothing.

For referral to your local services contact:

Family Services NSW	02 9692 9999
or your local Neighbourhood or Community Centre	02 9211 3644 or 1800 646 545

■ For more information

Visit the GRG website:
www.raisinggrandchildren.com.au

... where do you go for HELP?

There are times when you need a break and so do the children. You need to connect with friends and your own interests and the children need to learn to socialise in other safe environments.

For child care, before and after school care and vacation care speak to The **Child Care Access Hotline 1800 607 305**

■ handy hints

The Federal Government has made special allowance for grandparents to receive up to 50 hours of free child care, per child, per week through the **Grandparents Child Care Benefit**. Enquire through the Family Assistance Office **13 6150**

The **Salvation Army, Smith Family** and other crisis services may be able to help with the costs of camps.

For great school vacations contact **Camps for Kids** Department of Sport and Recreation **13 13 02** All meals, accommodation and adult supervision are provided

For families with a **child or adult with severe disabilities Carers NSW - 02 9280 4744** offer a wide range of support and referral services. You can also contact the **Commonwealth Carer Respite Service - 1800 059 059** - they have a 24 hour crisis service.

■ handy hints

If there is a disability in your family you may be eligible to receive a **Carers Allowance** and **Carers Payment** through Centrelink - **13 2717**

■ The NSW school system is in three tiers:

Pre-school, Primary School and High School.

To find your local school 131 536.

Call the **Immunisation Hotline on 1800 671 811** to find out if your child is immunised. The school will want to know at enrolment.

Each year families receive a **\$50 Back-to-School Allowance** in Term 1. Speak to your school principal or contact the **Back-to-School Helpline 1300 656 056**

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities may be enrolled in regular or support classes at school and may attend special education schools. Contact your local school or the **Department of Education Regional Office 131 536**

Parents requiring **interpreter services** are entitled to ask for assistance at any meetings they attend at school - **13 14 50**

■ handy hints

The school system is there to help.

Let the school Principal know your situation so that staff are aware of any difficulties your child is having. Your discussion will be treated confidentially.

The **Mirabel Foundation** works in NSW to help children with parents affected by illicit drug use. They may help with special school needs for your grandchild. They offer advocacy, referral and ongoing support - **03 9527 9422 Victoria** to see if your family qualifies for assistance.

... where do you go for HELP?

The best hints on how to find local services and how to get the assistance you need often comes from others in the same situation.

■ Have you thought of joining a support group?

Looking after yourself is as important as looking after the children and in support groups people share stories and information with others who really understand. They have guest speakers, good advice, contacts and are friendly places to just be yourself and be understood.

COTA(NSW) Information Service

02 9286 3860 or 1800 449102

has details of your nearest support group
or visit www.raisinggrandchildren.com.au

■ To find counselling and referral services:

For 24 hour telephone counselling service

Lifeline

131 114

Family Relationships Australia

1300 364 277

NSW Family Support Services 02 9692 9999 and **Local Community Service organisations 02 9211 3644** or **1800 646 545** can direct you to services in your local area that can offer free counselling, information and referral - for you and the children. They might also have play groups, parenting programs and support groups.

■ handy hints

The **Foster Care Association**
welcomes grandparents in their
support groups **02 9633 5816**

■ Across cultures

Across cultures grandparents raising grandchildren face many of the same issues. While mainstream services can assist all grandparent families, specific services exist for indigenous and multicultural communities. These recognise the significance of cultural diversity, history and traditions and their associated needs.

Indigenous services

AbSec Aboriginal Statewide Foster Carer Support Services 1800 888 698 support indigenous kinship carers and have over 20 'Grannies' groups in NSW.

Indigenous Women's Legal Contact Line offers resources and information **1800 639 784**.

Carers NSW has an ATSI Development Coordinator **02 9280 4744** to support families where someone has a disability.

Centrelink Indigenous Specialist Officers and Remote Visiting Teams make sure Indigenous peoples understand Centrelink services and programs **13 1021**

Multicultural services

Your local **Migrant Resource Centre** can provide support groups, play groups and referral to services.

The Community Relations Commission NSW 1300 651 500 provides translating and interpreter services as well as community liaison.

NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service 02 9816 0347 provide a range of practical health information sheets in most languages.

Centrelink Multilingual Services make sure multicultural peoples understand Centrelink services and programs **13 1202**

Name of service	Telephone number	Hours of service
Centrelink payment and allowances	131 021	Business hours
Medicare Enquiries Line	132 011	Business hours
DoCS Helpline and child protection	132 111	24 hrs - 7 days
Child Abuse Prevention Service (C.A.P.S.)	02 9716 8000 or 1800 688 009	24 hrs - 7 days
Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)	02 9361 8000 or 1800 422 599	24 hrs - 7 days
Family Drug Support	1300 368 186	24 hrs - 7 days
Domestic Violence Line	1800 656 463	24 hrs - 7 days
Parent Line advice re problems with children	13 20 55	9am - 4.30pm Mon - Sat
Kids Help Line support for children	1800 551 800	24 hrs - 7 days
Youth Line support for youth	02 9633 3666	24 hrs - 7 days
Mensline Australia	1300 789 978	24 hrs - 7 days
Child Care Access Hotline to find a Child Care Centre	1800 670 305	Business hrs
Playgroup NSW to find a playgroup near you	02 9604 5513 1800 171 882	Business hrs
Salvo Care Line for support and counselling	02 9331 6000 or 1300 363 622	24 hrs - all year
Victims Support Line counselling for victims of crime	02 9374 3000 or 1800 633 063	24 hrs - 7 days
Family Relationships Advice Line	1800 050 321	8am - 8pm Mon-Fri 10am - 4pm Sat



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