



## Day One – Wednesday 28 October 2009

### 8.30 Registration and Coffee

**9.00 Welcome and Opening Remarks from the Chair**  
*Diane Vivian, National Convenor, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ*  
*Dr Ian Hassall, Research Associate, Institute of Public Policy, AUT University*

**9.10 Keynote Address from the Minister of Social Development**  
In this session, the Minister of Social Development outlines the Government policies that will provide support for the role that grandparents play in caring for children as primary caregivers in our society and discusses the Government's progress towards bringing New Zealand's laws into line with the state's obligations under the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child.  
*Honourable Paula Bennett, Minister for Social Development*

### 9.40 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ: 2009 Research Report Update

A grandchild being raised by grandparents is a growing global phenomenon with significantly more children in grandparent care than in foster care in New Zealand. Yet by comparison they don't receive the same support and resources for costs associated with the physical and psychological disabilities they suffer as they would in foster care. In 2004 the GRG Trust NZ commissioned an extensive survey of 323 New Zealand grandparent and other kin caregivers, the results of which showed that two-thirds are raising grandchildren on an income under \$40,000 with nearly 40% struggling to do so on less than \$20,000 per annum! An updated survey has been completed in 2009.

- Five years later, what has changed?
- What concerns and issues still need to be addressed?
- What has been the impact (if any) of recent legislative and budgetary policy changes?

*Jill Worrall MNZM, Honorary Research Fellow, Massey University*

### 10.20 Demystifying the Financial Support Available for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

This session provides and update to the various income support benefits available from Work and Income, providing a practical guide with tips and information to ensure grandparents are getting the financial support to which they are entitled in their important role as primary caregiver of grandchildren.  
*Speakers from Work and Income (To be confirmed).*

### 10.50 Open Forum

Facilitated by the Chair, this session provides an opportunity for questions, discussion and reflection on the issues raised by the earlier speakers.

### 11.10 Morning Tea

### 11.40 Understanding the Complexities of the School System and What You Need to Know Before Your Child Starts Secondary School

Choosing the right school for your grandchild and guiding them through their secondary schooling system is complex in today's environment. However if you know how the systems work, who does what and who to contact when support is needed then familiarity breeds a confidence that enables you to work alongside the school for the benefit of your grandchildren. In this session key insights will be given as to how you can ensure your grandchild makes the most of their education at secondary school including:

- School based programmes, staff: Who does what and how they can help?
- Accessing learning support for special needs
- Systems of assessment, NCEA unit standards and achievement standards
- Pastoral care, truancy, discipline, bullying, anxiety and depression
- Community resources: Who is out there and how can you contact them?
- Working as a team and cheering from the sidelines.

*Julie Mulcahy and Debbie Knowles, Springboardnz*

### 12.40 Lunch

### 1.40 Personalities Unravelled

"Once we can understand the temperament of the person whom we seek to influence, our interactions are much more likely to be positive and we are more likely to see "Personality" rather than "Pest". Diane Levy

WORKSHOP

Much of our behaviour and that of our grandchildren is the result of Nature rather than Nurture. Diane Levy believes that we are born with an innate temperament and it is a parent's/grandparent's job to raise our children so that they keep their innate nature intact, but modify "round the edges" so that they can fit into the society they live in. In a light-hearted session, but with serious intent, this workshop will help you understand your own personality and the personalities of the people (both tall and short) with whom you interact.

- Who am I?
- Who am I dealing with?
- Combination Personalities
- Who do we choose as partners?
- Who do we understand and who annoys us
- What if we cannot be who we are supposed to be?

*Diane Levy, Parent Educator, Family Therapist and Author*

### 2.40 Afternoon Tea

### 3.00 SEX, DRUGS AND ROCK 'N ROLL!! "It wasn't like this in my day! Educating Grandparents on Educating Grandchildren!"

"There is a lot of evidence that kids are almost forced into sexual activity, are uncomfortable with it, and it causes them a lot of anxiety. Without helping them to understand their bodies better and to gain judgement, can we really imagine that they can resist the hormonal urges, the peer pressure and the media-based sexual onslaughts for five years or more? Just telling them to keep their legs crossed is not enough."

*Professor Peter Gluckman, Liggins Institute Director, Sunday Star Times 12/10/2008*

### Part I Sex and Drugs

Navigating the minefield of the 'tween-age' and teenage years is difficult for parents let alone grandparents. In this session the multidisciplinary panel will provide an insight into:

Sex –

- The facts and figures. What is happening amongst the youth of today?
- Sexual health education. What is being taught in our schools and what are its limits?
- When and where to get professional help

Drugs –

- The sub-culture of drug-taking and alcohol abuse amongst our youth today
- Identifying the signs of drug use and alcohol abuse in teens
- How and where to get help
- Protecting yourself

*Sergeant Deane McEntee, New Zealand Police*  
*Kendyl Smith, Attitude Manager, Parents Inc.*

### Part II 'Having the talk' The How-To in Communicating with your Grandchildren

'Having THE talk' and raising the issues of sex and talking about drugs and alcohol abuse can put the fear of God into many parents and grandparents. The reality is, however, that it is an essential part of parenting and guiding your children and grandchildren through to adulthood and it is not something that you can or should leave up to their peers or the school to take care of. But let's face it – with a generation gap between you and your grandchildren - how do you talk to them about these issues in a way that won't get you both freaked out in the process? In this insightful and entertaining session, the dos and don'ts of communicating with your tween or teenager are explored.

*John Cowan, Senior Writer and Presenter, Parents Inc.*

### 4.30 Surprise Guest!

### 4.40 BabyCARES and Taking Care of You

Infants and young children need more than efficient and well-managed care; they need one on one contact with someone special with whom they can form a secure attachment relationship. The formation of responsive and respectful relationships can determine life-long outcomes for young children. But to provide that care for infants and young children it is important that you first care for you. This experiential workshop provides you with an opportunity to see 'care' through different eyes and confirm the importance of caring for you to care for others.

*Ingrid Chettleburgh, PORSE In-Home Childcare and Educator*  
*Training Field Support Manager*

### 5.30 Closing Remarks from the Chair and Conclusion of Day One

### 7.00 Conference Dinner

WORKSHOP

## Day Two – Thursday 29 October 2009

### 8.00 - 10.00 GRG Support Group Coordinators Training Forum

A two hour training session for the Coordinators of local GRG Support Groups

### 9.00 Opening Remarks from the Chair

### 9.10 Grandparents as Educators to their Grandchildren

Providing practical tips for grandparents educating and raising their grandchildren, this session will provide an introduction to the organisation; PORSE, and examine:

- The importance of a grandparent's role as an educator
- How PORSE can help you become an effective grandparent educator
- How you can become eligible for financial assistance in your role
- How you can tap into the PORSE network of educators for support and respite

*Porse Facilitators*

### 10.00 Supporting our Grandchildren through Angry and Upset Feelings

The general Kiwi way of looking at childish tantrums is to describe them as "attention-seeking" and, in a previous generation, "just needs a good hiding." When we have an angry, upset child in front of us, we often have an urge to ignore them or exile them so that they will learn that that they cannot get away with that sort of behaviour. Diane Levy's approach is a long way from "praise or punish." She will show us how she developed a different way of thinking about our grandchildren's anger, how to sort out whether we are dealing with a wobbly of control, upset or despair and practical suggestions about what we can do.

- How I learned to change my mind
- How we were designed to be raised
- What doesn't work
- What works simply
- Practical examples
- But surely there are times when they might benefit from my advice!

*Diane Levy, Parent Educator, Family Therapist and Author*

### 11.00 Morning Tea

### 11.20 Understanding the Impact of Loss, Separation, Neglect and Abuse on Children's Attachments to their Caregivers

Children's brain development and the patterns in the way they form relationships is profoundly influenced by the quality of care they receive from their caregivers, especially in their first two years of life. This creates the foundation for how they react to adverse events that may occur later in their childhood, and how they respond to those who are caring for them.

- What is attachment?
- Four attachment patterns
- The needs cycle of attachment
- A two-year process of attachment formation
- Brain functioning and the impact of neglect, abuse and/or trauma on its development
- Demonstration of loving and caring water
- Practical ways for caregivers to start repairing the child's capacity to form secure attachments

*Judith Morris, Psychotherapist*

### 12.20 Lunch

### 1.20 Getting our Grandchildren to "Do as they are told!"

Diane Levy believes that a well-behaved grandchild can be a pleasure to be with. If only we can just get them to behave, we are freed up to enjoy their company. In this highly practical, what-to-do session, Diane shows us effective steps to get our grandchildren to do as they are asked.

She also tackles the difficult topics and how to sort out the sort of mayhem that can happen when we deal with sibling scraps.

- The Vicious Cycle
- How to tell Grandchildren what to do
- What if they don't?

- Time Out without punishment or consequences
- What to do about hitting, biting, taunting and swearing?
- What to do about sibling fights?
- When 'Time Out' isn't the answer

*Diane Levy, Parent Educator and Author*

### 2.20 Spotlights on the Care of Children Law

When determining what is in a child's welfare and best interests, The Care of Children Act 2004 enshrined a mandatory requirement for the court to establish the views and wishes of children. The Act was also designed to break down the barriers to grandparents and other kin carers involved in the day to day care of children, and their involvement in cases before the court. Recent changes to the law also affect the options and counselling resources available for children involved in, or the subject of, disputes before the Family Court. Five years on this session takes a critical look at the trends in judicial decision-making and dispute resolution including:

- The trends in interviewing children to ascertain their views and wishes
- Are judges going too far and placing too much weight on a child's stated views and wishes when making decisions in their best interests?
- Recent research and what it reveals about the impact the law is having on grandchildren in grandparent care?
- What changes to the law and system (if any) are necessary?

*Professor Mark Henaghan, Dean of Law, University of Otago*

### 3.10 Afternoon Tea

### 3.20 Taking Care of Your Estate and Assets

In recent years there have been a number of significant changes to the laws affecting wills and estates. For many grandparents there are concerns about making adequate provision for their families along with the constant financial pressures of meeting the day to day needs of themselves and their grandchildren. This session will examine the various estate planning issues Grandparents should be considering and the pitfalls to avoid.

*Andrew Schnauer, Partner, Schnauer and Co*

### 4.20 Open Forum

Facilitated by the Chair, this session provides an opportunity for questions, discussion and reflection on the issues raised by the earlier speakers.

### 4.30 Closing Remarks from the Chair

### 4.40 Conference Concludes

## ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

The Novotel Auckland Ellerslie and the Ibis Ellerslie are two hotels ideally located within walking distance of the Ellerslie Convention Centre. The following conference rates are available to delegates. Please tell them you are attending the conference to secure these rates, (prices include GST.).

**Novotel Auckland Ellerslie\*\*\*\* Ph 09 529 9092**  
**Standard Novotel Guest Room (room only) \$169.00**

**Ibis Ellerslie\*\*\* Ph 09 529 9091**  
**Standard Ibis Guest Room (room only) \$129.00**

*"I did not realise when I took the children on just how hard financially it would be. But somehow someone has to pick up these broken children and guide them. Back to their normal selves..."*

*Respondent to GRG Trust Survey 2004*

# MESSAGE from Diane Vivian

National Convenor – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ

Imagine you are approaching or beginning to enjoy your retirement years, when suddenly your life is turned upside down. A family crisis means you must take on the fulltime care and responsibility for your grandchildren and effectively become a 'parent' all over again. Cue sleepless nights with young babies and toddlers through to truant rebellious teenagers, plus extreme stress and the challenges associated with parenting children two generations apart from you.

*Sadly, this is the case for literally thousands of grandparents throughout New Zealand. You could very well be one of them!*

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that the State must ensure that children are protected from discrimination of any kind based on their status or that of their caregiver or guardian. Our own laws governing the care and protection of children are founded on the principle that if children can't be brought up by their parents; as long as it is in their best interests, they should wherever possible remain in the care of their family or whanau group. So often it is the grandparents who step in to care for them because of parental drug abuse, violence, and neglect, and in circumstances where the grandchildren themselves are suffering physically and psychologically and/or with special needs.

A 2009 survey of our members shows that nearly half are raising up to six grandchildren on a gross household income of less than \$31,000 per annum. Some of our grandparents even tell us they are going to bed hungry and foregoing much needed medical care for themselves to support their grandchildren and ensure they are fed.

It is a bitter irony then, that if those thousands of grandchildren were in foster-care they would be eligible for significantly more resources and financial support to cover their medical and therapeutic costs associated with their welfare and recovery. Yet all the grandparents I have talked to over the past ten years wouldn't have it any other way. The love they have for their grandchildren is what keeps them going day after day, year after year providing these children as best they can with the love and the sense of belonging they need in order to have a chance of developing into healthy and functioning members of society.

With nearly 4000 member families and 48 support groups nationwide, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust New Zealand (www.grg.org.nz) has been providing support and advocacy to grandparents in an effort to try to ensure they receive equitable assistance from government agencies, community organisations and service providers. There is still a long way to go towards getting the support that is needed, but recent changes to the Unsupported Child Benefit allowance has been a welcome improvement for many. We look forward to a time when children placed in grandparent/kin care get the same recognition as to their individual needs as do fostered children.

On the 28th & 29th of October 2009 we are delighted to be hosting the Trust's very first national conference at the Ellerslie Convention Centre in Auckland during Grandparents Week 2009 at which this issue and many more will be discussed.

The comprehensive two day programme is an important forum for grandparent caregivers as well as representatives of Government, policy advisers, agencies working at the frontline of child welfare and abuse prevention. Our aim is to educate, inform and raise the profile of the vital role grandparents are playing as fulltime caregivers throughout New Zealand. But more than that, this conference is a fantastic opportunity for all of us, whether or not we are parents or grandparents; to take a good look at how we are parenting and raising the children who will be the parents and grandparents of the future.

Make yourself your favourite brew, sit down and take a few minutes out of your busy day and read through the programme and find out for yourself why this event and the speakers involved will make a difference to your personal and/or professional life.

I personally look forward to meeting you at the conference in October!

Diane Vivian

*Founder and National Convenor – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ*

## WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Grandparents
- Kin caregivers
- Family counsellors and therapists
- Family violence practitioners
- Policy and legal advisers
- Child advocates
- Youth workers
- Psychologists
- Family lawyers
- Judges
- Academics

*A grandparent's love: for our children, for our future*