

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN TRUST NZ

National Office Newsletter

www.grg.org.nz



REPORT TO: Support Group Co-ordinators, GRG Members,
Kin Carers, Community Organisations and others.

FROM: NZ National Office Convenor

SUBJECT: National Office NZ Report August 2010 (2)



Carer Data base: 4420 members.

From GRG Office:

Companionship Wanted:

Grandmother raising 7 year old girl would love to meet other grand's for friendship in Motueka in similar circumstances, she is partnered and also looks after an elderly parent. Please phone Christine on 03 528 4036. Christine relocated to NZ from Australia to care for her grandchild.

Free Hearing Aid batteries: Different size this time: # 312's

Number DA312B8W-1.4 volts ZINC AIR- Easy Tab -8 tiny batteries in each sleeve. Duracell brand. Contact Head office on office@grg.org.nz or 09 4806530 or if a toll call to Auckland then 0800 472 637

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A Home for Life for kids in Care

Press Release by New Zealand Government at 11:52 am, 11 Aug 2010

Social Development Minister Paula Bennett has announced a comprehensive support package for New Zealanders to provide a home for life for a child in care.

We have more than 5,000 children in Child Youth and Family custody and every one of those kids deserves a secure home," says Ms Bennett.

"This is about removing the obstacles to taking a child on permanently and giving them a better life," says Ms Bennett.

The support package for families to provide a Home for Life includes:

- * Financial support for clothing and other costs (\$2,500 upfront payment)
- * Babycare pack - cot, pushchair, bottles and babywear
- * Reasonable assistance with legal costs
- * Expert CYF support for as long as necessary
- * Parenting seminars
- * Respite breaks for carers to get some time out

"There are over 2,000 foster carers currently, many of who may be able to offer a child permanency, this package supports them to do that "says Ms Bennett.

"But it's open to any New Zealander who is considering welcoming a child into their home - we want to give them every support possible," says Ms Bennett.

A dedicated support person from CYF will walk potential carers through the legal process and assistance will be provided to get correct entitlements.

The support package is designed to meet the financial, practical and individual support the child and family needs.

"Offering a foster child a home for life, means they're no longer in State care and finally they belong somewhere, which gives them the security they need to start enjoying being a child," says Ms Bennett.

Anyone wanting to know more about caring for a child should call 0508 CARERS or email homeforlife@cyf.govt.nz

"A home for life is an opportunity to offer your lifelong commitment to a child who needs you."

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From our membership:

Oh my goodness this certainly got our phones ringing and emails jumping. Some comments:

- Are we selling our children in NZ now?
- What about older children? This talks only about babies?

- How are these children going to feel later on in life when they find out their caregiver was paid to take them, what will this do to their self esteem.
- How many unsuitable people will have children placed with them?
- Is raising a child a business now?
- Does this apply to kin carers if they are already raising children under CYF?
- Did they consult with GRG Trust Board first, or at all (*no we heard about this only when press statement was released! We have done some digging see article below.*)
- That will take the discrepancy out to about \$4000 to \$5000 more than us for GRG's!
- I thought the idea was to place children back in their whanau not make it harder on them.

That's not permanency it is STATE DIRECTED ASSISTED ADOPTION! And once these children have a "permanent placement" will the Foster carer become a "caregiver" just like us and lose the advantage? Is it a real clever move so they can say that fewer children are in Foster Care under my watch?!!! Am I a skeptic? My bloody oath I am. *Hamilton Grand.*

If John Key is so adamant that he cares about the plight of children and child poverty in this country, why doesn't he and Paula Bennett do something about addressing the issue.

There are only 5000 children in "Foster Care" but between 10,000 and 12,000 equally traumatised children, being raised full-time by Grandparents who have stepped up to the mark to turn these children into good citizens.

Can anyone explain to me the difference between a Foster Carer and a Grandparent doing the same job under far worse conditions?
Great Gran, who is appalled.

GRG Trust Understanding of this issue:

Basically it is to attract new caregivers to take on permanent placement of children, not existing ones. Once they have done this permanency placement then all they will be entitled to is the Unsupported Child Benefit via W&I. In a nutshell:

Existing Caregiver: Children under CYF

Reasonable help with legal fee's if takes permanency
Gets Board payment /UCB
Non permanency gets clothing allowance 1/4ly
Other add on's
Respite care thru KidzaCool camps
Ongoing Social Worker visits
Free Caregiver training
Support Orders if takes permanency

New Caregiver:

Reasonable help with legal fees
Will then get UCB
Baby care pack etc if under 2
\$2500 up front if over 3
Respite Care possibly the same
Ongoing Social Worker visits
Parenting Courses
Support Orders

Information sourced thru 0508 CARERS and our Local CYF Supervisor.

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Free KidzaCool Holiday Camps January 2011

Close off date for the applications to ensure we can finalise selection and let people know before the year end for our next KidzaCool programme in January 2011 – our website has been updated with the following information:

www.healthcamps.org.nz

Applications can be submitted at any time prior to the close off dates for the programme. Our next programme is scheduled for 24-29 January 2011 and applications close on 30 October 2010. Confirmation of a placement will be advised by late November. Applicants who can not be placed due to the programme being oversubscribed, will be held on a waiting list for the next available programme.

Families need to apply direct to camps for application forms: numbers are listed below:

- Maunu Children's Health Camp, Whangarei, Phone: 09 437 9050
- Pakuranga Children's Health Camp, Auckland, Phone: 09 534 4017
- Princess of Wales Children's Health Camp, Rotorua, Phone: 07 345 9097
- Te Kainga Whaiora Children's Village, Gisborne, Phone: 06 867 5614
- Otaki Children's Health Camp, Otaki, Phone: 06 364 8069
- Glenelg Children's Health Camp, Christchurch, Phone: 03 332 2541
- Roxburgh Children's Health Camp, Roxburgh, Phone: 03 446 8119



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Child Youth and family Information for you, (if you care for children under them)

The CYF contact centre will be calling all their foster parents to thank them for their valuable work, and ask them how they are going. Their specially-trained staff will talk to over 2000 foster parents who are currently caring for children or young people.

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It will be an opportunity to thank CYF foster carers, but they'll also be asked a couple of key questions, including 'what could we do better?' and 'what we can assist you with right now?' The information CYF receive will be compiled for each site and sent to site managers, so they can follow up particular issues and gauge how their foster parents are getting on.

'It's all about service excellence by showing our foster carers that we value them, but it's also about hearing the voices of our carers, listening to them and learning what we could do better to assist them in their role,' said Karen. (Source Family & Foster Care Federation's newsletter July 2010)

How can we help ourselves and others in the same Position?

Tell your stories, to us and more importantly others: MP's neighbours, church people, talkback, anyone who will listen. Be part of that ground swell, let Grandparents and Kin raising our most vulnerable children be the topic of NZ conversation. For each and everyone one of you who are raising grandchildren or kin children you need to be proud, **real proud because of you, you may and probably have prevented child abuse!**

Introducing to you:

A unique and innovative newly published New Zealand book for children and young people who have trouble learning and understanding what personal and private means.

Leroy learns about the big P – a story about private and personal

Written and Published by John Hibbs (NZ) www.johnhibbs.co.nz

Available exclusively from Skylight \$35.00 - Full colour

This unique young person's book has been developed by a very experienced NZ counsellor who needed resources to help explain the concepts of personal and private to young clients with a developmental or learning disability of some kind. In other words, for those who otherwise would struggle to understand them.

John Hibbs has worked extensively with young people, including those with disability, to assist them to understand their sexuality and appropriate behaviour. He is very aware of the serious difficulties that can happen when these young people don't understand the concepts and behave in ways that gets them in trouble, or that harms and distresses others. He has extensively trialed this book himself and found it an invaluable tool in his professional tool kit. For this reason, he has now made it available to others to use as they support children and young people through these issues.

This illustrated, colourful book, with its easy to read sentences and explanations, now helps young people to learn about personal and private boundaries and how to respect them. And the large illustrations are very engaging for those for whom reading is hard.

A valuable new tool for counsellors, psychologists, therapists and teachers seeking to reinforce appropriate behaviour relating to what's personal and private. Highly recommended. The kind of resource we've been waiting for because people have asked for something like this so often!

To Order

1. online at Skylight's shop www.skylight.org.nz
2. phone **0800 299 100** during business hours
3. email support@skylight-trust.org.nz

"There is no reason to be afraid of aging, because if you age, you are lucky!
The alternative is death". *Drew Barrymore (Celebrity)*

Your Voices

Grandma Writes: In Safe Hands Now:

It's been over 10 years since I made my first phone call to CYFS. - My grandchildren were in serious danger in the care of their own parents.

Our daughter a University graduate school teacher, "please can you help me, I have been beaten up myself trying to protect them." They are with her now at home, but she is so angry and violent.

Aged 7, 4 & 1 years old, and nobody cared. "Surely" a voice at CYF said, "it's not that bad. We are very busy and under staffed".

More and more phone calls were made; finally some one came to see me as they were in the neighbourhood months later. CYFS were told to leave her property and they did. They did nothing for years, 3 times the case was closed at very critical times for these 3 young children and grandma. I slept under their house, crept around late at night and



battled this angry person for years. I was so physically and emotionally abused trying to protect innocent babies – my very own grandchildren. Police, mental health, doctors, everyone I could phone to try and get help, I phoned. CYFS turned the problem around to me being an interfering mother, got me counselling, which I attended – how could this be my fault?

Parents physically fighting daily, drugs were partly to blame.

These children were taken out in the night in a car and were told they were all going to die, mum was driving them over the bank. They sat still and quiet.

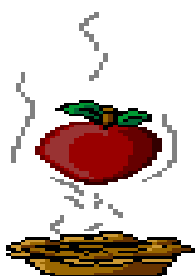
I tried to fight her and stop her from treating the children so badly – they were petrified and scared of their own parents due to years of abuse.

Neighbours, watching but never helping nor speaking up to help them, or us. Finally, the oldest is now 15 and we have them with us.

It cost us all our savings to take the parents to court. I shouldn't have had to go through all of this to keep our grandchildren safe. Children are too scared to speak up. How can the scars ever mend? Why doesn't someone listen to us?

She was our own daughter, it was very sad to see this happen to her also.

We now have no contact with either parent. They don't deserve it, these children have to mend. They are all doing well at school, enjoying their friends at home, something they never got to do. They sleep soundly, but best of all they laugh now. Grandma.



The Good Ol' Days:

My grandchildren often look sideways at me when I talk about the “good ole days”, but are absolutely fascinated that Nan's apple pie looks so much bigger and better and tastes so much nicer than the Supermarket model.

That she can whip up a feast out of nothing in next to no time is a marvel! ‘She is MAGIC’ they exclaim!

Darning a sock is ‘weird’ but mending their favorite dress or jumper ‘you’re da BOMB Nan’!
God Bless All

Nana Nade

The Bad Day:

I came home and she called to me, “come see what I have done” what confronted me was beyond belief, she has totally trashed the house, upturned TV, smashed 4 doors, smashed ornaments, which were given to me by my late mother. Put deep gauges in solid furniture. She had used a heavy metal lamp, to vent her rage. She is aged 14 and I phoned the Police, yes they took her away to CYF and now my insurance company says they will not pay for the damage.....*If any member of your family or indeed anyone invited into your home does willful damage your insurance company may not pay out under these circumstances.* Update: Grandma is going to press charges against her grand-daughter. The Insurance Company are in discussions with the grand and police depending on what they discover they may pay out, but if so it may be only because she has pressed charges. We will let you know the outcome.

Thank you for these newsletters.

These really help me and inspire me as a grandmother raising my grandchild on my own. Kindest thoughts and best wishes.

Julie

Maria also sends thanks for the newsletters, she is raising 4 and is keeping the children safe. She finds the newsletters informative and humorous and at times simply beautiful.



Raising Grandkids: What to Do When the Honeymoon Ends

Jan is a sixty-five year old grandmother who was given custody of her two grandsons, aged 8 and 15, after her daughter was jailed for drug abuse. “At first, it was a joy to have them in our house,” said Jan, whose grandchildren came to live with her one year ago.

“They seemed so happy to be here. But then the real problems started. My older grandson either just plain ignores me or he talks back. I don't know which is worse. The younger one is starting to follow suit. I'm starting to wonder where we went wrong.”

Raising Grandkids: When the Honeymoon is Over

Like Jan, often when you first take your grandchild in, there is a honeymoon period where the change of environment and absence of stress from the old living situation gives your grandchild the chance to show his or her best side, which is great. Sadly, all too often the honeymoon ends, and the problematic behaviours' emerge — sometimes slowly, sometimes with great rapidity. Either way, it knocks the family off balance.



The honeymoon should be expected, but grandparents should not be deceived into thinking that a magic solution to the family's problems has occurred by having the grandchildren come live with them. If the honeymoon never ends and your grandchild always does great, that's beautiful.

But sometimes these kids are initially being manipulative and are using their skills to try to “con” their grandparents. It's my experience that this is a very common thing for kids to do. So if the period of calm ends and the disruptive behaviour emerges, I tell grandparents “Don't blame yourself. This is just the end of the honeymoon, and you're starting to see the child in the light of his true problems.”

What grandparents have to remember is, when your grandchildren move in with you, you are their new family.

When You Have Custody of Your Grandchildren Because of Parental Addiction, Abandonment or Neglect.

Children who are living with their grandparents because of parental addiction, neglect or abandonment bring a whole set of other problems to deal with. These kids are already programmed to deal with the negative environment they came from and may not be ready to move into a family situation where there are boundaries and rules. What grandparents have to remember is, when your grandchildren move in with you, *you are their new family.*

In my private practice, I knew many grandparents who raised their grandchildren because of parental neglect, abandonment, incarceration or substance abuse. Frankly, these grandparents had their hands full. Often their grandkids came to them with a constellation of inappropriate behaviours' already firmly in place.

It was very hard for these grandparents to try to change that behaviour or intervene in the child's life and there are generational difficulties, as well as physical problems with caring for children when you're older. Your energy levels and mental flexibility may not be what they were when you were parenting young children yourself.

If the picture is that the grandparents are raising the child because of parental neglect, abuse or abandonment, above all, the parents should not be allowed to undermine the authority or rules the grandparents have put in place. You should limit or forbid visits until the parent is willing to comply with that. That's because the grandparents have now become the primary parents and the birth parents have to take a secondary role.

It's all too easy for the secondary parents to judge grandparents and be critical of their efforts because it helps the birth parent not look at his or her own irresponsibility and neglect. This should not be tolerated, especially in front of the children. The grandparents and the birth parent have to communicate, share thoughts and ideas and then come to some method of operating together.

I want to be clear: such meetings should not become a forum for birth parents to be abusive, oppositional or defiant to the grandparent. This is all too often the case. Grandparents should not accept blame from birth parents who have lost their ability to meet their own parenting responsibilities.

Avoid power struggles with your grandchild.

“You're not my mom! I don't have to listen to you!”

When your grandchild says, “You're not my parent!” I think the best strategy here is to agree with the child. You can say, “You're right, I'm not your mom but you live in my house now and these are the rules in my house.” Do not condemn the mom or dad or get into a discussion about it. All you have to say is, “There are rules here and there will be consequences if you don't follow them.”

When kids say “You're not my mom or dad,” what they're really trying to do is take the power away from you. Focus on what your role is: Caretaker. That means you should inform the child what the rules are in your house. The whole idea here is to avoid a power struggle.

What your grandchild is doing is inviting you to a fight. Remember, you don't have to attend every fight you're invited to. Avoid the power struggle, and calmly state what your role is and what the rules are. It's very important to verbalize no judgments about the mother or father. Judgments will only lead to more anger and resentment, which will lead to more power struggles.

I want to add that I really admire and respect grandparents, or anyone who adopts or takes in a child who has behavioural problems. In my opinion, they're amazing. But that doesn't mean that you can do it alone. And just as parents need help, so do grandparents. I urge you to get the help you need to successfully live with and raise these children.

For Grandparents whose Grandchildren are Being Physically Abusive

First of all, if your grandchild is being physically abusive to you, you should call the police. There's no excuse for physical abuse. You did not work all your life to be abused physically in your later years. If you want to be a martyr and allow that, that's your choice. But understand this: choosing to be a martyr doesn't help the child.

If you think you are doing it to help that child, what you need to understand is that the most important thing for that child is to have powerful limits set for them. And if they won't accept the limits imposed by you, then you need to look outside the home for entities with more power, such as the police and the social service system.

Often you'll hear grandparents state that they don't want to call the authorities because they're afraid their grandchild will end up in group home or institution. My response is clear. If he's physically hurting you, robbing you, or abusing you, maybe he needs to be in a group home or institution where the resources are available to teach him how to manage himself.

I don't say this to be harsh. I say it with complete empathy for your situation. The fact remains that kids who are physically abusive, steal, set fires, or destroy property often need more resources than the ordinary family has to offer. These behaviours' should be taken very seriously indeed, because they can be precursors of much larger problems.

If you are considering taking in a grandchild, ask yourself: are you able to manage a child with behavioural problems?

In my experience, many of the grandparents I worked with were very committed to their grandchildren, but were in fact just plain tired. They had lived their lives, they had worked like dogs, they had raised their kids, and now when they were dealing with their own failing health and financial problems, they felt obligated to take on the burden of raising their grandchildren.

While I respect the generosity of grandparents tremendously, I wouldn't always advise people to try to manage a behaviourally disordered grandchild. Each case is different. Remember, if the kid is well-behaved and knows how to manage himself, accept authority and recognize limits, the grandparents can do fine. But behaviourally disordered children are not only draining, they require people who have acquired special techniques in order to manage them.

Parenting Today Ain't What it Used to Be: Get Help if You Need It

Many of the behaviours grandparents have to address today were not part of the youth culture 30 or 50 years ago: The blatant disrespect, the demand for autonomy, the open defiance to rules. These things were present, but not at the level of intensity they are today. Grandparents I met in my practice often reported to me how shocked and discouraged they were when their grandkids did not accept their authority or the limits they set.

My advice to grandparents in cases where inappropriate behaviours start to emerge is to get help. That help can be outside the home in a counsellor's office, or that help can be inside the home through a training program like The Total Transformation.

If these children have behaviour disorders, you're going to see all that goes along with that: manipulative behaviour, risk taking, rigidity, senseless defiance. Remember not to blame yourself if these behaviours' emerge: grandparents need as much help as anybody else in dealing with these issues.

Raising Grandkids: What to Do When the Honeymoon Ends - reprinted with permission from Empowering Parents. For more information, visit www.empoweringparents.com

James Lehman is a behavioural therapist and the creator of The Total Transformation Program for parents. He has worked with troubled teens and children for three decades. James holds a Masters Degree in Social Work from Boston University. For more information, visit www.thetotaltransformation.com

For Grandparents whose Grandchildren or indeed adult children who are being abusive;

In no way is this acceptable, phone the Police if in immediate danger if not contact Age Concern if you are afraid of consequences and this is ongoing. Family Violence is not Ok is another place to seek help. If in doubt phone 111.

We over the years have heard dreadful stories of grandchildren bashing their elderly grandparents, setting fires in their homes, being verbally abusive or physically abusive. Threatening behaviours when the grands will not give into their demands, they will do all manner of things including injuring themselves to punish the grandparents. Grandmothers we know of have been locked in their bedrooms by both teen male and teen female grandchildren, phones removed from the grand's homes.

One would even pull on the handbrake whilst grandma was driving, if she would not do as he wanted. Yes sadly there are a million stories out there.

Then we come to the children of the grand's who have been known to blackmail grand's to extract money/goods from them. Do NOT put up with this unacceptable bullying. If you do not do something about it, it will continue.

Issues affecting GRG Children of late:

Girls

Threats to grandparents if they do not do what the children want they will do etc etc etc. Taking a whole lot of Panadol is one particular problem which has surfaced of late.

Self harm via cutting is rampant: Grandchildren destroying grandparent's homes are also on the increase. Truancy and even not coming back home at all. This seems to be the 12 -17 year age group and girls.

Boys

Pulling weapons on grandparents. Entering the prison system we are seeing also.

Abuse and violence from both boys and girls to grandparents. If in doubt phone 111.

Helping New Zealanders shine* www.2shine.org.nz

We hope you find the information you need here to learn more about family violence. We are always happy to talk with you about your situation or any concerns you have for others. We know sometimes the hardest part is taking the first step to reach out for help so please call, you will find someone ready to listen who can offer friendly, useful advice.

FREE CALL our confidential helpline **0508 744 633** using your mobile or landline from anywhere in New Zealand between **7.30am and 11.00pm every day.**

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Panadol over Dose:

- There are no indications (outward signs) of a Panadol over-dose..... which unfortunately means you cannot look at them and know for sure if they have or haven't
- Major damage to liver within 24 hours.
- Recommend going straight to A&E for a blood test.
- Recommend keeping a close eye on 'supply' in your home- but the Doctor did talk about person taking to 'hide' rather than 'consume'.
- If you are at all concerned about this then lock them away.



Going straight away for a blood test is emphasized. If they have taken an over-dose the tubes down the throat with 'remedy' should be enough to put them off doing it ever again.

Lorelle George. Team Leader, Health Promotions Harbour Health

You can't help getting old, but you don't have to get old- George Burns

Di & Team

National Convenor

heoi ano, na

E te Atua, aroha mai..... O God shower us with love

Ka kite

Can we help you? Members Services

Field Officers:

Alison Cuthbert:

Alison was a Social worker for over 40yrs, 26 of those as a senior social worker for the Royal N.Z Navy. She is able and confident to attend CYF Family Group Conferences (where practicable) to act as a support person for GRG's. I am an Independent Adoption Counsellor. A Family Court Counsellor working with those who have relationship issues and is familiar with the Family Court procedures related to general counselling and court procedures when applications are being made for who will assume the Primary Care Role for children. Ph 09 445 9671 Toll call, use 0800 345 671

Nola Adams:

Telephone advice can be given on the following topics Justice and Prison system, including Youth Court Family Court applications: for persons wishing to self-represent: Child Youth and Family representation where practicable/advice. Disability advice and the Schooling system. Nola can be contacted on ph 06 845 3141 Toll call, use 0508 367474

Please feel free to send/email this report on to others whom you think may be interested:

Please pass this on to other grandparents/kin carers you know of.

Disclaimer: Views expressed in this newsletter may not be the views of the GRG Trust.

Abbreviations:

GRG – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

H/O – Head Office

H/B – Handbook

BOT – Board of Trustees

CYF – Child Youth & Family Services

Co's – Co-ordinator/s

UCB – Unsupported Child Benefit.

WINZ – Work & Income NZ now DWI – Department of Work & Income

Grands – Grandparents

G/c – grandchild/ren

Kin – Kinship Carers

BPS – Business Professional Services. Our out Secretarial Service.

GRG Trust Head Office hours are 9am-3pm daily. (We raise grandchildren too)

We are a voluntary organisation.

All donations to the GRG Trust are tax deductible.

Are your children under CYF?

Do you have trouble getting hold of your Social Worker?

If this is the case then you can call 0508 CARER 0508 227

377 they will then make sure you are spoken to by your

Social Worker and if they are not available then someone

else will talk to you.

www.grg.org.nz or www.kin.org.nz or www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz or www.raisinggrandchildren.net

Email office@grg.org.nz

Free Phone 0800 GRANDS or 0800 472637 (not for use for Auckland callers)

Telephone: (09) 480 6530

Postal Add: PO Box 34 892 Birkenhead. Auckland 0742

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please contact the Trust Office as this is where the total mail out membership is kept. Moved home or planning to? Be sure to let us know.

We are a Charitable Trust



This National newsletter is proudly sponsored by as donation from Sovereign Sunshine with sincere thanks to our members, colleagues and friends in voting for our Charity in April 2010. ☺

www.sovereignsunshine.co.nz