



Media Release
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Law change means equity for grandparent caregivers

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ (GRG) celebrates the important changes to the Social Security Act 2018 following the third reading of the Social Security (Financial Support for Caregivers) Bill on 23 June 2021.

Children placed in the temporary care of their grandparents following a family breakdown or where their parents are dead, missing or they have a long-term serious disablement, will finally be able to get support to help cover their cost of living via the Unsupported Child or Orphan's Benefit from 1 July 2021,

The 1 year eligibility rule that is currently in force requires a caregiver to be "likely to be the principal caregiver for at least 1 year from the date of their application" for the benefit.

"This 1 year rule has caused so much hardship and injustice for grandparents over the years" says Kate Bundle, GRG's Chief Executive. "They are often asked by Oranga Tamariki to provide a safe placement for their grandchildren when the parents have drug, violence and mental health issues, or they are facing imprisonment, but then they get no financial support for the children's needs because the placement is seen as temporary until their parents sort themselves out."

"This law change is a long time coming and we are absolutely delighted that there will finally be support for these temporary care situations. The grandparents and whanau care givers who step up to care in these traumatic situations are heroes and the children themselves need this help when they are most vulnerable."

The law change also includes additional support for these children making them entitled to the Birthdays allowance and an allowance at Christmas time (Holidays allowance) at the same rate as children in state/foster care receiving the Foster Care Allowance. These are due to come into effect in December 2021.

In circumstances where children can't be raised by their parents; Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ provides support services, information, advocacy, advice and carer education programmes to fulltime grandparent and whanau caregivers focused on enabling them to raise resilient and healthy children achieving positive life outcomes in their care.

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