



NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2015

DATABASE: 5969 WHANAU CARERS

TENA KOUTOU, TALOFA LAVA, KIA ORANA, FAKAALOFA LAHI ATU, MALO E LELEI, BULA VINAKA, TALOHA NI, KAM NA MAURI, GREETINGS TO ALL!

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ Mitre 10 Community of the Year



FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE

Question?

"I have a sister-in-law that gets the Unsupported Child Benefit and works full time. Can you please tell me, if the mother of her Grand Daughter pays child support, Is my sister in law entitled to get that child maintenance or just the excess over her UCB? And is she entitled to get working for families, it gets a bit confusing, I was told if I myself was working I would get the maintenance as well."

A: If a Grandparent or Kin Carer is receiving the **Unsupported Child's Benefit** then they can **NOT** get Family Tax Credits from IRD as well.

The Parents of the Child have to pay Child Support to IRD and this is collected for the Government to help pay towards the UCB.

If the Child Support is more than the UCB, then the difference is paid to the Caregiver.

The UCB is Non Means Tested Benefit, meaning the Caregivers Income does not affect the Entitlement to the UCB.

Family Tax Credits via IRD is means Tested so it is affected by the Income of the Parent. This is paid to most lower income families.

A Sole Parent can get the Child Support if they are working and do not receive a Sole Parent benefit.



If a Sole Parent (Custodian) is working and gets any Family Tax Credits from IRD they can also receive any Child Support that the (Non Custodian) parent pays.

If a Parent or a Caregiver is working they may be able to also get the **In Work Tax Credit** via IRD. This is depending on their income and the hours they work per week.

A Sole Parent must work at least **20 hours** per week
A Couple must work at least **30 hours** per week, combined, ie one parent could work 5 hours where the other works 25 hours.



My Journey

I'm a grandmother of two beautiful girls both under the age of five. My journey began in the middle to last few months of 2013 when my girls started being left with me more and more often due to their parents difficult break up and their mother deciding she didn't want to parent for whatever reason she had. My daughter decided one Friday night she could go out and leave her girls with me, at his time the youngest only a few months old and the other just over two. Well she didn't return and on the Saturday morning she was still not back and with no sign of her and unable to contact her, I called my boss and explained the situation. Thankfully my boss was very understanding and told me not to worry and he would see me back at work on the Tuesday.

Needless to say I was back at work on the Tuesday as my daughter turned up on the Monday afternoon saying how sorry she was etc - excuse after excuse. I was not amused and told her so, things were fine for about a week or so then again same thing Friday evening came I'm outside with my oldest grandchild and my son 7 years old at the time, I realized my daughter has gone again! Well same thing can't contact her she won't answer her phone by Saturday I go in and see my boss explain again and he asks me what I want to do about the situation. I said I don't know and am unsure of the legal side of things, he got out his cell phone and gives me a number for a family lawyer he knows and tells me to ring the lawyer and get back to him the next week and assured me that I can take time off work as annual leave. I rang the lawyer on Monday morning and get an appointment for later that day.

After speaking to the lawyer and getting all the information, I am told by the lawyer to take some time to process this information. This time my daughter does not return for over two weeks by this time I have spoken to the lawyer and asked her to proceed with all legal matters, find a pre-school who will take the two girls at short notice so I can go back to work. Things are going well and my daughter is by now back but not worried or concerned by what has been done and carries on doing what she has been doing.

But no it was not meant to be, by April 2014 I had been given day to day care and guardianship of the two girls but unfortunately I was unable to continue working due to the financial pressure of having the girls in pre-school while I worked and W & I, according to them, could not help any more than they were already doing. Note I had complied with all the requirements W & I had asked me for ie; legal documents, showing them the break-down of their family unit, so I end up getting put on a sole parent benefit and the girls have been placed on a family tax credit. Now this is where things get confusing, I have done all that is required by me, all documents legal photocopied stamped and entered into the system and you would think that someone would have noticed this and would have said that the two girls should not have been placed on the family tax credit, they should have been put on an unsupported child benefit (UCB), and not knowing how things work with W & I thought that they were doing all that was necessary for my family circumstances.

So by this stage I have joined up with Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ for newsletters and information (one of the ladies from pre-school told me about GRG) and we carry on as normal as can be. We have had good days bad days and down-right nasty days due to the little girl's parents and the financial pressure raising two girls under five. Tears and tantrums, and not always from the kids, we carry on as best we can going with-out at times, but trying to make the best of the situation we have.



Then earlier this year I receive an email from GRG explaining about how it's time to apply for the 'school start up fund' thru W & I, so I do and to my utter disbelief I receive a letter from W & I a few days later letting me know that the girls don't qualify for this fund as they are not receiving the UCB, I asked why and they have no real explanation. I email GRG and explain my situation and within a day I receive a response and am told to contact a lady named Tricia Corin, a GRG advocate. Contacting Tricia, she tells me what I should do, how to go about it and that she will become my advocate so that she can help me with W & I. And she did! (Tricia is a referral service thru members support manager) I am happy to say that finally the two girls are receiving what they are entitled to, but I am so annoyed with W & I that during the 11 months of us struggling financially having to leave a full time job having to take the girls out of pre-school and having to tell my son that things will be rough for a while, W & I didn't pick up on this 'error' they had made. It would have gone unnoticed, I believe, much longer if it had not been for this wonderful organization Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ keeping everyone informed thank you for all that you have done.



So I have made a promise to myself to make sure that I spread the word about GRG to whom-ever I can through social media conversations I have with friends and I ask them to forward it too, so that others like me who decide to do the right thing and raise our grandkids ourselves are not alone and don't feel like there is no one out there who could help because I did feel alone. I didn't know who to ask and I accepted the word from certain Government departments as they should know, as they are meant to, but they don't always do as my story shows.

So once again thank you GRG for all the newsletters the emails with all the important information that we as GRG need and the stories of other GRG letting us know we are not alone thank you.

And especially thank you Tricia the GRG Field Officer for all your kind words, your never ending support, you are truly one in a million. So I would like to say thank you GRG for all that you have done for my little family without you, we as a family would still be struggling in all ways.

Christchurch Family

You just never know

My eldest grandson brought his new girlfriend in to meet us. She's a lovely girl and the youngest we raise was just in awe of her.

We got chatting and she said her mother was a GRG coordinator for another area also. "It is just such a small world, you never know what is around the corner." says Lynette, our Coordinator from Invercargill.

About the Extraordinary Care Fund- Opens May 18th closes June 26 2015

The Extraordinary Care Fund is designed to support children who are showing promise in a particular area or experiencing difficulties that are significantly impacting on their development.

Carers are welcome to apply for a grant of up to \$2,000 each financial year (1 July – 30 June). Where they're caring for more than one child, carers can apply for a grant for each child.

Criteria

You can apply for a grant from the fund if you get the Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit and you have additional costs because the child you support is either:

- ♦ showing promise through high achievement in a particular area, for example selection for a New Zealand -wide orchestra, kapa haka, dance, sports, academic event or programme; or
- ♦ experiencing difficulties that are significantly impacting on their development, for example a child with learning or behavioural difficulties who would benefit from participation in a particular course or activity.

Guidelines

Decisions about whether to award a grant are based on the needs of the child rather than their family's financial situation. Some costs that might meet the criteria are:

Showing promise

- ♦ Selection for participation in an arts, science, innovation, technology or academic programme or event
- ♦ Attendance at a New Zealand sporting competition
- ♦ Attending the Royal New Zealand Ballet's mentoring programme
- ♦ Private music lessons and instrument hire or purchase for a child who's progressed well beyond their peers in a group lesson setting

Experiencing difficulties

- ♦ Extra tutoring (not funded through the Ministry of Education) for a child who's unable to keep up at school because of long-term absence
- ♦ Orthodontic work (not funded through the Ministry of Health) that would lessen difficulties faced by the child
- ♦ Speech therapy that can't be funded through the Ministry of Education
- ♦ Courses or activities to develop a child's self-esteem, physical capability or social skills
- ♦ Courses or activities to improve a child's ability to learn where they have learning difficulties
- ♦ Private counselling that can't be funded through another agency
- ♦ Swimming lessons where the child hasn't learnt to swim through school lessons

What the fund doesn't cover

- ♦ Costs that are covered by the Establishment Grant or School and Year Start-up Payment or by other agencies
- ♦ Health and medical costs (eg. treatment or medication)
- ♦ Everyday costs (eg. school trips, vehicles, legal costs)
- ♦ Overseas travel

Applying for a grant

An application form will be available on our website at the beginning of each funding round. You'll need to call us on 0800 559 009 to make an appointment and bring the completed form and supporting material into one of our service centres.

If you don't have internet access or can't print out the form, come in and see us or call on 0800 559 009 and we'll post one to you.

You can apply each funding round but you can only receive one grant for each child each financial year (1 July – 30 June).

Supporting information

All applications need to include:

- ♦ details of costs such as an invoice or receipt. If the cost relates to something like a representative trip, this could be a letter requesting payment from an organiser, and
- ♦ a letter from an independent person like a teacher, coach, or other person of standing in the community who can support the application.

If you're applying for \$500 or more, you'll need to provide two letters of support.

Part payments

In certain circumstances, grants for part payments will be considered if you need a contribution towards a larger cost like a representative trip. To receive a part payment, you need to be able to show how you're meeting the rest of the costs.

This is the beginning of a 'new' round which means if you have applied before you can, now apply again. Minimum \$100 - maximum \$2000. per child.

Remember 2 categories 1) showing promise. 2) Disadvantaged.

You need 2 support letters if applying over \$500. 1 if under.

Who could you go to for these?

- 1) Local GRG co
- 2) Church pastor
- 3) School
- 4) Another organisation
- 5) Doctor

It is not advisable to get a support letter from the person who will ultimately get the payment.

Quotes, you must supply quotes for goods/items/fees requested.

You do need to make an appointment with Work and Income to hand in all the paperwork, may I suggest you keep photocopies of all.

May I suggest you pop in to work and income to get an application form ASAP!!

Challenges for a family:

Grandparents or kin who find themselves in a position of having to raise children at a later stage in life face many challenges:

Is their health up to taking on perhaps small and troubled children, do they have enough room in their home to house them? Many have downsized their homes due to age and costs. How will they be able to afford them?

Feeding, clothing and school expenses. What if they need specialist services? And at what cost? Then there is the worry of potential legal fees in getting orders over the children and the small car they may have bought is no longer big enough to transport them all. So many issues to consider, but so often at the time and in an emergency, one does not consider the wider issues. Challenges emerge as grandparents travel this road. Hindsight they say is a wonderful thing and here we share some insights.

One must consider the wider family and other grandchildren, what will be the ramifications on them and indeed reverberate back on the grandparents. Very often the wider family dynamics can have devastating effects;

They may resent you for taking on these children, you may be too tired to help them with their children, and they may even think their potential inheritance will be eaten up in costs incurred when taking on these children. Jealousy can rear its ugly head in so many ways and this also could be from the grandchildren that do not live with you. In some families this is not an issue but sometimes this can come from left field and unexpectedly.

The parent/s of the children you have taken under your wing do not thank you for doing this and

some may bring stress and vileness to your door, they may blame you for 'stealing their children' or for causing this to happen. This can divide the wider family, so that one can end up extremely isolated feeling like you are

fighting the world.

They may orchestrate family court challenges time and time again, leaving grandparents broke and in some cases giving up.



This does not necessarily mean the children will go back to the parents, very often it will mean Foster Care for them under Child Youth and Family care. A grandparent's worse nightmare!

But in facing these challenges one finds an inner strength, I liken it to at times like standing on a moving mat, sometimes it is plain sailing other times we are holding on tight with white knuckles. Having someone to talk to who understands the issues you face can be your saving grace.

To know you are not alone and there is a listening ear with knowledge on where to go and what to do can make a world of difference, and then there are the children you raise, who need you and need to have routine and a safe home.

Something as simple as a cuddle or 'I love you Nanny' brings sunshine into one's life.

These parents are adults in their own



right they have a voice and a choice; the little children have no voice, nor choice, so these grandparents must be the voice and make a choice for the children.

There is also the issue of the child you had given birth to, your child, the mother or father of the children you have to raise, to go up in Court against your own child is one of the hardest things one has to do. Many times we are asked by the grandparents how they can live with this, how can they settle the anguish in their minds about this. Our past research showed us that the majority of parents of children were 26.5 years for mothers and 28 years for fathers.

Not easy is it? But there you stand with arms outstretched protecting the wee ones, unselfishly.

What is FUNGUS?

I arrived at school on Friday afternoon to discover a string of cars queuing from two directions. It was one of those days where the rain deposited in increments throughout the day, making for a wet-wet day. I sighed as I tried to make my way to the bay where we pick up the kids. It felt more like ten hours than ten minutes later when I finally pulled in. I saw all three of them on the pavement as I rolled into the bay.

Master 8 opened the left passenger door and proceeded to get in to the middle of the car where he usually sits, while talking to me about a new baseball set he had put together. I did not take that much notice as I wanted to get Little Miss 5 into the car as she usually sits behind me in her booster seat. I asked Master 8 to get out so his sister could get in. Meanwhile Master arrived as well and started babbling about the genius of Master 8 innovation at creating a baseball set. Meanwhile, Little Miss 5 had a big soft toy bee with her, which I immediately recognised as 'Barnaby'. He is usually given to kids in her class for good behaviour and consistent work habits. Her brother's brought him home too when they were with the same teacher in year 1. I 'ooh-ed, ahed' and praised her for having Barnaby for the weekend and only took note of the talk about the baseball set on the way home, which her brother's were still talking about.

Master 7 was all excited as he told me his brother, Master 8, was a genius and that I should have a look. I told them once again, as would happen when they are in the car with me, that I cannot look around as I need to concentrate on my driving. It was then that I felt water drops on me. I was quick enough to get a glimpse of Master 8 in the rear view mirror as he stretched a rather long and very wet sock like a piece of elastic and then released it to its original state. I asked him where he had gotten the rather foreign sock as I did not recognise it. He explained with a big smile that he had picked it up in the road in front of the school! My poor heart almost came to a standstill as I envisioned him picking up the sock amidst a string of cars! The disregard of safety and risk taking is all part of his character fuelled by ADHD and neuron connection disorder.



He went on to explain that it is his new ball. I asked him to explain how he worked that out. He explained, all smiles, that he would roll it up and then would hit it with his new baseball bat. I asked him where his new bat was and noticed a flattened water bottle in the rear view mirror. It was then that I started to lecture him about the dangers of picking up rubbish. I told him and his brother and sister that you might never know what disease the person might have had who used it. I told him he could get

something like fungus. He can be quite insistent when he wants to do something, so I added that he might get fungus on his face as he had touched the sock and then touched his face! The next question then came from the three as if in a choir:

‘What is FUNGUS?’ – with the emphasis on fungus.

‘Never mind,’ I said. ‘Ask uncle Google. He will tell you how gross it is and that you can pick it up from somewhere.’

I pulled into a parking lot where there were a few shops and asked Master 7 to get out. He asked me if he should walk home from there. Poor kid, he was quite confused as I did not explain myself properly. I was more focussed on the fact that Master 8 should get rid of his “new baseball set”. I asked Master 8 to get out and put the water bottle and sock in the bin, which was in front of the car. He took off to the Cancer Foundation’s clothes bins instead! I called after him and explained that the “cancer people” would not be happy with a flattened water bottle and one wet sock! I also asked him if he would think it could be used again by someone? He agreed that it was useless to anyone but told me that he still needs a baseball set. ‘What for?’ I asked. ‘You play tackle rugby and Rippa. Isn’t that enough?’ ‘No, I need to keep fit,’ he said. ‘And it will help with footwork for rugby!’ chimed his brother Master 7.

The past more than five years have been full on with three kids with ADHD and neuron connection disorder. We journey on with the little events in our lives which makes us smile at the antics of our three precious special children.

Member Support Manager: Di & team (as a caregiver you are part of our team)

heoi ano, na. *E te Atua, aroha mai..... O God shower us with love. Ka kite*

Ka Whangaia ka tupu, ka puawai That which is nurtured, blossoms and grows

Can we help you? Members ONLY Services Nationwide

Toll free line 0800 472 637 (Caregivers only please)

Members Support Manager: Di Vivian New members and general information ext. 1

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We are respectful, we listen, we learn

He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ako mātou

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

GRG Trust Head Office hours are 9am – 2pm daily.
(We raise grandchildren too)

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Anti-bullying



0800 456 450



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