



GRANDPARENTS RAISING
GRANDCHILDREN TRUST NZ
Raising resilient and healthy
children and young people through
empowering grandparent and
whānau care families since 2001

Are you raising someone else's child full-time?

GRG provides support,
information, advice, advocacy
services and caregiver
education programmes
nationwide to full-time
caregivers who are raising
a child not born to them.
Membership is free.
Call us toll free on
0800 GRANDS or visit
www.grg.nz to join.

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Welcome! Tena koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei,
Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri Namaste, Hallo, Bonjour, Hola and Greetings this month
to our 6,604+ member families and all our non-member subscribers!

Financial support for raising someone else's child...

If you are raising someone else's child because:

- there has been a breakdown in the child's family, or
- their parents have died, or
- they are missing, or
- they have a long-term disablement

AND you are to be their principal temporary or long-term caregiver, from
the date you apply to Work and Income for this support, then you are
entitled to either the Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB) or the Orphan's
Benefit (OB) to help with the costs of raising the child.

The Unsupported Child's or Orphan's Benefits are not taxable and they are
not affected by your income or assets as a caregiver.

It is affected by any income the child might be receiving (e.g. ACC) and the
child must be resident and present in New Zealand.

To qualify, you must also be over 18 years of age, resident and present in
NZ and you must not be a natural parent, an adoptive parent, or a step-
parent of the child.

If these circumstances apply to you and you think you have been
incorrectly advised or you realise now that you should be receiving this
support, please contact us tollfree on 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or call
our National Support Office on 09 418 3753 for a referral to our advocate,
Tricia Corin.



Brad Clark
Chief Executive

Hello and welcome!

Kia ora e te whānau, happy spring! Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) is pleased to share the news that we have been successful to have our 'license to operate' renewed, by being accredited by Te Kāhui Kāhu / the Social Services Providers Association (SSPA) for another two years.

This is a significant exercise for any social services provider like GRG to undertake. An SSPA assessor looks under the bonnet, in the boot, checks the spare tyre, and does a full diagnostic on our organisation. Our systems, processes, policies and records are scrutinised and must demonstrate high standards of organisational competence.

In essence we have been assessed as a quality service provider and approved to continue to deliver those services to help our grandparents and their mokopuna across Aotearoa for the next two years. This is a testament to the GRG team, including our amazing volunteer Support Group Coordinators working at the grassroots in more than 37 city and regional communities. I want to congratulate, acknowledge and thank the GRG team across the country (including our hard-working Board), on their mahi, that made this possible.

Consequently, GRG has retained its eligibility to contract with government agencies such as Oranga Tamariki (OT). And with our Oranga Tamariki contract up for renewal at the end of June, this was one hurdle out of the way. However, with a backdrop of significant funding cuts to OT, and reduced or cancelled contracts for many colleagues in our sector - we tried not to be too confident...until recently.

GRG is excited to share that we were offered and have signed a new OT contract for a three-year term, at the same level of investment as our previous contract. This represents a modest but important percentage of our annual budgeted income. And once again, is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team and gives us reason to celebrate. Well done all!

In past CEO updates, I have written about the important work of our Board to review and update our Strategic Plan and that I would share this with you. Please follow this link: <https://www.grg.org.nz/>

[about/our-purpose](#) to learn more about the refresh of our Strategic Pillars. Significantly, no changes were made to our Vision & Purpose, or our Values. But we have updated focus areas under headings – Navigate; Advocate; Support; Equity; and Sustainability. Under each strategic pillar we have emphasised and made commitments to deliver specific supports to our people and our communities, and to focus on underpinning the long-term sustainability of GRG, financially, culturally, and in our service delivery.

As always, we invite you to follow us, and be part of our journey, and consider supporting us any way you can. And please mark Sunday 6 October in your calendar to celebrate New Zealand Grandparents Day! GRG is working to make a bit of a splash to celebrate the joy, comfort, and wisdom of the grandparents in our lives. It is an international day like Mother's Day or Father's Day and celebrated around the world on different dates. For GRG, this is an opportunity to raise awareness and celebrate an estimated 10,000+ grandparents in New Zealand who have put a hand up to parent all over again and provide loving and safe homes to around 25,000 mokopuna. We're working away to make some noise, and urge you to join our social media channels, primarily our Facebook group, and LinkedIn page to keep up to date on all GRG activity.

Ka kite anō

Brad@grg.org.nz





Christina Howe
Senior Community Advocate

Interview with Lawyer for Child

In this edition I thought I would interview a well respected and knowledgeable Lawyer for Child ("L4C") within the Waikato region to shed some light on their role within the Family Court and how they represent the children.

What is the process for becoming Lawyer for Child and how much experience do you need as a lawyer?

In every Family Court throughout New Zealand there is a list of lawyers who are qualified to accept appointments from the court as L4C.

To be appointed as a L4C, that lawyer must meet specific criteria and have a minimum experience of five years practice in the Family Court. The criteria needed includes the ability to exercise sound judgement and identify central issues, an ability to relate to and listen to children of all ages, good interpersonal skills, and an ability to relate to and listen to adults.

L4C is expected to have an understanding of tikanga Māori and knowledge of other issues, such as the impact of drugs and alcohol, dynamics of family violence, child development, disabilities, and mental health issues. A sensitivity and awareness of different world views including gender, ethnicity, sexuality, cultural, and religious issues is also critical to the role. L4C should have the ability to assist parties and other professionals involved in any negotiations or discussions.

L4C is required to complete the relevant qualifications and training and comply with best practice guidelines. L4C must act independently of the parties and advocate on behalf of the children or young people they represent.



What type of work do you do as Lawyer for Child?

As a L4C, I am typically appointed by the court to represent children in cases where there are concerns about their safety or where the court thinks the appointment is necessary. Almost all cases involve a dispute of one kind or another regarding children's care and contact arrangements, or important decisions which may impact them. The Family Court is required to take into account the children's views and ensure that they are properly presented to the court.

How do you get children to open up to you?

Meeting with the children is the most important and rewarding part of the work I do and a requirement under the legislation. When meeting with children I am always mindful of each child's individual and family circumstances.

I always talk to children in a manner which is appropriate to their age and stage in their development. I try to approach these meetings gently, with kindness, respect, and humour. I reassure them and tell them that it is okay if they do not want to talk to me, though in my experience this rarely happens.

I explain my role and that I am helping the adults in their lives to try to reach agreement. I ask them to tell me about their interests, pets, sports, friendships, school, which often helps the children to feel comfortable and open up. For younger children,

If you have any questions or want to find out more, please contact the GRG National Support Office on 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637).

using office toys or playing with them can be a helpful and fun way for them to open up.

It is important to explain to children that any decisions are always going to be made by the adults, but that it is important to know what the children think. I tell the children that I cannot promise what will happen, because ultimately decisions will be made by the adults or a Judge. Some children are too young to speak. In those cases, the role of L4C focuses on their welfare and best interests.

I always check with the children I meet that I have understood their views and wishes so that these can be accurately relayed to the Judge. In most cases the children are happy for the adults to know what we talked about. However, there are occasions when children might ask that some matters discussed remain confidential. If children disclose anything that relates to their safety or that of someone else, I discuss with them the need to tell the appropriate people, and this is done. I am always very conscious that as L4C it is always important to avoid overwhelming children who may have already had a number of other professionals involved in their lives.

What is a day in the life of Lawyer for Child like?

On a typical day my appointment will start from the time the court documents are received. It is always important to read the information carefully so that the issues, including any urgent matters, can be identified quickly.

In my role, I am required to meet with the children and gather any other information which might be relevant for the Judge before any decisions are made. Usually this involves talking and meeting with parents, any other parties, whānau members, and teachers. Enquires are also made with NZ Police, Ministry of Justice, and Oranga Tamariki. Collectively, this information provides valuable insight into a children's world and the issues which may need to be considered or determined by the Judge. Once all information is gathered, I prepare a report which is then filed in the Family Court.

In some cases, I convene round table meetings with the parties and their lawyers to try to resolve matters. In cases involving Oranga Tamariki, I might be required to liaise with the social worker involved or be invited to attend a whānau hui or Family Group Conference. In other cases, I might be involved in the appointment of a specialist report writer such as a psychologist.

I often help parties to keep care and contact arrangements going and where necessary assist when any urgent matters arises.

However, it is critical for parties to understand that L4C is not a social worker or psychologist, and it is not our role to conduct any evidential interviews for children or be the decision makers.

What is a highlight/lowlight of being Lawyer for Child?

In many disputes which come before the Family Court, sadly the children can inevitably become the victims. Children can be placed in unsafe, unstable, or uncertain situations, (whether physically, emotionally, or psychologically), by the very individuals who should be there to protect them. The impact of this, together with any conflict between the adults can have long-term and serious consequences for children, their health, well-being, and development.

The highlight of my role as L4C is, without doubt, meeting the children. There is always something special and unique about each child that I meet.

It is a privilege to represent children in the Family Court, ascertain their views and wishes and promote their welfare and best interests.

Achieving a resolution, (whether agreed between the parties or court-imposed), which focuses on the needs of the children rather than the adults, is always a rewarding and positive outcome, and one which as L4C I strive to promote and achieve.

In our next edition I will be taking us through the process of Family Court and what this may look like from start to finish.





Tricia Corin
Specialist Advocate
Income/Financial Support

Tricia Advocating for You

Child support requirement for carers receiving the Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB)

We get many enquires about the process of applying for Child Support for a Caregiver who is receiving an Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB).

Carers who need to apply for Child Support

Depending on their circumstances carers getting Unsupported Child's Benefit may need to apply for a formula assessment of Child Support for children in their care.

Carers getting an Unsupported Child's Benefit may need to apply for Child Support if all the following criteria are met:

- there is sufficient legal evidence available to establish who one or both of the Liable Parent(s) is and;
- there is no risk of violence to the carer, the carer's immediate family, the Unsupported Child's Benefit child, or their immediate family, if the carer applied and;
- one or both of the liable parents is not deceased and
- the child was not conceived as a result of incest or sexual violation and;
- there are no other compelling circumstances

*** Please Note: No other carers are required to apply for Child Support ***

When Unsupported Child's Benefit carers need to apply for a formula assessment of Child Support, the amount paid by the liable parent is used to help pay for that benefit.

When the Child Support paid is more than the Unsupported Child's Benefit rate, any excess is paid to the carer.

The IRD Form required for Caregivers need to fill out is:

IR954 Application for Child Support by a Non - parent Carer

Carers who do not need to apply for Child Support

Some carers applying for Unsupported Child's Benefit may not be required to apply for Child Support.

MSD will assess when carers must apply for Child Support depending on their personal circumstances.

The carer does not need to apply in any of the following situations:

- Insufficient evidence available to identify liable parent
- Risk of violence to the carer or their children
- Liable parent is deceased
- Child conceived as a result of incest or sexual violence
- Compelling circumstance or reason

Caregivers applying for Unsupported Child's Benefit will not be asked to apply when MSD has decided that a carer does not need to apply for Child Support. However, the carer can choose to apply if they want to.

Carers who are not applying for Unsupported Child's Benefit do not need to apply for Child Support.

1. UCB beneficiaries must apply for formula assessment

Legislation: Child Support Act 1991 section 9

2. When UCB beneficiary not required to apply for formula assessment

Legislation: Child Support Act 1991 section 9 (5)

If you have any questions about Child Support please contact the GRG National Support Office on 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) to speak with our Specialist Income/Financial Support Advocate.

Thank you for sharing your voice in the GRG annual survey

We want to say a big thank you to everyone who took part in our annual survey. Your insights and feedback are so important to us and we're grateful that you took the time to share your experiences.

Your responses play a crucial role in helping us understand what matters most to you as grandparents and whānau caregivers. With your input, we can continue to improve our support, resources and specialised advocacy efforts, ensuring they truly meet your needs.

We're also excited to announce that the lucky recipient of the \$100 grocery voucher is from the Hauraki district—congratulations! Your participation helps us make a real impact in the lives of our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) community.



Have you ever considered volunteering?

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) is currently seeking volunteer Support Group Coordinators for the following regions; Kaitia, Dargaville, Hibiscus Coast, Waitakere, Henderson, Glen Eden, Mangere, Hamilton East, Te Awamutu, Taupo, Whakatane, Whanganui, Central West Coast, Ashburton, Christchurch and Otago Coastal.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Giselle Stalls, National Support Manager, on 021 246 0553, Giselle@grg.org.nz or 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637).

Caring Families Aotearoa Excellence in Foster Care Awards 2025

Do you know a caregiver who goes above and beyond for their tamariki (children) and rangatahi (young person) and deserves to be recognised for their incredible mahi (work)? Now is your chance to nominate them!

The Excellence in Foster Care Awards is Caring Families Aotearoa's annual award ceremony which celebrates 10 extraordinary caregivers in Aotearoa who are looking after children not born to them. Hosted in collaboration with Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ, Open Home Foundation - Te Whare Kaupapa Āwhina of New Zealand, Kia Puawai and Barnardos Aotearoa .

For more information on the awards and how to nominate someone you know, please go to: www.caringfamilies.org.nz/excellence-in-foster-care-awards

If you have any questions, please contact Caring Families Aotearoa on, FREE Call 0800 693 323 or at enquiries@caringfamilies.org.nz





Giselle Stalls
National Support Manager

A word from Giselle

Finding support in others made easy

A core part of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren's (GRG) service delivery is provided through our incredible network of national volunteer-led support groups. Each of these groups may operate a little differently, but the unwavering support from our dedicated support group coordinators remains consistent. In addition to these groups, we're fortunate to have a team of wonderful coffee group facilitators who create a more informal setting, allowing our members to connect and share experiences over a cup of coffee.

Are you connected with a GRG support group or coffee group? If not, it's free and easy to do. If you're a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) registered member, please contact the GRG National Support Office on 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or via office@grg.org.nz to get a referral to a support group or perhaps you'd like to link in with a coffee group? We can help you connect with them too. If you know of anyone who would like to join one of our support groups, all they need to do is register with us through our website at www.GRG.org.nz—it's FREE and easy to join.

So, whether you're seeking the more structured support of a group or the friendly atmosphere of a coffee gathering, there's a place for you in our GRG community. Reach out today and let's stay connected.



To all our Support Group Coordinators & Coffee Group Facilitators

At the heart of everything we do is you, our incredible network of support group coordinators and coffee group facilitators. We know that many of you are still in the midst of raising your own tamariki and rangatahi, yet you continue to give so much of your time and energy to help others. Whether you're on the front lines, supporting families through tough times, organising food parcels and clothing, advocating on caregivers' behalf, sitting with them at family group conferences, gruelling WINZ appointments, lawyers, courts, or simply being there with a cuppa and a kind word, your dedication is what keeps our GRG community strong. Your efforts don't go unnoticed, and we couldn't do this without you.



Front left to right: Kathy Procter (Kapiti/Otaki), Brad Clark (GRG CEO) and Maria Zoetebier (Hutt Valley).
Back left to right: Philippa Wilson, Cecilee Donovan (Wellington), Roma Paul and Giselle Stalls (National Support Manager).

Introducing our three new Support Group Coordinators (SGCs) to the GRG team!



Moepatu Borell – Te Kuiti SGC

I have been with Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) for 2 years. In that time, I have received much needed moral support from our local GRG support group and importantly have gained legal advice from the GRG national support office aimed at ensuring my mokopuna remains safe. I am now confidently self-represented. Now having been appointed Support Group Co-ordinator of the Te Kuiti group, I hope to be able to give back to GRG in a meaningful way.

Kia ora, ko Rhonda Hurst tōku ingoa. Nō Taumarunui ahau. Kei te tino hihiri au ki te tautoko i ngā kaumātua mē ā rātou mokopuna aroha.

Kia ora my name is Rhonda, I am from Taumarunui and I'm looking forward to being part of our support group caring for our grandparents raising our beautiful grandchildren.

While such an honor it is, it comes with unique challenges that sometimes needs a listening heart, practical assistance or a cuppa tea.

Let's do this together and create some lovely memories.



Rhonda Hurst – Taumarunui SGC



Lynette Springford – Whangārei SGC

Tēnā koe, nau mai, haere mai. I'm honoured to serve as the Whangārei Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ Support Group Coordinator. I truly believe that both children and families thrive when they receive the right support and investing in our children is vital for the our country's future.

With a background as a trained special needs teacher, I have dedicated my career to advocacy, coordinating programmes and creating opportunities for community involvement, including travel experiences for my clients. My passion is deeply rooted in all things family and community, and I'm excited to bring this dedication to our support group.

Listening to Families and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Empowering caregivers through education is one of the objectives of the holistic support network provided by Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

The Listening to Families' team is looking forward to working with Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. Both activities are focussed on assisting families. We can't change the world, we can help the community one family at a time. Listening to Families provides valuable resources to support grandparents and families. Topics covered include ADHD, Anxiety, Eating challenges, Emotion regulation and Trauma.

Video clips are used to provide information to address the subject matter topics. Each question and answer is one video clip – most are less than 6 minutes. The video clips record a conversation between real people – people with experience who know the questions and those with the knowledge to answer them in a way that is easy to understand. Feedback from families confirms that the questions being asked are their questions, they identify with the people asking the questions.



The Listening to Families website is also being used by education and health professionals. They share the link to the site with families, they discuss the content with families as part of a meeting or consultation. Many are using the information to inform their own practice.

Additional topics are being added each month. There are currently 550+ clips on the site.

Listening to Families is a community initiative. The Maia Health Foundation <https://www.maiahealth.org.nz/> fund the recording of the videos and the website – the rest of the input is from volunteers.

For more information go to:
www.listeningtofamilies.co.nz

About Listening to Families

These are their objectives:

- To help families to navigate the health system.
- To answer families questions - often overlooked by busy health professionals.
- To provide information in an easily accessible format.

Listening to
families

Maia
Health
Foundation



GRG's Simply Acquired & Learned Techniques™ SALT trauma informed care workshop programme

This programme has been developed specifically for grandparents and whānau caregivers to help them learn how to increase attachment in children who have experienced trauma, and how to:

- safely de-escalate conflict, develop self-regulation and
- increase the child's resilience, feeling of stability, security, and belonging within their whānau.

REGISTER NOW at SALT@grg.org.nz or phone 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637)
Each SALT workshop is FREE for all Grandparent Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ (GRG) registered members!

Other Handy Helpline Numbers

EMERGENCY 111 for emergency services, fire, ambulance or police

PLUNKETLINE 0800 933 922 for advice on child health or parenting from a registered Plunket Nurse

HEALTHLINE 0800 611 116 for health triage and advice from a registered nurse.

COVID-19 Healthline concerns 0800 358 5453

'NEED TO TALK?' Text 1737 Get help from a counsellor

LIFELINE 0800 543 354 or Text 4357 – 24/7 confidential support from qualified counsellors and trained volunteers

YOUTHLINE 0800 376 633 helping families and youth

0508 CARERS (0508 227 377) a 24/7 Caregivers Guidance and Advice Line.

0800 WHATS UP (0800 942 8787) is a free counselling helpline for teenagers and children run by Barnardos.

DEPRESSION.ORG.NZ Free text number 4202

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ

Established in 2001 as a registered charitable trust (CC20205), GRG supports over 6500 grandparent and whanau care families nationwide, representing around 10,000 caregivers and over 16,000 children. Our vision and kaupapa is to empower grandparent and other whanau care families to achieve positive life outcomes, through providing support, information, advice, advocacy services and caregiver education programmes.

Donate

Have your circumstances changed?

Our aim is to keep you informed and of what's happening, key information and opportunities that can help you. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or you have changed address or phone number please update your details by clicking the button below or contact us.

Update your member details

Can we help you? Members ONLY services are available free of charge nationwide.

New members and existing members please call our Helpline 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or 09 418 3753

Join GRG or subscribe to our newsletter via our website or click the button below.

Join GRG

Our Website

Donate

Donating to GRG with One Percent Collective means that every cent donated lands in our bank account – they don't take a cut because they're a charity too! We get 100% and they handle all the admin. They even make it easy to claim a 33% rebate on your GRG Trust donations at tax time!



One Percent Collective
regular giving made easy

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. He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ake o mātou – We are respectful, we listen, we learn.

Please pass this newsletter on to other grandparents and whanau caregivers who need support.

Ngā mihi nui – Thank you to our Funders for their support for our newsletter.



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