



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 on toll free  
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 6,572 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 Benefit or the Orphan’s Benefit to  
help with the costs of raising the child.

The Unsupported Child 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.

# Hello and welcome!



Wow, winter seems like it has arrived suddenly! But no matter where you live in our beautiful country, I hope you can snuggle up with your mokopuna, and other loved ones, to stay warm and dry.

The GRG office has been full of cozy kids' pyjamas and other 'welcome pack' goods lately, kindly donated by the Kindness Collective, Foster Hope and others, to pass on to new members and other of our whanau in need. It is so nice to know we are not alone in our efforts and ambition to support our grandparents and the tamariki and rangatahi in their care.

A big realisation for me (as still the newbie) is the strength and depth of resources available in our sector, and the great partnerships we have built with so many like-minded organisations. So not only will you get trusted support from your local Support Group (or Coffee Group) Coordinator, or GRG Advocate, but when in need, it is likely a referral will enable you to access the help you may need. Don't be shy, if you need help and we don't know where to go, or what to do immediately, we'll always do our best to find a solution.

And speaking of our Support and Coffee Group Coordinators, as I write this, it is National Volunteer Week! We have reached out to all our incredible volunteers to thank them and recognise their contribution to our mahi. We simply could not exist without them.

Another realisation is the valuable role Family Court Navigators play for GRG members. I had the opportunity recently to partner with Hamilton SGC Pat Davis, and the dynamic Waikato Family Court Navigator Raquel Richards, to address eight Waikato and Bay of Plenty District Court Judges (that's us in the photo, in front of the Hamilton District Court). This was a golden opportunity to share with "their Honours" key issues GRG members are confronted with when navigating the family court such as – Legal Aid; Interim (and other) Orders; Child Assessments (or lack of); and shared more about the mahi of GRG. We were asked insightful questions that demonstrated an eagerness to understand the unique challenges GRG

members may face. Please see more about the mahi of Family Court Navigators like Raquel elsewhere in this publication.

I mentioned in the last newsletter the mahi of the GRG Board to revisit our strategic priorities. I'm pleased to say that a very productive day of planning took place. The outcome document remains a work in progress to ensure we have captured everything we wanted, and to ensure this is presented clearly and concisely to help guide areas of strategic focus over the foreseeable future. I would acknowledge and thank the many SGC's and staff who added significant value to those discussions. And the GRG Board for their hard work as volunteers. Watch this space for further news.

Elsewhere we've had welcome news of a significant grant from Foundation North. We want to acknowledge their ongoing support alongside the generosity of others such as Zonta International who help fund our SALT workshops. This support is vital to ensure GRG can continue its mission of supporting grandparents and their grandchildren. On the fundraising front, we will launch a digital campaign via Facebook initially and leverage our presence on Google in the coming months to raise more awareness and funds for our cause. As always, please contact me directly if you would like to discuss leaving a legacy to GRG or to introduce us to potential corporate partners or major donors.

I'm also pleased to say the new GRG website will be live by the time you receive this newsletter. This is exciting for all as our site has been long overdue for an upgrade! Thanks to Karla Macdonald and Board member Zac Johns for their hard work to see this project through.

Brad Clark  
Chief Executive  
[Brad@grg.org.nz](mailto:Brad@grg.org.nz)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad'.



Christina Howe  
Senior Community Advocate

# Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children

A lot of you have had some interaction with Oranga Tamariki and for most of you the interaction has been unpleasant, so let's take a look at how they work.

First of all, Oranga Tamariki has a choice from the outset to respond to a Report of Concern through a non-legal response or a legal response. A non-legal response is something like simply making a note on their file system, an informal resolution through a whānau hui, or an agreement is reached at a Family Group Conference. Or in a lot of our members circumstances, Oranga Tamariki tell a whānau member to take the children and then step away. In these cases, the people caring for the children are left with little to no support and are forced into the Family Court system by applying themselves under the Care of Children Act for a Parenting Order and / or Additional Guardianship Order. Please see our last edition for information on these orders.

In severe cases Oranga Tamariki will bypass the non-legal response and head straight to the Family Court by applying for a Place of Safety Warrant and/ or Temporary Custody of the children. In these circumstances, Oranga Tamariki will usually uplift the children and place them into some sort of foster care. In recent years Oranga Tamariki have become more aware of the lasting harm to the children and the whānau of uplifting children and they only do so in severe cases.

Our first focus will be the Family Group Conference. This is formal meeting with Oranga Tamariki and the extended whānau to try and work together and develop a plan to make sure the children are safe and well cared for. Prior to the Family Group Conference make sure you have spoken to whānau members you are comfortable speaking with about what you hope to get out of the meeting, discuss with Oranga

Tamariki any specific requests you have to make the meeting run smoother i.e. opening with a prayer and/ or karakia, sitting close to a whiteboard to see clearly, sitting away from certain members of the whānau. You should also consider who you want to be invited to the meeting. You are entitled to ask for a support person to be there for you, whether this is a friend or a support worker from an agency you are working with.

At the Family Group Conference you may hear the views of the children being expressed by their social worker, the social worker will explain their concerns for the children and they will seek agreement from the whānau that those concerns are real and valid. The social worker will then leave the whānau to discuss what they have heard and try to develop a plan moving forward to keep the children safe. The social worker will then consider the plan and determine whether the plan is in the best interests of the children. From here Oranga Tamariki may continue working with the whānau without applying for any Family Court orders.

Please do not feel pressured to agree to a plan or even feel pressured to agree that the social workers concerns are real and valid. You are under no obligation to agree to anything. Be careful of agreeing that the children are in need of care and protection because as soon as that is agreed, Oranga Tamariki has jurisdiction to continue. If this is not agreed to in the first instance, then the Family Group Conference does not proceed.

If you would like to know more about Oranga Tamariki - Ministry for Children or have any questions, please contact the GRG National Support Office on 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637).



So what happens if whānau do not agree that there are concerns for the children or do not agree to a plan. Oranga Tamariki have a few options available to them. They can either try to reconvene the conference at a later date, they will consider whether immediate action needs to be taken to ensure the safety of the children, whether an application to the Family Court needs to be made, or whether they can work with the whānau in another way to secure the safety of the children.

If Family Court applications are thought to be required then again Oranga Tamariki have two options. The first is custodial orders. These orders give Oranga Tamariki guardianship over the children and give them the legal right to determine who cares for the children on a day to day basis. Wherever it is safe and possible to do so, the children's whānau will know these applications are being filed, excluding in the severe cases.

The second option for Oranga Tamariki is non-custodial orders and is less known to our members. The first non-custodial order is a Restraining Order. If the children have been found in need of care and protection but Oranga Tamariki have found a safe placement for them within whānau and do not need to have the custody of the children, they can still

apply for a Restraining Order against any person to stop threatening or abusive behaviour, or stop that person residing with the children. The second non-custodial order is a Support Order. Again, if the children have been found in need of care and protection but Oranga Tamariki have found a safe placement for them within whānau and do not need to have the custody of the children, they could still work with the caregivers on a temporary basis (not exceeding 12 months) to get support in place for the children i.e. school assistance, counselling, medical diagnosis. Do not be afraid to ask for a Support Order when taking over the care of children.

If children are placed under the guardianship and/or custody of Oranga Tamariki it is not the end of the proceedings. Oranga Tamariki are required to review the plan and placement every six months for a child under seven years and every 12 months for an older child. At each review the Family Court becomes involved, and if there are issues or inconsistencies or if a whānau member puts their hand up to care for the children, or if the parents have turned their lives around, the Family Court Judge will consider these changes in circumstances.

Keep in touch with us if you have any questions about this article and stay tuned for the next edition where I interview a Lawyer for Child.

## Kaiārahi o Te Kooti a Whānau Family Court Navigator Waikato

### WE ARE HERE TO HELP

- This is a free service. Contact us about:
  - o Care of Children/Custody
  - o Family Violence
  - o Oranga Tamariki
  - o Family Court Process & Information
  - o Legal Aid
  - o Divorce
  - o Out of Court Process & Options
  - o And Much More...
  - o We are unable to offer Legal Advice



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Phone: 027 247 6149

Family Court Navigators

Ministry of Justice | Tāhū o te Ture  
Hamilton District Court | Waikato



Tricia Corin  
Specialist Advocate  
Income/Financial Support

# Tricia Advocating for You

## Change of Caregiver

What happens when a change of caregiver occurs? This is a question I get many times, when a Caregiver is already receiving the Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB) or the Orphans Benefit (OB), but the child may be moving to another Caregiver.

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### What happens with the Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB) or Orphans Benefit (OB)?

If a Caregiver is caring for a child, and they receive the Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB) or Orphans Benefit (OB), and the child is going to move to another Caregiver.

The new caregiver must be an eligible caregiver, then they can receive the OB/UCB for the child.

### Eligible Caregiver

To get an Orphans Benefit (OB) or Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB), the caregiver must be an eligible caregiver, which is either the principal caregiver or the principal temporary caregiver of the child.

### This is called a change a 'Change of Caregiver'

The new caregiver will have to fill out an application form. Where a new caregiver applies for Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit, you will need to obtain verification from the previous caregiver that the child is no longer in their care.

This does not include:

### Additional Care Arrangement

If the change in the caregiver is temporary, for example, school holidays or a short stay in hospital, the Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit can continue to be paid to the caregiver, provided contact and support of the child is maintained and the caregiver continues to be the principal caregiver or principal temporary caregiver.

When a dependent child leaves the caregiver's care

Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit, and Clothing Allowance for the child should stop from the beginning of the next pay period.

However, there is discretion to continue payment for up to 28 days following the event. This discretion is generally used to avoid financial hardship for the family when the change has been unexpected or when processing deadlines have passed.

### Change in Age

A child's age affects the:

- rate of Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit payable and
- whether or not the child meets the definition of dependent child

A child is considered to be a dependent child unless the child is:

- in full-time employment
- Note that generally a child can still be a dependent child when they start part-time employment
- Receiving a basic Student Allowance or an Independent Circumstances Allowance
- Note receiving a Student Loan does not necessarily mean a child is financially independent

If you have any questions about a Change of Caregiver, Unsupported Child's Benefit (UCB) or Orphans Benefit (OB) please contact the GRG National Support Office on 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637).

## Under 18 and not attending school

A child does not have to be attending school to remain a dependent child up until the age of 18 years.

## Child turns 18 years

When a dependent child turns 18 years old the Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit should stop.

## Exception

Where a dependent child is attending school or a tertiary institution (including by correspondence) you may continue to receive Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit.

At the end of each school year 18-year-olds who are still at school or an educational facility will automatically be excluded from the benefit on the first payday after the 31 December each year.

Caregivers will be sent a letter advising them of this.

If an 18 year old wishes to continue their education the following year then they may qualify for Student Allowance.

## Child's Income

Personal earnings of the child do not affect the rate of payment of Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit.

A child in full-time employment and financially independent is not treated as a dependent child for Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit.

## Other income

A child may receive other income that is not from personal earnings. Any other money received (other than personal earnings) that is more than 50% of the basic annual benefit rate reduces the benefit payable by \$1.00 for every complete \$1.00 of income.

Other income may include:

- interest from bank accounts
- trust income and
- payments from the Arthur Hall Fletcher Trust

If a caregiver receives an Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit for more than one child, the income is assessed separately for each child. This may mean different rates of benefit may apply to each child depending on their age and income levels.

Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit.

## End of School Year

At the end of the school year there is a review process for 16 to 18 year olds who are still included in a benefit as a dependent child.

Instructions are sent out early each October from Ministry of Social Development ( MSD) National Office.

## Children aged 16 or 17 years old

Caregivers will be sent letters asking if their 16/17 year old child will be attending school or an educational facility in the following year.

If a 16/17 year old is not attending school or an educational facility they can continue to be included in the benefit as long as they are still a dependent child.

## Children aged 18 years old

At the end of each school year 18 year olds who are still at school or an educational facility will automatically be excluded from the benefit on the first payday after the 31 December each year.

Caregivers will be sent a letter advising them of this.

If an 18 year old wishes to continue their education the following year then they may qualify for Student Allowance.



In celebration of National Volunteers Week this June, we extend a special shoutout to our amazing team of volunteers at Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust New Zealand (GRG). Your tireless dedication to our caregiver families is truly inspiring.

Our incredible team includes dedicated Support Group Coordinators, Coffee Group Facilitators, Board of Trustees and their many helpers. Your commitment and hard work bring comfort, guidance and a sense of community to so many. Thank you for your time, energy, and passion. You truly make a difference!



Giselle Stalls  
National Support Manager

## A word from Giselle

It's hard to believe we're already into June—where has the time gone? As they say, "time flies when you're having fun." I have the pleasure of working with Support Group Coordinators from all over the country. While I support them, they teach me so much in return. These Coordinators are also grandparents and whānau/kin caregivers, with real lived experience.



I am pleased to introduce our four new Support Group Coordinators: Leonie in Napier, Marie in Tokoroa, Jacqui in Matamata and Michelle in Porirua. Through our conversations and interactions, it is clear they have a wealth of experience and insight to offer. We extend a very warm welcome to each of them as they join our GRG Whānau.

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

Hi, I'm Leonie I was born in Hastings in the sunny Hawkes Bay 63 yrs ago.

After a wonderful childhood, at 21 I married my husband Glenn and went on to have 3 children and 6 grandchildren, 2 of which have been in our care for the last 8 years. My interests include Ten pin Bowling ,movies and catching up with friends and family.

Over my life I've worked as a cook, waitress, Plunket car seat rental Coordinator ,IHC carer and over the last 20 yrs as duty manager at a local cinema. Things I've been involved in have been, Netball ,softball, cub leader, Plunket, kindy, school PTA and junior netball council .



Leonie Lewis Napier SGC

Have you ever considered volunteering? We are currently seeking volunteer Support Group Coordinators. If you are interested, please contact Giselle Stalls, National Support Manager, on 021 246 0553, [Giselle@grg.org.nz](mailto:Giselle@grg.org.nz) or 0800 GRANDS.



Marie Mason Tokoroa SGC

My name is Marie Mason. I am married to Tony, we have 4 children ranging from 17-27 and 5 grandchildren of which we are raising 3 of them. I grew up in Hamilton, Auckland and Tokoroa whereas my husband is born and bred here. We have a busy home with our youngest 2 children still at home (daughter is currently in Yr12 at school) plus the 3 grandbabies ranging from almost 10yrs old down to 20mths old. All of them have their own unique personalities and I feel honoured and enriched to be able to watch them grow and explore their own worlds. I'm always here to lend a listening ear and offer whatever assistance I can. I look forward to putting some more names to faces over the coming months.

Hi my name is Jacqui Toungh. My husband and I have lived in Matamata for the past four years having relocated from Auckland to retire. I am a mother of 4 children and have seven wonderful grandchildren one of which has been in our care for the past 8 years.

My past background is in Human Resources working in large corporate organisations. It's the skills I have learnt in this role and the challenges and struggles we experienced bringing up our own granddaughter that I hope to be able to utilise further within my new role as assistant coordinator for GRG. I look forward to meeting and working with you in the future.



Jacqui Toungh Matamata SGC



Michelle Emmett Porirua SGC

Hi my name is Michelle Emmett. I was born and raised in Taranaki, mainly Waitara and New Plymouth. Moving to Porirua in 1984 when my son was one week old. My three children are now grown, and I have four wonderful grandchildren. Over the years I have held a variety of jobs covering assembly line work, customer service, logistics, banking and taxation. My interests mainly revolve around papercraft. Making cards, gift boxes and folders to display photos etc. I also enjoy puzzles, game shows and knitting. I am currently raising my youngest granddaughter who is 4 years old and prior to her I also had her sister on and off over a ten-year period. Having had this experience and the highs and lows that come with it I welcome the opportunity to support other grandparents in a similar situation.

We are sad to say farewell to Karen Kilgour, Ashburton Support Group Coordinator (SGC). You have been an incredible SGC! Your passion and dedication to the GRG members have been invaluable and for this, we are forever grateful. Thank you for agreeing to remain part of the support group. Take care, from the GRG Team.





# Kaiārahi Family Court Navigator - Waikato

Kaiārahi Family Court Navigators aim to help people navigate the Family Court by providing whānau and families with information, guidance and support in their Family Court journeys. Kaiārahi also have a role connecting the Family Court and its users with appropriate supports available in the community. Kaiārahi aim to improve family justice outcomes for whānau and families by empowering them to make informed decisions on appropriate justice pathways and how to access them. Kaiārahi also provide information about how to engage with the court for legal matters or how to access out-of-court services.

## They help whānau:

- Understand the language, processes and outcomes of Family Court proceedings
- Where appropriate, access out-of-court services to help you reach agreement about the care of your children
- Remain engaged and involved in any Family Court proceedings by working to address any barriers that are preventing you from participating
- With your agreement, connect you with other agencies and services in the community to support you as needed.

Waikato Kaiarahi cover Coromandel to Taumarunui and are placed at a minimum of 25 Co-Locations within the region on a rotating roster to align with Ministry of Justice (MOJ) strategies in building and strengthening relationships and delivering access to justice amongst the beating hearts of our communities.

They have seen great success with organising Judicial Community days, Court Open Days and Education/Information sessions to ensure this knowledge is spread far and wide to our local organisations and Government departments alike who are working on the frontline to improve outcomes for Whanau.

They are a free and trusted confidential service who are passionate about ensuring our people are well informed and in the right hands, at the right time when seeking assistance.

Waikato Kaiarahi have a long standing relationship with GRG and appreciate the selfless efforts our grandparents make every day for our tamariki.

They are on hand and ready to support you wherever wthey can!

## How do I get in contact with a Kaiārahi Family Court Navigator?

You can contact your local Family Court Kaiārahi in the following ways: ask at the main counter (customer services) at your local courthouse, or phone 0800 COURTS (0800 268 787) or email [Kaiarahi@justice.govt.nz](mailto:Kaiarahi@justice.govt.nz)



## Caregiver Education

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](mailto: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.



Disclaimer: Opinions or views expressed in this newsletter shall be understood as reflecting those of the author as quoted and are not to be taken as given or endorsed by GRG. This newsletter is subject to copyright. © 2024

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