



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 and services are free. Call us on toll free **0800 GRANDS** or visit **www.grg.nz** to join.

Inside this issue

Kate's Take	2
KidzACool Camps	3
Hannah's Outreach	4
Caregiver Education	5
Tricia - Advocating for You	6
Merle's Support Group Update	7
Grand Reflections	9
Support Group Contacts	10
GRG Contacts and Helpline Numbers	12

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 6,000+ 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 for it 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 472 637** or call our National Support Office on **09 418 3753** for a referral to our advocate, Tricia Corin.



Kate Bundle
Chief Executive

Kate's Take

Kia ora koutou katoa and a warm welcome to the 119 new client families who have joined GRG for support since our last newsletter. *[Recent media articles](#), including comment from me, have highlighted the challenges grandparents and whānau caregivers can face when they seek income support for the tamariki and rangatahi who come into their care. Experience and research has shown us many times over the years that taking on the role of full-time caregiver can be really tough.

Many agencies are often involved and caregivers often feel incredibly overwhelmed and vulnerable as they navigate their way through the legal processes involved with Oranga Tamariki and the Family Court, accessing financial support through government agencies, while also trying to provide the children with a stable home in which they can feel a sense of belonging and safety.

With fewer children going into state approved foster care and more grandparents and extended whānau caregivers stepping up to provide care where needed, applications and grants made for the Unsupported Child Benefit (UCB) have increased significantly over the past decade. Each month around 60 new referrals are made to our advocate Tricia Corin for advice and advocacy support on income support issues. The majority of these relate to applications for the UCB and for some clients there are lengthy delays before they finally get any financial support. The process can require advocacy through reviews of decisions and appeals over a long time period.

We learned in our [NZ Lotteries funded research with around 1100 caregivers in 2016](#), that only 15% of grandparents seeking financial support were correctly advised of their entitlement to the UCB when they first sought help from Work and Income. Inconsistencies in the application of the law, policy and practice guidelines regarding the UCB application process is still a challenge in some areas and it is notable that in the year to 30 June 2022, Tricia's advocacy for 33 clients resulted in arrears of UCB/Orphan's Benefit entitlements totalling \$673,380. In the nine months of this financial year to 31 March 2023, just 21 caregivers have received over \$928,000! What these figures tell us is that for some caregivers, they have struggled significantly for many months or years to feed, clothe and house the children in their care and their struggle could have been avoided if they had been correctly assessed as to their entitlement in the beginning.

Recently [the story of Peter Sargent](#), a new

grandparent caregiver in Fielding, being told to 'toughen up' by a Work and Income representative, highlighted the attitudes that can be shown by some in the agency. Through our discussions with MSD/Work and Income's senior management I am heartened to report that over the past few months the concerns we have raised regarding these kinds of attitudes are being addressed and reassurances given that they are not acceptable. We will continue to engage with them to advocate for improvements in service delivery, policy and processes.

In our [April 2022 newsletter](#), we also highlighted our concerns about the number of children potentially missing out on the [School and Year StartUp payment](#). After figures were released by the Ministry, revealing that there could be as many as 8,000 children missing out on this support each year for the 2019-2021 years, we queried why this support couldn't be automated as happens with the clothing allowance. Unfortunately, without a policy change by the Government, Work and Income's hands are tied as the policy for this additional support requires an 'application' to be made.

If you are receiving the UCB/OB, keep an eye out for emails and letter reminders towards the end of the year, letting you know when to apply. We also remind you in our newsletters and social media posts. Through these efforts by Work and Income and increased awareness, I am pleased to note Work and Income's senior management advice recently that in the past year there has been improvement with around 87% of the children receiving the UCB/OB now receiving SAYSUP. We will continue to advocate for the policy to change so that this can be automated.

*See recent articles in [Stuff.co.nz](#)

- [Raising grandson easier than negotiating 'minefield' of social services](#)
- [The 'hidden' care kids: Need for benefits to raise someone else's child up 50%](#)
- [Treatment of grandparents raising grandchildren a 'systematic failing'](#)

Welcome to our new Trustees

It gives me great pleasure to welcome and introduce you all to our three new trustees, Duane Trembath, Laurie Porima and Zac Johns; appointed to GRG's Board of Trustees in recent months. They have a passion for the GRG cause, and in each case they have been raised by their grandparents at some stage during their lives. Their diverse expertise, experience and insight will undoubtedly enhance GRG's governance and strategic direction in the years ahead.



Duane Trembath

Duane (Whakatōkea te iwi) is a Chartered Accountant and an experienced business leader, having worked for Te Reo Tātaki (TVNZ) and large multinational organisations such as Estee Lauder Companies and L'Oréal both in New Zealand and abroad. Most recently, Duane has been appointed as CFO of Tourism New Zealand. Duane's grandparents played an important role in his upbringing, and he is passionate about supporting community organisations to provide the best outcomes for our tamariki and rangatahi.



Laurie Porima

Laurie's iwi affiliations are Ngāti Manawa, Ngāti Hikairo, Waikato, Ngai Tuhoe, and Ngāpuhi. Raised by his grandparents he is keenly interested in their role in raising grandchildren including from a tikanga Māori perspective. Laurie is an independent Māori evaluation and research specialist. He works in a range of economic, educational, policy and social service sectors. He holds commercial and NFP governance and director roles providing governance, management, outcomes and strategic planning training and advice to Iwi, Māori health services (Hauora), Social Services, Kōhanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa Māori.



Zac Johns

Zac was raised by his grandmother who passed on her zeal for Musical Theatre, kindling his interest from an early age. He has been involved in many aspects of theatre and the performing arts, primarily as a Music Director, Conductor and contributor to productions including Jersey Boys, Chess, Mary Poppins, Les Misérables, and Sister Act. Alongside his music career he works for the Fundraising team at the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and has contributed to theatrical charitable causes, including serving as Chairperson for the NAPTA Charitable Trust.



KidzACool Adventure Camps

Coming up - 5 Day July School Holidays Camps!

KidzaCool Adventures programme gives children the opportunity to play and relax in a fun, safe and sociable environment while kin, whānau and foster carers work, relax or catch up with friends and family.

Offering carers peace of mind while offering children, aged 5-12, a piece of the action!! The programme is a FREE service for caregivers.

KidzACool Adventure Camps are offered in Whangarei (Northland), Auckland, Rotorua (Midland), Gisborne (East Coast) and Christchurch villages.

If you are interested in sending your grandchild to a KidzACool Adventure camp, you must have had a child in your care for 12 months or more and you must not be the biological or adoptive parents of the child.

Applications generally close four weeks prior to the holiday programme start date. If not placed at the time, Stand maintains a waitlist for later programmes during the year or following year.

Children who have previously attended a KidzaCool Adventures programme may apply for another stay, however, Stand prioritises first time applicants and those who have high needs for a break. Any remaining places may then be offered to return stay applicants.

For more information and a Referral please contact the GRG National Support Office on **0800 472 637** or email office@grg.org.nz

Hannah's Outreach - a child's story

One of the primary goals for all caregivers is to keep children safe.

Whether you are a grandparent, whānau or kin caregiver, a foster parent or adoptive parent, you empower and guide children in your care on ways to establish and maintain healthy boundaries. We often get questions from caregivers about the best way to guide children when they are asked questions about their care arrangements.

Children rely on you to help, guide, and support them and when you welcome a child into your care, you become an essential part of their life. You provide them with your love, comfort, care, stability, guidance, support and a sense of belonging. Often, they will be asked personal questions about your role in their lives and for example, what it is like living with your grandparents. Those questions can come from friends, family members, teachers and others.

Other examples might include:

- How long will you have to live with your grandma?
- Why are you in foster care?
- What did you do to end up in your situation?
- What did your parents do (or not do)?

Sometimes these questions are well-intentioned. Sometimes they are inquisitive, and, at other times, the questions can feel intrusive. You can help them understand different ways that they can respond when asked personal questions about their lives, their families, or their experiences.

One of the most beneficial things you can do is to provide a safe environment for them to practice what personal information they are comfortable and willing to share with others. Ask them some questions that others might ask and discuss their answers together. You could also switch roles with the child—have them play the caregiver while you put yourself into their shoes. This type of exercise can help them learn various ways to respond to personal questions from others. Setting and establishing privacy boundaries are vital life skills

for them to carry over into their adult lives.

Understanding the right to privacy is another important lesson for children so that they develop respect for themselves and feel empowered to set personal and appropriate boundaries.

Therefore, teach them that they don't have to share their personal story either in person or online. Reinforce with them, that the decision to share their story is up to them. They have the right to decide how much or how little they feel comfortable sharing—even if it means sharing nothing at all.

Teach them that it is okay not to answer any questions about their personal lives or the lives of their family. Encourage them to talk with you or if

***A child's story is their story
to either share or keep
confidential.***



**If you would like help or have any questions,
please contact the GRG National Support
Office on 0800 GRANDS**

they have a caseworker, trusted teacher or school advisor when they are unsure if they should or should not share their personal information.

Discuss potential ways to respond by sharing some information but without oversharing. A strategy that can work is to teach them that they can change the topic, refuse to answer the question, or simply walk away.

Empower them to set healthy personal boundaries to protect themselves, as well as to protect their family's privacy and to remember that they get to decide what they want to share and control how

much or how little they want to share with others.

Remember that sharing your personal story as a child or young person can be a delicate and difficult decision. How much they feel comfortable sharing may change at various times and with various people. Encourage them to share their questions and feelings with you, or another trusted adult whenever they need to.



Hannah Morris
Community Outreach Advocate



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.

Upcoming workshops: 10am - 2pm Venues confirmed on registration

Hamilton 18 May, Palmerston North 25 May, Rotorua 2 June, Porirua 8 June

East Tamaki 9 June, Tauranga 16 June, Ashburton 21 July, Matamata 27 July, Tokoroa 28 July

REGISTER NOW at SALT@grg.org.nz or phone 0800 472 637

Venues and further information is confirmed on registration. If you are interested in a SALT workshop please contact us via the above email or phone.

Tricia Advocating for You

On 1 April 2023, the rates for benefit payments increased and this month I include a table of the new rates for the Unsupported Child or Orphan's Benefit payments (UCB/OB). I also include reminders and key dates for applying to the Extraordinary Care Fund and information about the Child Care Subsidy and the OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreational Subsidy).

UCB/OB Age Category	Weekly UCB/OB Non-taxable rate	Weekly UCB/OB Clothing Allowance Non-taxable rate	*UCB/OB Holiday and Birthday Allowance Non-taxable rate
0 - 4 years	\$273.36	\$23.92	\$136.68
5 - 9 years	\$275.25	\$27.13	\$137.63
10 - 13 years	\$296.59	\$33.50	\$148.30
14+ years	\$317.82	\$40.19	\$158.91

* The Holiday and Birthday Allowance are two separate automatic payments made each year to help cover the costs of preparing a celebration, purchasing gifts, or planning an event or experience for the child. The Birthday Allowance is paid around 2 weeks before the child's birthday and the Holiday payment is made in mid-December before Christmas.

Extraordinary Care Fund

UCB/OB recipients can apply for funding of up to \$2,000 per year if a child in your care shows promise in a skill or talent, or because they are experiencing difficulties and need extra support. It can also cover the cost of a BYOD for school. e.g. iPad or laptop.

If you applied to the ECF **before 26 February 2023** for funding you should hear the decision soon. There have been delays in processing applications since February's Cyclone Gabrielle.

The Ministry for Social Development has changed the dates for the next rounds as follows:

- Applications lodged **before 1 May 2023** should hear **decisions after 9 June 2023**.
- Applications lodged **before 1 August 2023** should hear **decisions after 11 September**.

If you received a grant in the year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, you can apply for a grant for the year starting on 1 July 2023. You can take your Applications into Work & Income any time. You do not need an Appointment.

If you are able to, you can also email your application directly to Ministry of Social Development (MSD) on extraordinary-care-fund@msd.govt.nz

If you still need advice or GRG to advocate for you to access your income support entitlements please contact us on **0800472637** for a referral to our advocacy service.

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy is a payment that helps families on low to middle incomes with the cost of pre-school childcare. It is available for caregivers of a child under 5 or under 6 (if they qualify for the Child Disability Allowance) and is for 3-9 hours per week if you are not working. If you are working or in education/training you may be eligible for up to 50 hours. The amount paid is based on your gross weekly income. The income thresholds have all increased from 1 April 2023 between 20 and 46% so if you did not qualify before 1 April 2023, you may want to check the new income thresholds. The table is available on [Work & Income's website](#).

OSCAR Subsidy

This is a payment which helps families with the costs of before and after school care for up to 20 hours a week, and school holiday programmes for up to 50 hours a week. Again the income thresholds have increased and you can check your eligibility on the [Work & Income's website](#).



Tricia Corin
**Specialist Advocate
Income/Financial
Support**

Merle's Support Group Update

In this newsletter we welcome a new Support Group Coordinator, farewell three and mourn the recent passing of a much loved member of our team of wonderful volunteer Support Group Coordinators. Karlene McCormick a former Whakatane SGC passed away suddenly on 22 March 2023.

Karlene, as many of our members know from their own connection with her, was a warm, wonderful and beautiful soul who gave so much aroha, touching the lives of many people in the community, including our grandparents who saw in her an inner strength and capability which in turn helped them to view the world with hope. Rest in heavenly peace Karlene. You will be missed but never forgotten.

Welcome to Cheryl London

We would like to welcome Cheryl London to the SGC team who is representing GRG in the Mid North. Cheryl and her husband have recently retired and have returned back to their whenua in the Hokianga. They are busying themselves with getting connected back into their community. Cheryl has experience in teaching, special needs, learning and behaviour and supporting and coordinating whānau. A qualification in Mental Health and Addictions adds to her kete of what she can offer to grandparents raising their mokos. We are thrilled to have Cheryl take up this role in an area where we expect support and understanding to go a long way toward helping and growing our membership.

Tēnā koutou katoa
Ko Cheryl London toku ingoa
Ko ingarangi me aērana te whakapaparanga mai
Ko Whanganui te whenua tupu engari,
Ko Hokianga te kainga
Tēnā tātou katoa

Cheryl London – Mid North
Contact: 021 680 863 / midnorth@grg.org.nz



Karlene McCormick 1958-2023



Cheryl London

Thank
you
♡

Thank you and farewell

Pam Downing – Tauranga SGC

It is with a heavy heart that I wish to notify you of the resignation of Pam Downing, our Support Group Coordinator in Tauranga. Pam has loved the role of Support Group Coordinator and has made the difficult decision because her personal situation has changed leaving her without the necessary time to do the role. Pam had a challenging start to the role in March 2020 during the Covid 19 lockdown. Her first support group meeting came in August and was a marked success with fifteen grandparents in attendance. Pam has always been approachable and a comfort to many grandparents who have required one on one support by phone or over a cup of coffee. She has been proactive in the community linking in with social workers and the Lions Club who have generously supported our grandparents at Christmas time. She has been a great support to our previous Support Group Coordinator in Katikati and temporarily covered the Papamoa area. Thank you, Pam for your work with GRG and we wish you well in whatever the future holds for you and your family.

Jo Wickham – Taumarunui SGC

Due to health reasons, we are sad to advise that Jo Wickham has recently resigned from her role which she has held since 2018. Over the past five years, Jo has been a steadfast and amazing support to grandparents in the Taumarunui area including coordinating several initiatives that have benefitted our GRG families with whānau outings and camps to Mt Ruapehu and the Blue Mountain Adventure Centre to name just two. We are very sorry to see Jo leave the role, but appreciate the need for her to look after herself and her family. Thank you Jo. We wish you well in your recovery.

Martine Donnelly – Hamilton East SGC

We also sadly farewell Martine who has been an excellent support for many members in Hamilton. The good news is she will continue to be a member of the support group and our GRG whānau. Thank you Martine, and we wish you well in your future endeavours.

Did you know...

Support Group Coordinators are a key part of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ's (GRG) integrated approach to supporting over 9,000 grandparent and whānau/kin caregivers nationwide. Our Support Group Coordinators are all volunteers, most often having been a fulltime grandparent/kin carer themselves and wanting to give back to their local communities, having received support themselves and knowing how valuable it can be.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Merle@grg.org.nz or phone 0800 472 637



Merle Lambert
**National Support
Coordinator**

WE NEED YOUR VOTE!

GRG has been selected this year to receive a years' worth of free courier services as part of NZ Post's Delivering for Good programme, and with your vote we could receive an additional year!

Please vote for GRG at:

www.deliveringforgood.nzpost.co.nz

Voting closes Sunday 14th May 2023 at 11.59pm



Grand Reflections on Camp!

Excitement, trepidation and curiosity...

This was certainly the vibe for the tamariki and rangatahi who set off on our first GRG exclusive respite camp at The Y's Camp Adair in the Hunua Ranges during the recent April school holidays!

Karla Macdonald, GRG Projects and Communications Coordinator reports:

While charged with nervous energy and excitement as 81 tamariki and rangatahi aged 6 - 16 years headed off on a five-day camp adventure; for their grandparents and whānau caregivers it was a wonderful opportunity to have some much-needed respite, knowing their tamariki and rangatahi were in safe hands.

It is one of the saddest things we hear at GRG - when a grandparent tells us they feel so overwhelmed and the stress and pressure on them is so great that they feel the only alternative might be to hand the children over to Oranga Tamariki to take into foster care. Fortunately it is very rare that it happens, but not so rare to feel that way.

What they really need is a break! Some respite from the stress and challenges of parenting children who have often experienced and been impacted by trauma, not to mention the physical and financial demands that come with raising children full-time.

It was with this in mind that I had the pleasure of project managing GRG's first exclusive camp experience for our members' children and young people in the Auckland region.

We believe that all children should have the opportunity to go to camp. It is part of growing up in New Zealand!

Yet the opportunities for this type of experience aren't always available. We've also had feedback over the years that some camps are too short. A grandparent can spend a day getting a child to camp, the second day tidying the house, only to turn around and head back on the third day to collect their mokopuna. Barely a chance to catch a breath and have some rest time for themselves.

Camp Adair was for some: their first time on camp, their first time away from their caregivers and their first time experiencing the range of outdoor activities offered. Led by highly skilled and trained instructional staff they enjoyed activities that included climbing, high swings, flying fox, confidence course, archery, woodwork, arts & crafts, abseiling, lacrosse, hiking, raft building, mudsliding, camp fires, reading, movie night and story time (for the younger children). The great Kiwi classic game of spotlight too was also the recipe that inspired friendships, growing confidence and a sense of achievement in them all.

It was awesome to receive feedback from the children on the last day who loved it so much that they wanted the camp to go for another week! I was also struck by how much the nervous and shy children I had met on the first day had grown in confidence and had made new friends. It has been so gratifying too, to hear from many grandparents who have appreciated and enjoyed the break, including one granddad who was so excited that it was the first time



ever that he and his wife would have time on their own after many years as fulltime caregivers. This whole project was very satisfying for me. To be honest, it has made my year. I am very proud of what we were able to do here, and I know we have changed lives – forever!

We are incredibly grateful to our funders, MFS Sydney, Potter Masonic Trust and The Y for their support for this fantastic opportunity for our member families. We would love to do this again and in other regions throughout NZ with support from funders.

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 6,000 grandparent and whanau care families nationwide, representing around 9,500 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.

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

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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!



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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