



Grandparents As Parents

An information resource for grandparent carers

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE and
GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

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The information about financial assistance is intended only as a guide to payments available. Individual circumstances vary and you should obtain your own advice about whether or not you qualify under the relevant laws and criteria.

Community Solutions Inc. has made reasonable efforts to ensure the information is accurate and current as at July 2006 but does not accept responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Introduction

The financial circumstances of grandparent carers can change dramatically after their grandchildren arrive. Grandparents find themselves supporting not just themselves, but one or more children on a very limited budget. Sometimes children arrive with very little and grandparents need to buy clothing, toys and furniture immediately. In addition, grandparent carers often need to alter their living arrangements or housing to accommodate the children.

Financial Assistance and Government Services is the third of four booklets in the **Grandparents As Parents Information Kit**. It describes a range of Australian Government payments and benefits that may be available to families in which the primary care of a child is being provided by a grandparent.

This booklet outlines assistance that may be available through the Queensland Government Department of Housing, and related services. It also contains information about relevant Queensland Government services, such as the Child Care Information Service, services for grandparent families, and concessions for seniors.

Australian Government Benefits

The Australian Government recognises the special contribution that grandparents make to families and the community and provide a range of benefits to assist eligible claimants. The information provided is a guide only, due to its complexity. Any matters relating to assistance in respect of children entering or leaving care should be dealt with by appointment with the Family Assistance Office. Family Assistance Offices are located within Medicare and Centrelink offices and Australian Taxation Shopfronts.

Family Assistance Payments

Family Assistance Offices are located within Medicare and Centrelink offices and Australian Taxation Shopfronts.

FAMILY TAX BENEFIT (FTB)

FTB is an annual tax benefit to help families with the cost of raising children. Guardians, including foster parents and grandparents, responsible for the day-to-day care of children/grandchildren may be eligible for Family Assistance.

FTB Part A

FTB Part A is the most common payment to help families with the cost of raising children. It is worked out on the family's combined annual income and the ages and number of dependent children in the family. It is paid per child.

You may get FTB Part A if you:

- have a dependent child under 21 (including a foster child), or
- have a dependent full time student aged 21 to 24; and
- have income under a certain amount, and are living in Australia (that is, Australia is your permanent home); and
- you are either an Australian citizen, a New Zealand citizen, the holder of a permanent visa or the holder of certain temporary visas.

FTB Part B

FTB Part B gives extra assistance to families with one main income. It is based on the annual income of the lower earner as well as the age of the youngest child. It is paid per family. You can choose to receive FTB Part B fortnightly by instalments or as a lump sum after the end of the income (financial) year.

Qualification for Family Assistance is dependent upon the type of care being given. For the purposes of being considered an FTB child, family assistance legislation refers to being in the care of an adult. Day-to-day care generally includes physical care, where means of support and attention to health are essential to well-being.

Formal Care

Formal care is where the change of care is legally sanctioned and involves a change in legal responsibility (whether day to day and/or long term) that is supported by documentation from a state/territory child welfare authority or a court from another jurisdiction, for example, family law court from the federal jurisdiction. These documents from the state authority or the court order will determine who has the legal right to care.

FTB is payable from the date the child enters care, for the relevant dates provided

in the supporting documentation. If the child moves from one formal carer to another, the FTB will follow the child and be paid to the new carer from that point in time.

Documentation to the Family Assistance Office may include:

- an original letter on the letterhead of the state child welfare authority providing details on the child’s placement with the carer and the relevant approved dates of placement; or
- the relevant court orders if available.

Informal Care

Informal care is a private arrangement between the parent and another party, where there is no change to any form of legal responsibility. Informal carers will usually be grandparents, other relatives or family friends. In these arrangements, whether FTB can be paid to the new carer will depend on whether the care is of a temporary and short term or an ongoing nature.

When it is clear from the outset that the child will be in ongoing care with the new carer, FTB is payable from the date the child enters their care. However in informal, but temporary and short term care situations, the question as to whether FTB is payable will depend on the nature of and duration of the absence from the parent’s care.

Temporary and Short Term Care

Where possible, FTB should be paid to the person who has the actual care of a child. However, in some situations, FTB may continue to be paid to a parent who does not have the care of a child such as where the change of care is temporary and short term AND the intention is that the child will return to the parent within a short period, the parent will continue to be paid FTB. However, in all but the most extenuating circumstances, the total temporary and short term absence for FTB purposes, should not exceed 4 weeks. After this period, the actual carer should receive the FTB.

The continued payment of FTB beyond a 4 week absence to the parent could only occur if the parent’s involvement in the child’s care increased to a sufficient degree. There may be situations where the care is temporary and short term or the period of care is unknown AND the parent does not want to be paid FTB. In this case the new carer will be eligible for FTB from the date the child enters their care provided the relevant eligibility criteria are met.

Ongoing Care

When it is clear from the outset that a child will be in ongoing care, then the carer will be eligible for FTB from the date the child enters their care. When care has been on a temporary and short term basis and it subsequently becomes ongoing, a change of care applies at the point it becomes ongoing and FTB becomes payable.

MATERNITY PAYMENT

Maternity Payment is intended to benefit the primary carer. To be entitled to Maternity Payment the child must be less than 13 weeks old when it comes into care and a claim must be made prior to the child turning 26 weeks old. Maternity

If the child moves from one formal carer to another, the FTB will follow the child and be paid to the new carer from that point in time.



You may also be eligible for a Double Orphan Pension, if the child meets the criteria of an Orphan.

Payment may be payable for locally adopted child under two years of age, or an adopted child from overseas, if the child enters Australia before turning two years of age.

MATERNITY IMMUNISATION ALLOWANCE (MIA)

To be entitled to MIA, the child must be less than 2 years old and meet immunisation requirements for an 18 month old child.

DOUBLE ORPHAN PENSION (DOP)

You may also be eligible for a DOP if the child meets the criteria of an Orphan. For example, a DOP may be paid in any of these situations where:

- both parents are deceased; or
- one parent of the child is deceased and the other is serving a prison sentence of at least 10 years, or is indefinitely residing in a psychiatric hospital or similar institution, or is residing in a nursing home or similar institution indefinitely, or whose location is unknown; or
- the child is a refugee who has not lived in Australia previously and both parents are outside Australia or their location is unknown.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

For further assistance, contact your local Family Assistance Office on **13 6150**. Family Assistance Offices are located in Centrelink, Medicare Offices and Taxation Shopfronts.

The information above was provided by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

GRANDPARENT CHILD CARE BENEFIT

Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB) is available to grandparents who are the sole or major provider of ongoing care for their grandchild. GCCB covers the full cost of child care for up to 50 hours for each grandchild in approved care each week. In certain circumstances you may be able to get GCCB for more than 50 hours per week.

To be eligible for GCCB, a grandparent must:

- receive an income support payment from Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs; and
- meet the eligibility requirements outlined for the waiver of the Child Care Benefit (CCB) work, training and study test (see below).

CHILD CARE BENEFIT

CCB is assistance to help families, including eligible grandparents who have primary care of their grandchildren, with the costs of child care. Unlike GCCB, CCB is suitable for grandparent carers who are not in receipt of an income support payment. CCB is structured to ensure that families using approved services that are on the lowest incomes receive the highest rates of assistance. The CCB rate is reduced as family income increases, to the point where families receive the minimum rate. Approved child care services include Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Occasional Care and In-Home Care services. Working families are also able to claim the minimum rate of CCB for up to 50 hours of care per child per week for registered care services. Registered carers are informal carers who register with the

Family Assistance Office but do not have to participate in Australian Government quality assurance systems. Examples of registered care includes some preschools, creches, nannies, kindergartens, friends and grandparents.

Waiver of the work, study, training test for grandparents

The CCB work, training and study test is waived for eligible grandparents who have the primary care of their grandchildren. This allows eligible grandparent carers to access up to 50 hours of CCB for each grandchild in approved care each week. Previously, grandparent carers could only receive CCB for up to 20 hours per week if they were not in work, training or study.

To be eligible for the waiver a grandparent must be:

- the natural, adoptive, or step grandparent of the child. Great-grandparents who are looking after grandchildren are also eligible; or
- the current or former partner of a grandparent if they are the primary carer of the grandchild; and
- the sole or major provider of ongoing daily care for the grandchild; and
- have substantial autonomy for the day-to-day decisions about the child's care, welfare and development; and
- meet existing CCB eligibility requirements for approved care.

CHILD CARE TAX REBATE

In addition to CCB, the Australian Government announced the Child Care Tax Rebate (CCTR) to further assist working families with child care costs. Families meeting the work, training, study test will be eligible to claim 30 per cent of their out-of-pocket child care expenses for up to \$4000 per child, per year. Grandparents who are claiming CCB and have had the work, study, training test waived can claim the CCTR for their out-of-pocket child care costs. Grandparents claiming GCCB are not eligible for the CCTR as they do not incur any out-of-pocket child care expenses. For more information about the CCTR you may wish to contact the Australian Taxation Office on 13 2861.

WHERE DO I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

- Call the Family Assistance Office on **13 6150** between 8.00am and 8.00pm (local time) Monday to Friday.
- Visit the website at www.familyassist.gov.au.
- Visit the nearest Family Assistance Office located in all Centrelink Customer Service Centres, Medicare Australia offices and Tax Office shopfronts.
- You can phone the Child Care Access Hotline on **1800 670 305** for information on child care services available in your area.

To claim GCCB or a waiver of the work, study, training test you must apply to the Family Assistance Office. Grandparents who are not the main carers of their grandchildren are not entitled to GCCB or a waiver of the work, training, study test. However, they may wish to consider applying to the Family Assistance Office about becoming a Registered Carer if they charge a fee for the child care being provided for their grandchildren.

The information above was provided by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Child Care Benefit is assistance to help families, including eligible grandparents, with the costs of child care.



Income Support Payments

Parenting Payment is an income support payment designed specifically for people who have principal care of a child.

PARENTING PAYMENT AND NEWSTART ALLOWANCE

I am the principal carer of my grandchild – which Income Support Payment/s might I be entitled to?

If you are unemployed or on a low income, and you are the principal carer of your grandchild, you might qualify for:

- Parenting Payment or
- Newstart Allowance.

Income support payments are income and asset tested. This means that in order to qualify the applicant will be assessed against their and/or their partner's income and assets, and that these have to be below a certain limit to qualify for payment.

Parenting Payment

Parenting Payment (PP) is an income support payment designed specifically for people, either single or partnered, who have principal care of a child including grandparents and foster carers. PP can be paid in addition to FTB.

PP (Partnered) is only paid to one member of a couple. Only one person can receive PP in respect of a child (for example a natural/adoptive parent and a foster carer cannot receive PP for the same child).

Newstart Allowance

Newstart Allowance (NSA) is an income support payment for people aged over 21 years and below age pension age, who are unemployed. Recipients must be seeking full-time work, participate in activities designed to facilitate entry to employment, or meet the activity test by undertaking suitable part-time work.

How do I qualify for Parenting Payment?

In general terms, to qualify for PP, a claimant must:

- have principal care of a qualifying child;
- have income and assets below certain limits; and
- meet the residence requirements.

For the purposes of PP, a qualifying child is:

- for PP Single, a child under the age of eight; and
- for PP Partnered, a child under the age of six.

How do I qualify for Newstart Allowance as a principal carer?

In general terms, to qualify for NSA, a claimant must:

- be unemployed or part-time employed;
- satisfy the activity test;
- satisfy the terms of Preparing for Work Agreement (PFWA) they have entered into;
- be 21 years or over but under Age Pension age;
- be an Australian resident currently in Australia;

- not be subject to an Assurance of Support (AoS).

From 1 July 2006, people who are principal carers of at least one dependent child will receive NSA if they meet required eligibility criteria.

For the purposes of qualifying as a principal carer parent on NSA you must have principal care of a qualifying child:

- for single parents – a child eight years or over;
- for partnered parents – a child six years or over.

What, if any, participation requirements are applicable to principal carers who receive Parenting Payment or Newstart Allowance?

Principal carer parents who claim income support post 1 July 2006 will have part-time job search requirements of at least 15 hours per week if their child is six years or over, regardless of which payment they are receiving.

Depending on the carer’s individual circumstances, they may be eligible for a temporary exemption from job-search requirements (renewable) where caring for the child affects their ability to work, or search for work.

I am currently receiving Parenting Payment – how do the Welfare to Work changes affect me?

Principal carers who are on PP immediately prior to 1 July 2006 will be able to remain on this payment until their youngest child turns 16 (subject to them continuing to meet the payment’s eligibility requirements).

These people will be required to look for part-time work of at least 15 hours a week, as part of their participation requirements, from 1 July 2007 or when their youngest child turns seven (whichever is later).

How can I find out more about income support payments?

Contact Centrelink: PP – 13 61 50 – www.centrelink.gov.au
NSA – 13 28 50 – www.centrelink.gov.au

The information above was provided by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

AGE PENSION

Some grandparents who are raising grandchildren may be paid age pension. If you have previously claimed age pension, and your pension was not paid or was stopped because of your income, you may now be entitled to a payment because you have children in your care. Age pensioners receive a Pensioner Concession Card that covers both the cardholder and any dependent children.

You may get age pension if you:

- Are of age pension age;
- Meet residence requirements; and
- Have income and assets below a certain amount.

Age pension age for men is 65. For women it depends on your date of birth – women qualify for age pension at different ages depending on their birth date.

*One of the things I learned from talking to other grandparent carers was that I can speak to the Social Workers at Centrelink - they were really helpful to me.
Grandparent carer*



Age pensioners receive a Pensioner Concession Card that covers both the cardholder and any dependent children.

Date of birth	Qualification age
1 January 1940 to 30 June 1941	62
1 July 1941 to 31 December 1942	62½
1 January 1943 to 30 June 1944	63
1 July 1944 to 31 December 1945	63½
1 January 1946 to 30 June 1947	64
1 July 1947 to 31 December 1948	64½
1 January 1949 and later	65

You can phone Centrelink on **13 23 00** or visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre to tell them you wish to claim an age pension. Additional information on age pension can be found:

- In the Centrelink publication 'About to retire or in retirement?', available from Centrelink; and
- On the Centrelink website at: <http://www.centrelink.gov.au>

The information above was provided by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Caring for a Child with a Disability

If your grandchild has a disability you may be eligible for financial support as the child's carer. The forms of support available are described below:

CARER ALLOWANCE

Carer Allowance (child) – care receiver under 16 years of age

Carer Allowance is an income supplement that recognises the impact of the caring role on carers. It can be paid in addition to income support payments.

A person may get Carer Allowance (child) if they look after a dependent child whose condition is on the Lists of Recognised Disabilities or who is assessed as functioning below the level expected of a child of the same age who does not have a disability. You must live in the same home as the child you are caring for. Both the carer and the child with a disability must also meet residence requirements.

A single rate of Carer Allowance is available if care is provided to two dependent children with disabilities or severe medical conditions who individually do not qualify a carer for Carer Allowance, but whose combined assessment against the Child Disability Assessment Tool meets the eligibility threshold.

A Carer Allowance customer is eligible for a Health Care Card (HCC) for a child care receiver. A HCC entitles the cardholder to concessions for prescription medicines, dental and optometrist services for the child. If the carer of a child is ineligible for Carer Allowance, he or she may still be entitled to a HCC if the child needs at least 14 hours more care and attention per week compared to a child of the same age without a disability or severe medical condition.

Carer Allowance is free of income and asset tests and is not treated as income for taxation purposes.

Carer Allowance (adult) - care receiver 16 years of age or more

Carer Allowance (adult) may be available if your grandchild is over 16 years of age and has long-term personal care needs because of a disability or severe medical condition.

To find out more about eligibility for Carer Allowance, visit your local Centrelink office or telephone 13 27 17.

CARER PAYMENT

Carer Payment is an income support payment for people who, because of their caring responsibilities, are unable to support themselves through substantial workforce participation.

You may get Carer Payment (child) if you provide constant care in the home of the person you care for and they are:

- a child under the age of 16 with a profound disability, or
- two or more children under 16 years of age with disabilities whose combined care needs are at least equivalent to those of a child with a profound disability.

Carer Payment is subject to an income and assets test.

Carer Payment (adult)

Carer Payment (adult) may be available if your grandchild is over 16 years of age and has long-term personal care needs because of a disability or severe medical condition.

To find out more about eligibility for Carer Payment, visit your local Centrelink office or telephone 13 27 17.

The information above was provided by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Carer Allowance is an income supplement that recognises the impact of the caring role on carers.

Concession Cards

I am the primary carer of my grandchild. Am I eligible for a concession card?

Grandparents who are the primary carers of their grandchildren have a range of options to access a concession card, covering grandchildren in their care. The options are described below.

Income support concession card

If you are already receiving an income support payment, such as Age Pension or Parenting Payment, you will already automatically have a Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) or Health Care Card (HCC). If you are also eligible for Family Tax Benefit for the grandchild/ren in your care, they can be added to your PCC or HCC. The children will then be able to receive the benefits of the card.

Family Tax Benefit HCC

If you do not receive a pension or benefit, but get the maximum rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A paid fortnightly for your grandchild/ren, you will automatically be issued with a HCC. This card will cover both you and your grandchild/ren.



Grandparents have a range of options to access a concession card, covering grandchildren in their care.

Low-income HCC

If you are not automatically entitled to a concession card under the above provisions, you may be entitled to a low-income HCC instead. To qualify for a low-income HCC, you must have income below certain levels (but there is no assets test). This card must be claimed, and will cover both yourself and your grandchild/ren.

Foster child HCC

A separate foster child HCC can be claimed for the grandchild/ren in your care. This card is available to all grandparents who are providing full-time care for their grandchild/ren through any form of care arrangement. You do not have to meet any income or assets test to get this card. You can apply for the card, but it is issued in the name of the grandchild and can only be used for the benefit of that child.

Carer Allowance (child) HCC

If your grandchild has a disability or serious medical condition and requires extra care as a result, you may be able to claim Carer Allowance (child). If granted, a HCC is issued for the sole use of the child.

How do I obtain a concession card?

You should contact your local Centrelink or Family Assistance Office to discuss which option is best for your situation. You can call into an office, or call Centrelink on 13 23 00, or the Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

What benefits can I access with my concession card?

Australian Government concession cards like the PCC and HCC provide access to:

- pharmaceuticals listed under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) at the concession rate;
- bulk-billed GP appointments, at the discretion of the doctor (the Government provides financial incentives for GPs to bulk-bill concession card holders);
- a reduction in the cost of out-of-hospital medical expenses above a concessional threshold through the extended Medicare Safety Net.

The information above was provided by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Child Support

WHAT IS CHILD SUPPORT?

Both parents are responsible for providing financial support for their children. The Child Support Scheme aims to ensure that the children of separated parents are adequately supported according to their parent's capacity to do so. The Child Support Agency (CSA) administers the Scheme, including:

- registering cases;
- assessing child support payable;
- collecting payments where requested; and
- providing information on child support matters.

As the primary carer of my grandchild, am I eligible for Child Support?

You may be eligible to receive child support payments if you care for the child for at least 110 nights in the 12 months following an application for a child support assessment. For more information about your individual circumstances, contact CSA on 131 272.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR CHILD SUPPORT?

The easiest way is by calling CSA on 131 272. You can also apply online at www.csa.gov.au, or by lodging an application form by mail or in person. Application forms are available from CSA, Centrelink or a Family Assistance Office. When completed, you can return it to any of these offices.

One of my grandchild's parents is receiving Child Support Payments, but I am the child's primary care provider – what can I do?

You may still be able to receive child support. If the parent already receiving child support does not consent to the child being in your care, CSA will investigate further before making a decision.

Can I apply for Child Support if I do not know where my grandchild's parents are living?

You can still apply for child support in these circumstances. CSA may ask you for information that will help locate the child's parents, such as previous addresses and details of their employer.

Where can I get more information about Child Support?

You can call the CSA on 131 272 or contact them through their website www.csa.gov.au. To speak in a language other than English call 131 450. If you are hearing-impaired call 133 677.

The information above was provided by the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

The Child Support Scheme aims to ensure that the children of separated parents are adequately supported according to their parent's capacity to do so.

Home and Community Care (HACC)

WHAT IS THE HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE (HACC) PROGRAM?

The HACC Program funds services designed to help frail older people and people with a disability to live independently at home. This program is jointly funded by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. HACC services may be provided by well known service providers, such as your local Council or Community Health Service, or by small, less known agencies.

There are a number of different services which come under the HACC 'umbrella', including:

- **Day care** – this is based in a Day Centre and provides group recreation activities.
- **Home help/home care/domestic assistance** – this includes household tasks like cleaning, washing, ironing and shopping.
- **Personal care** – for example, help with bathing and dressing.



HACC services may be provided by your local Council or Community Health Service, or by other agencies.

- **Home maintenance and modification** – Provides help with home repairs and maintenance, (for example, changing light globes, fixing door locks, removing rubbish, roof repairs) as well as modifying your home with features like safety ramps, and support rails in the bathroom.
- **Transport** – these services assist with shopping and keeping appointments, and may include travel for social activities and visiting friends.
- **Food services** – if you have difficulty preparing meals, these services deliver them to your home. They also provide meals at a community or day centre. Food services may include help with food shopping, food storage and preparation. Some services include traditional ethnic dishes.
- **Community nursing** – these services are provided in your home by a qualified nurse, and can be given to you on a regular or occasional basis.
- **Allied health services** – these include physiotherapy, podiatry, speech therapy and occupational therapy, and similar services which help people to be mobile and to lead an independent life at home. They can be provided at home or in a variety of services, for example, a day centre or a community health service.
- **Advocacy services** – these are agencies whose role is to advise you about your rights and responsibilities when receiving services, and at your request, to act on your behalf with service providers.
- **Social support** – this includes a range of services for people who need help with shopping, banking, paying bills or simply need company.
- **Support services for carers.** If you are caring for a frail older person or someone with a disability, you can get support through respite, carer support organisations, Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres, or the Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre. These are described below.

Services for Carers

- **Respite** – this is a service designed to give carers a break from their caring role. It takes a number of forms, from care in the home, in a day centre, in the community, to care in residential aged care homes – whichever options best suits the carer and the person in their care. It can be provided as a planned service or on an emergency basis.

In addition, the Australian Government funds services for carers, including:

- **Carer support organisations** (for example, the Carers Association, the Alzheimer’s Association) provide various services for carers, including information, counselling, training or acting as advocates for carers.
- **Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres** provide information about services, make referrals and arrange short term respite for emergencies or unplanned situations. They can support carers of frail older people, or people with dementia, young people with a disability, chronically ill or terminally ill people. Emergency respite care is available 24 hours a day. Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres can be contacted on **1800 059 059** (Free call TM).
- **Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres** in each capital city provide information and advice about services and other forms of support and assistance. They can be contacted by calling **1800 242 636** (Free call TM).



WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR HACC SERVICES?

HACC services are designed for people who need support to continue living in the community, and who are older and 'frail' (for example, someone who has difficulty with everyday showering), or for people who have a disability. HACC services are also available for those who are caring for a frail older person or a person with a disability. HACC services are designed to reach people with the greatest level of need. This is determined by HACC service providers who make an assessment of your needs.

HOW CAN I OBTAIN A HACC SERVICE?

If you know a HACC funded service providing the type of services you may need, you can contact them directly. You do not need a referral. Some ways of finding out what services are available in your local area are:

- Phone a Commonwealth Carelink Centre on **1800 052 222** (Free call ™).
- Phone your local Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre on **1800 242 636** (Free call ™).

Each HACC service will have its own policy on fees, but most services require a small contribution, depending on your situation. Special consideration is given to people with limited finances.

The information above was provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

I enjoy meeting with other grandparent carers as we all enjoy finding out what is going on and sharing ideas on how to keep the kids happy.

*Maureen, aged 68
(grandson aged 10)*

Queensland Government Services

The Queensland Government provides various services for seniors, pensioners and grandparent carers. These include the Child Care Information Service, the Time for Grandparents program, the Queensland Seniors Card, and a range of state government concessions.

In addition, the Queensland Government Department of Housing provides services that may assist you to find secure and affordable accommodation.

Child Care Information Service

The Child Care Information Service is a free statewide information service provided by the Department of Communities.

The Child Care Information Service provides information and referral to assist Queensland families and the wider community access:

- The location and types of child care services in their local area,
- Parenting tip sheets,
- Their rights as a consumer, and
- Information kits for new operators.

The Child Care Information Service provides information about child care and family support in Queensland in the following formats:

- A telephone information service,
- Brochures and information sheets,
- Booklets, and
- Information stands at relevant public events.

Contact:

Child Care Information Service:

3224 4225 in Brisbane

1800 637 711 free call outside Brisbane

or visit the website at www.communities.qld.gov.au

email ccis@communities.qld.gov.au

Services for Grandparents

The Department of Communities funds the *Time for Grandparents* program. This program aims to provide grandparents raising grandchildren outside the statutory child protection system with some respite from their daily responsibilities as well as providing grandparents and grandchildren with rewarding experiences to enhance their ability to cope with the pressures many of these families face.

The program provides free places in existing youth activities and camps run by organisations such as Scouts QLD, Girl Guides QLD, Police Citizens Youth Clubs, Brisbane City Council and Sport and Recreation Queensland. A wide variety of activities are available in many locations across the state.

The Time for Grandparents program provides free places in existing youth activities and camps.

The *Time for Grandparents* program can be accessed by calling Seniors Enquiry Line on **1300 135 500**.

Seniors Enquiry Line can also assist grandparents of all ages by providing information and referrals relevant to grandparenting.

Seniors Card

Grandparents who are 60 years or older may be eligible for a Queensland Government Seniors Card, which includes access to government concessions, or a Seniors Business Discount Card, which includes access to shopping discounts. For more information, call **13 13 04** or **1800 175 500**, or visit www.qld.gov.au/seniorscard.

Concessions

To obtain a copy of the 'Concessions Made Easy' brochure containing information about the range of state government concessions available to eligible Queensland seniors, pensioners, and veterans, call **13 13 04** or **1800 460 849**, or visit www.communities.qld.gov.au.

How can I contact the Department of Communities?

Contact the Department of Communities by calling Smart Service Queensland on: **13 13 04**

Office for Seniors Local Call: **1300 132 654**, or visit www.communities.qld.gov.au

The information above was provided by the Queensland Government Department of Communities.

Housing and Accommodation

Your financial situation and living arrangements may have changed since taking on the care of your grandchild. You may need assistance to meet your housing needs, or tenancy information and advice. A range of assistance is available through the Queensland Department of Housing.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

The Department of Housing has a range of services to help Queenslanders to find secure and affordable housing. You may be eligible to receive housing assistance such as:

- rental housing;
- access to affordable rental properties through community organisations or local government;
- information and advice on bond loans and mortgage relief;
- home maintenance and modification advice and assistance services; or
- information from a tenant advice and advocacy service.

The Department of Housing has a range of services to help Queenslanders find secure and affordable housing.

If you are not already a tenant of the department and you are experiencing housing need whilst caring for your grandchild, the department will assess your circumstances to determine eligibility for the various services available.

For more information, contact your nearest Department of Housing office or visit the department's website at www.housing.qld.gov.au.

Your nearest Department of Housing offices

Sunshine Coast Area Office

96 Memorial Avenue, Maroochydore Qld 4558

PO Box 99, Maroochydore Qld 4558

General enquiries: (07) 5475 9700

Maintenance enquiries: 1300 650 916 (Coolum Beach and south)
or 1300 137 687 (Peregian Beach and north)

After hours emergency maintenance: 1800 808 107

Fax: (07) 5475 9701

Wide Bay-Burnett Area Office

16 Quay Street, Bundaberg Qld 4670

PO Box 1120, Bundaberg Qld 4670

General enquiries: (07) 4131 5990

Toll free: 1800 809 835

Maintenance enquiries: 1800 633 949

After hours emergency maintenance: 1800 808 107

Fax: (07) 4131 5989

Email: clientservices@housing.qld.gov.au

Maryborough Client Service Centre

116 Lennox Street, Maryborough Qld 4650

PO Box 535, Maryborough Qld 4650

General enquiries: (07) 4121 1918

Toll free: 1800 623 242

Maintenance enquiries: 1300 137 687

After hours emergency maintenance: 1800 808 107

Fax: (07) 4121 1775

Email: clientservices@housing.qld.gov.au

RELATED SERVICES

Residential Tenancies Authority

Free information about your rights and responsibilities when renting in Queensland is available through the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA).

The RTA deals with general tenancies (renting houses and units), moveable dwelling tenancies (renting caravans or mobile homes and/or caravan sites) and residential services (renting a room in a boarding house, supported accommodation, aged rental accommodation or student accommodation).

For more information, contact the Residential Tenancies Authority on 1300 366 311 or visit www.rta.qld.gov.au.



Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (Qld)

Information, advocacy and advice relating to a tenant's or resident's rights and responsibilities is available through the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (Qld). This service will be of help if you are experiencing difficulties with your tenancy or residential services. It can also provide information and referrals if you are in housing need.

Sunshine Coast

Sunshine Coast Regional Housing Council Inc.

14 Maud Street, NAMBOUR QLD 4560

Tel: (07) 5476 0555

(Housing advice hours are Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 8.30am - 12.00pm and 1.00pm - 4.00pm; Wed by appointment only)

Gympie and South Burnett

Cooloola Community Housing Association

22 Nash Street, GYMPIE QLD 4570

Tel: (07) 5482 7623

(Housing advice hours are Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9.00am – 2.00pm; Wed by appointment only)

Fraser Coast

Fraser Coast Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (Queensland)

43 Hunter Street, PIALBA QLD 4655

Tel: (07) 4124 1523

(Housing advice hours are Mon - Fri 9.00am – 1.00pm)

Bundaberg and surrounds

Bundaberg Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service (Queensland)

254 Bourbong Street, BUNDABERG QLD 4670

Tel: (07) 4153 2957

(Housing advice hours are Mon, Tue, Thu 9.00am – 1.00pm; Fri 9.00am – 2.00pm; Wed by appointment only)

Tenants' Union of Queensland

The Tenants' Union of Queensland is a statewide service that provides free tenancy advice and advocacy support for tenants. The Union aims to improve conditions for all people who rent their home.

The Tenants' Union's statewide telephone advice service operates between 9:00am and 4:00pm, Monday to Friday.

Regional phone number: **1800 177 761**

Brisbane phone number: **3257 1108**

Tenancy publications are also available from www.tuq.org.au.

The information above was provided by the Queensland Department of Housing in March 2006.

When I think of how my grandson may have turned out, I am very thankful that I have him in my care.

Grandparent carer





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