



"The KinKare Committee"
Our brave Treasure's opinion

KinKare..... *Caring for relative carers and those denied access*

MONTHLY NEWS



KinKare Founders
Maree, Danni, Miriam

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www.kinkare.com.au



Editorial

Hello Everyone,

The beginning of every year seems to get busier as I get older. This year has been no exception even though Easter is so late.

Cogs is very close to finalising the first major step in rejuvenating itself with the results of the election due out on Monday 4th April. I will be the new President, elected unopposed, but there are contests for other positions. As yet no one has nominated for Treasurer. Hopefully, there will be nominations from the floor.

Create is currently requesting young people 15-17 living in out-of-home care to respond to a survey about transition plans. The deadline has been extended briefly so please try your best to complete it my next Wednesday 6th April www.create.org.au

As from next newsletter, we will have a special article added. Many of you may know **Dr Ron Frey** has been running fabulous sessions with some of our grandparents. These sessions have been enormously helpful to all of us. The topics range from how different illegal drugs work and their common symptoms to how to handle traumatised children AND their difficult parents. Notes from these sessions will be written up as an **article for the newsletter**.

Every situation is different, of course, but some basic knowledge about the causes makes it somewhat easier to cope. I know you will love the series.

More good news, especially for **all of you who live on the north side**. **KinKare is about to open a support group** in your area. We need you to contact us **IMMEDIATELY** with your telephone contact details so a suitable venue can be found.

I know some of you have been waiting a long time for this so please get in touch ASAP.

Until next month,
Happy reading,
Maree



An Australian Government Initiative

These centres came about after the John Howard enquiry into the plight of children after separation. **KinKare was heavily involved in that consultation** and is constantly referred to in the grandparent section of the subsequent report, "Every Picture Tells a Story".

Since the beginning, KinKare has had a very amicable relationship with centres in our area. Currently our Ipswich meeting is facilitated by the Ipswich Ctr and just recently the Logan centre and KinKare have been working on more grandparent friendly presentations.

The whole aim of these centres is to mediate family disputes in order to try to prevent the matters going on to court. A philosophy we heartily agree with. Family relationships cannot be mended in a court of law in our opinion.

I have had dealings now with about 5 or so centres in SE Q'ld and have found all of them very responsive to the needs of grandparents. Several of our grandparents have even found positive outcomes through these services.

As the Centres are becoming more established, new trends are being documented and services needed to meet the needs are being introduced.

The initial services provided by these centres are completely free and they should be your first port of call to go down the mediation road. Other mediation services are available, but reports from grandparents are not as favourable and many have had to pay a fee for service.

Mediation is not always successful, but **IT IS THE BEST WAY**.

Centres may differ slightly in their methods as they are contracted out to different organisations to run. Phone assistance is available on 1800 050 321

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KinKare is auspiced by Connect the Coast Assoc. Inc



Dept of Child Safety

I am very often asked about different aspects of Child Safety Regulations. Last month I included rates of allowances and this month the Standards by which all foster carers MUST abide.

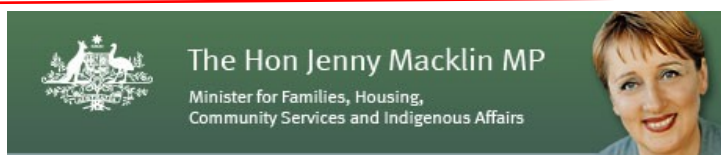
Standards of care

Foster and kinship carers are required to provide a level of care which is consistent with the statement of standards, as outlined in section 122 of the [Child Protection Act 1999](#).

The Act outlines the following standards:

1. The Chief Executive (Director-General) must take reasonable steps to ensure a child placed in care under section 82 is cared for in a way that meets the following standards (the *statement of standards*):
2. the child's dignity and rights will be respected at all times
3. the child's needs for physical care will be met, including adequate food, clothing and shelter
4. the child will receive emotional care that allows him or her to experience being cared about and valued and that contributes to the child's positive self-regard
5. the child's needs relating to his or her culture and ethnic grouping will be met
6. the child's material needs relating to his or her schooling, physical and mental stimulation, recreation and general living will be met
7. the child will receive education, training or employment opportunities relevant to the child's age and ability
8. the child will receive positive guidance when necessary to help him or her to change inappropriate behaviour
9. the child will receive dental, medical and therapeutic services necessary to meet his or her needs
10. the child will be given the opportunity to participate in positive social and recreational activities appropriate to his or her developmental level and age
11. the child will be encouraged to maintain family and other significant personal relationships
12. if the child has a disability - the child will receive care and help appropriate to the child's special needs
13. For subsection (1)(g), techniques for managing the child's behaviour must not include corporal punishment or punishment that humiliates, frightens or threatens the child in a way that is likely to cause emotional harm.
14. For subsection (1)(j), if the chief executive has custody or guardianship of the child, the child's carer must act in accordance with the chief executive's reasonable directions.
15. The application of the standards to the child's care must take into account what is reasonable having regard to:
 - a. the length of time the child is in the care of the carer or care service
 - b. the child's age and development.

Recent News for Older Australians



The new Work Bonus is set to commence on 1 July this year and will encourage older Australians to continue contributing their skills and knowledge by remaining in the workforce.

Under the new rules age pensioners will be able to earn up to \$250 a fortnight without it being assessed as income under the income test.

Pensioners will also be able to build up any unused amount of their \$250 fortnightly bonus in an 'income bank' to a total of \$6,500.

The 'income bank' can be used to exempt future earnings from the pension income test, so that a pensioner could earn up to \$6,500 a year extra without it affecting their pension. This could be from regular work each fortnight or, for example, over a six week period before Christmas.

Any unused amount of the income bank can be carried forward across years.

Case studies

Bob is an age pensioner working as a school crossing supervisor earning \$300 a fortnight. Under current rules, half his employment income is disregarded (\$150) by the Work Bonus so only \$150 is assessed as income under the pension income test. Under the new Work Bonus, \$250 will be disregarded, and only \$50 assessed, so Bob will have \$100 less income a fortnight counted under the pension income test.

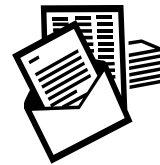
Bob's pension will increase by \$50 a fortnight due to a lower amount of income being assessed under the pension income test.

Maria is an age pensioner who only works for six weeks a year as an accountant at tax time. During the six week tax season she earns \$1,500 a fortnight, earning a total of \$4,500. As Maria does not work at all in the year between tax seasons, after 12 months under the new Work Bonus she will have accumulated \$5,750 (23 fortnights x \$250) of Bonus in her 'income bank'. Therefore during the tax season, the \$4,500 she has earned can be offset and will not affect her pension.

Maria will continue to receive the maximum rate of pension as she has no income that is assessed under the pension income test, despite earning \$4,500 in the six week period. In addition, Maria would retain \$2,000 in her 'income bank' to offset future employment earnings.



We Should Write a Book!



This is the old "Our Personal Page". It is very important that readers send in their stories to be published on this page to inform others in the community just how different our lives are. This page may also contain comments on calls, or answers to queries raised from time to time.

For the purposes of this page, second generation carers or those denied access will be referred to as "grandparents" and those who rightfully should be raising the children will be referred to as "parents". In some cases the carers may be great aunts or uncles, step grandparents or even great-grandparents etc. This helps to keep the roles of all concerned clear. Similarly, all children will be referred to as "grandchildren". All stories will be edited to protect the identification of anyone involved and in keeping with available space. Accompanying illustrations are from the public domain and are not meant to reflect any party concerned.

All letters are the opinions of the writers not necessarily KinKare's.

The U.S. Census of 2000 found that more than 2.4 million grandparents had responsibility for their grandchildren. Just eight years later, a national survey revealed that there were 6.6 million children living with a grandparent. The increase in the number of grandparents taking care of their grandchildren is partly due to financial need. In other cases, grandparents assume responsibility when the grandchildren's parents are unable to care for them because of neglect, a mental disorder, substance abuse, domestic abuse, incarceration or abandonment.

Claudette's Story

What Happened one day changed everything for my daughter and her husband. After an argument and her in-laws calling the police, their son was taken from them.

He spent a month with his paternal grandparents. Then they said "enough" and wanted out.

I had been praying for a way to peacefully take my sweet one-year-old grandson into my home. When the call came on Friday asking if I would take him on Monday, I said "I'll come right now."

In less than two months, he will have been my constant sunshine for two years. He came just three short months after the sudden death of my husband.

Now his baby brother has joined us too.

How I Coped;

My strength comes from my relationship with God and my family and dear friends.

I always thought that being a single parent would be one of the most difficult things ever, and I never dreamed I'd be one since I had a wonderful marriage.

I accept help when it's offered, and I try to make time for myself. I think my husband would have wanted to give our precious grandsons a safe and loving home, and that helps me cope each day.



Lessons Learned :

Material things don't matter.

Life is all about family and love and true friends.

God makes a way, and He helps in times of trouble.

I have two little lives to guide, and they have taught me to not sweat the small stuff and to slow down and take one day at a time.

Hardest Part:

Seeing my daughter turn to drugs and seeing just how much her boys love her and need her, and seeing their father let a whole month go by without a visit with them.

Hearing my grandsons swear.

Most Rewarding Part:

Oh! the hugs, kisses, tickles, and all the "I love you so much Grandma!"

The unlimited, unconditional love and the reason to live again.

My grandsons are a gift beyond words, so very precious.

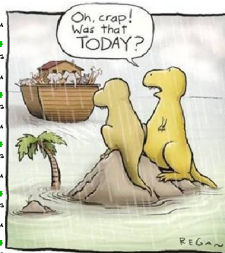
What a truly inspiring story! I continue to be in awe of the grandparents who take on parental roles and do it with such joy and grace.

Laughter is the best Medicine



Paddy was driving down the street in a sweat because he had an important meeting and couldn't find a parking place. Looking up to heaven he said, "Lord take pity on me. If you find me a parking place I will go to Mass every Sunday for the rest of me life and give up me Irish Whiskey!"

Miraculously, a parking place appeared. Paddy looked up again and said, "Never mind, I found one."



So that's what happened to the dinosaurs!

Honouring St Patrick's Day

An elderly lady was standing at the railing of the cruise ship holding her hat tight so that it would not blow away in the wind.

A gentleman approached her and said, "Pardon me, madam..

I do not intend to be forward but did you know that your dress is blowing up in this high wind?"

"Yes, I know," said the lady. "I need both my hands to hold onto this hat."

"But madam, you must know that you are not wearing any panties and your privates are exposed!" said the gentleman in earnest.

The woman looked down, then back up at the man and replied,

"Sir, anything you see down there is 75 years old. I just bought this hat yesterday!"



Save the Trees!!!



The man said, "I do, Father."

The priest said, "Then stand over there against the wall."

Then the priest asked the second man, "Do you want to go to heaven?"

"Certainly, Father," was the man's reply.

"Then stand over there against the wall," said the priest.

Then Father Murphy walked up to O'Toole and said, "Do you want to go to heaven?"

O'Toole said, "No, I don't Father."

The priest said, "I don't believe this. You mean to tell me that when you die you don't want to go to heaven?"

O'Toole said, "Oh, when I die, yes. I thought you were getting a group together to go right now."

Flynn staggered home very late after another evening with his drinking buddy, Paddy. He took off his shoes to avoid waking his wife, Mary.

He tiptoed as quietly as he could toward the stairs leading to their upstairs bedroom, but misjudged the bottom step. As he caught himself by grabbing the banister, his body swung around and he landed heavily on his rump. A whiskey bottle in each back pocket broke and made the landing especially painful.

Managing not to yell, Flynn sprung up, pulled down his pants, and looked in the hall mirror to see that his butt cheeks were cut and bleeding. He managed to quietly find a full box of Band-Aids and began putting a Band-Aid as best he could on each place he saw blood.

He then hid the now almost empty Band-Aid box and shuffled and stumbled his way to bed.

In the morning, Flynn woke up with searing pain in both his head and butt and Mary staring at him from across the room.

She said, "You were drunk again last night weren't you?"

Flynn said, "Why you say such a mean thing?"

"Well," Mary said, "it could be the open front door, it could be the broken glass at the bottom of the stairs, it could be the drops of blood trailing through the house, it could be your bloodshot eyes, but mostly.....it's all those Band-Aids stuck on the hall mirror."

GOD LOVES DRUNK PEOPLE TOO!

A man and his wife were awakened at 3:00 am by a loud pounding on the door. The man gets up and goes to the door where a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain, is asking for a push.

"Not a chance," says the husband, "it is 3:00 in the morning!" He slams the door and returns to bed.

"Who was that?" asked his wife. "Just some drunk guy asking for a push," he answers.

"Did you help him?" she asks. "No, I did not, it is 3:00 in the morning and it is pouring rain out there!"

"Well, you have a short memory," says his wife. "Can't you remember about three months ago when we broke down, and those two guys helped us? I think you should help him, and you should be ashamed of yourself!" God loves drunk people too.

The man does as he is told, gets dressed, and goes out into the pounding rain. He calls out into the dark, "Hello, are you still there?"

"Yes," comes back the answer.

"Do you still need a push?" calls out the husband.

"Yes, please!" comes the reply from the dark.

"Where are you?" asks the husband.

"Over here on the swing set," replied the drunk



Walking into the bar, Mike said to Charlie the bartender, "Pour me a stiff one - just had another fight with the little woman."

"Oh yeah?" said Charlie, "And how did this one end?"

"When it was over," Mike replied, "She came to me on her hands and knees."

"Really," said Charles, "Now that's a switch! What did she say?"

She said, "Come out from under the bed, you little chicken."



Meeting Notices



Please always ring first as there maybe changes for special purposes.

Kinkare Groups:

Beaudesert:

Place: Beaucare 44 Tina St
Day/Time: 4th Friday of the month 10:30am
Contact: Maree ☎ 3287 1664

Cleveland:

Place: Donald Simpson Ctr, 172 Bloomfield St
Day/Time: 3rd Friday of the month 10:30am
Contact: Maged ☎ 3207 7200

Eagleby:

Place: Eagleby Community Ctr, Cowper Ave
Day/Time: 2nd Friday of the month 10:30am
Contact: Maree ☎ 3287 1664 or Danni ☎ 3299 1764

Ipswich
Please ring first

Ipswich:

Place: Family Relationship Ctr, East St
Day/Time: 3rd Tuesday of the month 10:30am
Contact: Donella ☎ 3810 4800

Nerang:

Place: Nerang Neighbourhood Ctr, Martens St
Day/Time: 4th Wednesday of the month 12:30pm
Contact: Marjie ☎ 5527 3034

GAGS Inc

Place: Energex House, Cnr Wallace Nth & Tallon St
Caboolture
Day/Time: 2nd Wednesday of the month 10:00am
Contact: Helen ☎ (07) 5498 9333
✉ gagsinc@hotmail.com

Western Australia:

Granpower:

Email: info@granpower.org.au
Ph 0409 294 231

South Australia:

Grandparents for Grand-children SA Inc:

Ph Denise (08) 8410 6642
Email: denise.gfgsainc@bigpond.com

Grandparents as Parents

Sunshine Coast:

Place: Comm. Capital Ctr, Sportsmans Pde, Bokarina
Day/Time: 2nd Friday 10am-12noon
Contact: Donna ☎ 5413 1514

Indigenous G'parent Support Group:

Place: Centacare
Day/Time: Weekly
Contact: Tess Rowley ☎ 3252 4371

North Queensland:

Cairns and District Grandparents Support Group:

Place: Hambledon House Community Ctr, Edmonton
Day/Time: 1st Wednesday of the month 9:30am
Contact: John or Janet ☎ 4055 5161

Grandparents in need of Support (GINOS)

Contact: Nev ☎ (07) 4723 3520
✉ trcota@bigpond.net.au

The Townsville G'parents Social Support Group:

Place: Dan Gleeson Memorial Gardens
Day/Time: Last Friday of the month 10:30am-12 noon
Contact: Nev ☎ (07) 4723 3520

G'parents Raising Grandchildren – Atherton Tablelands:

Place: Family Support House, 38 Mabel St
Day/Time: 1st Monday of the month 9:30am-11:30am
Contact: Jane Buschkens ☎ (07) 4091 3850

Always room for more!

Please send in details that you would like published on this page.

(To ensure publication, send written information to Maree as per the footer contact details.)

**Seniors Enquiry Line – 1300 135 500**

This is not just for the old and frail! Ask about the **Time for Grandparents Programme** while you are there.

Centrelink (Parent or Guardian Line) – 13 61 50

www.centrelink.gov.au

Centrelink social workers know about most of the community organisations in the area, not just money matters.

Please make an appointment. It is worth your while.

Child Support Agency – www.csa.gov.au The CSA is a Federal Government organisation which helps support separated parents – and grandparents who are primary carers – with the transfer of payments for the benefit of their (grand)children.

Community Legal Centres

The national website is www.naclc.org.au

or for Queensland, see www.qails.org.au

Usually these centres can provide free legal services, short of actually representing you.

Legal Aid – www.nla.aust.net.au (the national website)

and **Legal Aid Queensland** – 1300 651 188

www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

Family Law Court Australia (Queensland) – 3248 2200

www.familycourt.gov.au (national website)

Parentline – 1300 301 300

www.parentline.com.au

This is for all types of parents and you are not excluded!

Kids' Help Line – 1800 551 800

www.kidshelp.com.au

This is for your kids. They often need a place to talk privately and so far I have had only good reports.

Commission for Children Young People and Child Guardian

1800 688 275

3224 4225 (Queensland office)

www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au

Relationships Australia – 1300 364 277

www.relationships.com.au

Don't forget to look after yourself and your relationships with other family members and spouse!

Crisis Care (Dept Child Safety Queensland after hours)

1800 177 135

3235 9999

www.childsafety.qld.gov.au

Keep a Diary:

The diary should include day, date and time of any contact and notes regarding the event. This might simply be that you sent a birthday card or email.

For those denied access, there could well come a time when the children ask why you were not there when they were growing up. As adults, they can see that you wanted to be and tried hard to be there for them. For those raising, the day may come that you are accused of stopping their parents from seeing them and the above applies again.

In either situation, the diary may well be helpful if ever the matter does go to a court.

Ask Questions of any Professional:

No matter if you are speaking to a lawyer, medical person or a Child Safety Officer, you are entitled to be fully briefed on their role and what they can and can't do for you as well as their qualifications.

Ask legal people how many grandparent cases like yours they have handled and what their success rate is. Ask medical, or similar, people if they are prepared to sign a report that you can give to your solicitor or Child Safety.

Never attend a Child Safety Meeting without someone else with you and make sure you are given a Carer Handbook. In Queensland it is permissible to tape the session as long as you declare your intention.

Make an appointment for a Centrelink Social Worker:

If you need to deal with Centrelink, don't just do so over the phone or even the counter. The social workers are much more knowledgeable. Tell them your basic situation at the time of making the appointment to give them time to look into the subject.

Seek Free Legal Opinion first:

There are many places where you can get free legal opinion other than Legal Aid. The Community Legal Centres have nothing to gain by misleading you as they are not funded by your wallet.

Look after YOURSELF!!!

No matter if you are denied access, raising or somewhere in between, the pressures are huge. Even young grandparents can be worn down by the constant anxiety and frustration.

Your grandchildren need you to be at your best!

Make sure you attend your doctor regularly and mention your situation. It is also very important for you to have someone outside the situation to talk freely to.

This is where support groups are at their best.

You can talk to others who understand your concerns and may even be able to tell you how they coped in a similar situation.

You will find there are other very good parents who have had the same thing happen to their family.

You will find you are not alone.