



"The Kinkare Committee"
Our brave Treasure's opinion

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

MONTHLY NEWS



Kinkare Founders
Maree, Danni, Miriam

Edition:
February 2011

www.kinkare.com.au



Editorial

Hello Everyone,

I trust that you had a lovely Christmas. Unfortunately, it is not a happy season for many grandparents. I was kept very busy with calls, many of them from new members.

Here, in Queensland, we are just about sick and tired of Mother Nature's fury and are looking for a break to the disasters. If any of you are in need, please be in touch as there are many organisations willing to help.

PLEASE NOTE: The Family Relationship Ctr in Ipswich was flooded and will not be up and running again until the end of this month or possibly even next month. Therefore, **there will be no Ipswich meeting until at least March.** If you are intending to come to that meeting, please ring first to confirm closer to the date. We wish our dear friends there a speedy recovery.

★ *Happy New Year*

We certainly have good reason to celebrate 2011. Shortly, we will have a representative on the Carers Council and many other Governments are also making noises about helping grandparents.

All of this has been a long time coming and it is because of the dedication and persistence of grandparents support group leaders who would not give up that we are finally looking at change.

It is typical, during New Year celebrations to look back as well as to look forward and we are going to do just that.

At the Conference in Melbourne, Nev Abbey from Ginos Nth Q'ld, brought up the 21 recommendations



It has been very pleasing to know that our members have all escaped the worst of it so far, but we are still to hear from those in North Q'ld after Cyclone Yasi.

Meetings are just beginning to start up again so this month's newsletter will not have some of its regular features. The Cogs article is one that will resume in later editions.

You will also notice a slight change to the format of the pages with articles being placed horizontally rather than vertically. This is an attempt to make the newsletter easier to read for those receiving it by email.

For those of you who know me personally, I have to brag about my good news for 2011. I have now given up the smokes since New Year's Day. It wasn't a planned New Year's Resolution, rather the result of a bad summer cold, but it is a good thing nevertheless. For those of you who would like to follow suit, try www.whyquit.com This is a very helpful, and free, site.

Until next month,
Happy reading,
Maree

put forward back in 2003 by the report commissioned by Larry Anthony the then Federal Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The report was prepared by COTA National Seniors.

Much to my surprise, many of those attending were not aware of the recommendations and asked for them after the conference.

Like so many other things, the NGOs responsible for pushing the Government to act on the recommendations were not as passionate as some of us and very little was implemented. This tends to happen with organizations which dabble in several issues rather than specialising in just one.

The basic needs of grandparents raising grandchildren have not been met and are therefore pretty much the same as they were back then. So for this New Year, we are revisiting these recommendations and hopefully they will be the guidelines any future advances will strive to meet. Those recommendations are listed on Page2.

Recommendation #1

That Commonwealth and State Governments together recognise grandparents raising their grandchildren as a special group requiring assistance.

Recommendation #2

That Commonwealth and State Governments work together to ensure that grandparents raising grandchildren receive the same payments and support services as foster carers.

Recommendation #3

That Centrelink ensure grandparents obtain the benefits and assistance they are entitled to:

- Centrelink staff be fully trained in all aspects of benefits available to grandparents and their eligibility requirements.
- Centrelink produce and promote a booklet specifically for grandparents that includes information about Centrelink payments and other benefits, subsidies and services for which grandparents may be eligible.

Recommendation #4

That the criteria for disability allowances be reviewed and extended to cover emotional and psychological disability.

Recommendation #5

That a range of respite options be available to grandparents raising grandchildren, both expanding existing respite programs and funding new options through grandparent support groups and community service providers.

Recommendation #6

That community organisations such as Apex, Lions etc. be encouraged to assist grandparents and their grandchildren to participate in social and sporting activities.

Recommendation #7

That a community awareness campaign for grandparents raising grandchildren be developed and implemented, supported by reliable, accessible and consistent information about financial and legal issues and support services and available in a variety of formats - booklets, telephone information services, website, print media and community service announcements on radio and television.

Recommendation #8

That the status and rights of grandparents be recognised within Commonwealth Family Law and State legislation relating to the protection of children and young people, the Family Court, Children Courts and child protection authorities, particularly with regard to the grandparents' existing or potential role as the primary carer of their grandchildren.

Recommendation #9

That Commonwealth and State Governments ensure that independent complaints mechanisms or ombudsmen are available to oversee child protection authorities with the power to investigate complaints and that these are well publicised.

Recommendation #10

That Legal Aid be available to grandchildren and grandparents involved in Family Court matters:

- all children involved in the legal system have an independent advocate or children's legal representative paid for by Legal Aid
- the income and assets test for Legal Aid have the same eligibility criteria as the aged pension

Recommendation #11

That Legal Aid Officers and other legal practitioner be provided with accurate and comprehensible advice, including the legal rights of grandparents who have or are seeking custody of their grandchildren, and the eligibility criteria for Legal Aid.

Recommendation #12

That the issues of repeated non-attendance at hearings by recipients of Legal Aid be addressed.

Recommendation #13

That the legal situation of grandchildren following the death of a custodial grandparent be clarified, including the extent to which the grandparent(s) may provide for their safety and security.

Recommendation #14

That procedures be set up to establish the eligibility for assistance of those grandparents who are raising their grandchildren with the informal agreement of the parents and / or the child protection authorities and without a formal court order.

Recommendation #15

That the grandchildren be eligible for Health Care Cards in their own right and have this card and a Medicare Card issued in their own name to be held by the carer.

Recommendation #16

That the grandchildren be eligible for State education subsidies and allowances in their own right and that grandparents be informed of those subsidies and allowances.

Recommendation #17

That parent education programs be developed to meet the specific needs of grandparents raising grandchildren.

Grandparents ask that access to and availability of the services be improved for these grandchildren who often require counselling, speech pathology and dental treatment, as well as for additional tutoring and assistance with school work.

Recommendation #18

That Commonwealth and State Governments and community service provider organisations develop coordinated early intervention and prevention programs for families at risk, to address children's well-being and safety within their family. These programs should be founded on evidence-based models and include adequate services for individual children and families, especially emotional and psychological services and therapies and promotion of effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between families, agencies and professionals.

Recommendation #19

That funding is made available in each State to assist grandparent support groups with resources, professional support, training of group leaders, running costs and State-wide coordination.

Recommendation #20

That Government sponsor further ^{research} into the long term effects of parental drug and alcohol use on children's health and development, including:

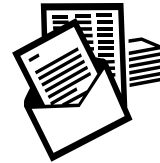
- the effects on children of being raised by their grandparents, and the effects on the health and well being of grandparents
- the effects on the health and well being of grandparents

Recommendation #21

That, within the next two years, the Commonwealth Government sponsor a conference on issues relating to grandparents raising grandchildren.



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.

How does a grandparent cope when denied access to their grandchildren?

by [Robin Tidwell](#)

Not all grandparents who never seem to be able to spend time with their grandchildren are overtly being denied access to them; sometimes, an adult child doesn't seem to care or to realize the importance of grandparents in a child's life – or the significance of a grandchild in the life of the grandparents.

Sometimes, especially in the case of blended families, expectations are merely different. Sometimes, there are old hurts and wounds that prevent an adult child from having a relationship with his parents, and therefore the grandchildren are also kept at arms' length.

How do grandparents cope with these situations? They may deny the problems exist; they may become angry and hurt. They may do all three, at different times; they may long to confront their adult children, but resist in case they make matters worse and, instead of seeing the grandchildren a few times a year, are only allowed an annual visit of a few hours – at best.

Sometimes, grandparents do speak to their children and try to work out a compromise; often this results in a brief change, but doesn't solve the problem. In a perfect world, the children will understand the grandparents' point of view, but the longer the issues continue, the more difficult they are to resolve.

Grandparents may become depressed, even clinically, when realizing all they've missed and will continue to miss: their grandchildren's "firsts", whether in person or via photos and videos; rocking them, singing to them, baking cookies, teaching, telling stories, seeing a particular movie for the first time. All these things are important to grandparents and, someday, will be important to the grandchildren when they realize what they, themselves, have missed.

In some families, grandparents see the kids weekly and enjoy family dinners, holidays, special occasions or even no occasion – just a few hours or a weekend with the grandchildren. In some families, grandchildren rarely see their grandparents, either because of distance or busyness or some other reason. In blended families, in particular, this can be problematic due to different traditions.

If one grandparent was raised in a "village" of extended family, and the other was not, there will be different expectations. Sometimes this occurs when one adult child is raised differently than the new spouse and expectations are adjusted accordingly; this can result in one or more sets of grandparents being virtually ignored.

But are there not things that most adult children do, to provide and encourage a relationship between grandparents and grandchildren? Especially when there appears to be no obvious strain or epic event with negative connotations, or even one which occurred years or decades ago and has, at least on the surface, been resolved?

Perhaps the adult children simply don't realize the hurt they are causing; of course, it's also possible that they just don't care. Sometimes one might even believe that the children are trying to tell them, in a passive-aggressive manner, to butt out of their lives.

When adult children and their families live at some distance from the grandparents, it would not be reasonable to expect even weekly visits; and surely the grandparents, if they aren't too decrepit, could make an effort to visit their children as well. This isn't always possible, due to work schedules, finances, and so forth, but when either side in this debate seems to be able to travel the rest of the globe, but not find time to foster the "grand" relationship, it can be a problem.

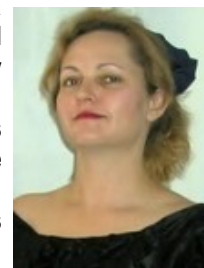
However, when adult children live within minutes of their parents, yet still are "too busy" to allow a relationship between grandchildren and grandparents, this can be an even bigger issue. When grandparents aren't allowed to babysit, or take the kids to a park, or any number of grandparenting-type activities, especially without the constant presence of the children's parents, grandparents begin to feel useless, worthless, and not deserving of the relationship. Hurt feelings result, which can be difficult to overcome for all involved.

About me

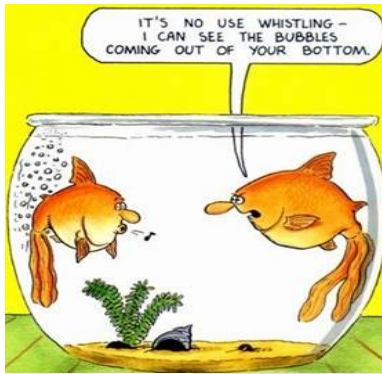
Robin is a freelance writer living in the St. Louis, Missouri area with her husband, Dennis, and their two sons. She has a rather eclectic educational background, and may just yet finish her B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies. She has held a plethora of jobs, appointments, and volunteer positions, and tries very hard to make it through one week at a time without a crisis.

Robin writes regularly for both Demand Studios and Examiner.com, to which she contributes, respectively, a hodgepodge of information and teen issues pertinent to the Greater St. Louis area.

Robin is also the Parenting and Pregnancy Channel Manager on Helium.com, where she has been a member for just over two years; her portfolio can be viewed at her website, www.RobinTidwell.com, or at any of her Helium Zones, and her musings and meanderings can be seen at her blog site, robinboots.wordpress.com



Laughter is the best Medicine



During a recent flood in a small town, a young girl was perched on top of a house with a little boy. As they sat watching articles float by in the water, they noticed an old hat go past.

Suddenly, the hat turned and came back, then turned around and went downstream. After it had gone some distance, again it turned and came back. They watched as it did this a number of times.

"Do you see that hat?" said the girl in amazement. "First it goes downstream, then turns around and comes back, then it goes back downstream and then it comes back again."

Oh, that's nothing, it's only my dad," replied the boy. "This morning my Mum said that come hell or high water, he was going to mow the lawn today."



I don't want to burst your bubble, but despite what you may have seen on the streets, the following combinations DO NOT go together and thus should be avoided:

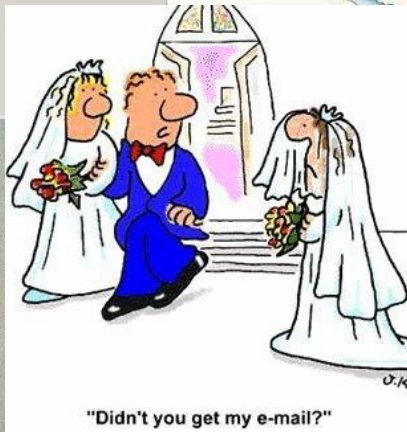
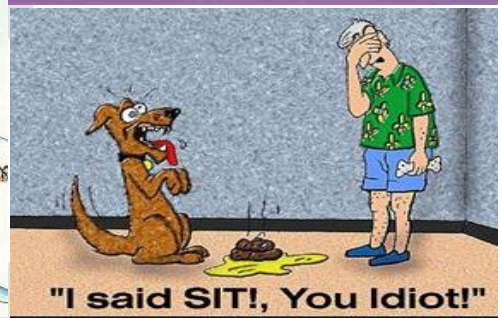
1. A nose ring and bifocals
2. Spiked hair and bald spots
3. A pierced tongue and dentures
4. Miniskirt and support hose
5. Ankle bracelets and corn pads
6. Speedos and cellulite
7. A belly button ring and a gall bladder surgery scar
8. Unbuttoned disco shirts and a heart monitor
9. Midriff shirts and a midriff bulge
10. Bikinis and liver spots
11. Short shorts and varicose veins
12. In-line skates and a walker
13. Thongs and Depends



Your husband is suffering from a very severe stress disorder. If you don't do the following he will surely die. Each morning fix him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant at all times. For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare an especially nice meal. No chores. No nagging. Oh yes, and make love several times a week. Do this for the next year and he'll regain his health completely!



What did the doctor say?
You're going to die!



2011 New Prayer

Dear God,
All I ask for in 2011 is a big, fat bank account and a slim body... please don't mix these up like you did last year.

Amen.



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

**Not Meeting in
Ipswich
February**

Due to Floods

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.qacls.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.