

MONTHLY NEWS



Editorial

Hi Everyone,
What an action packed month we have had!
I hope this newsletter finds you healthier than it does me. It seems I have finally caught the dreaded flu that is doing the rounds. My apologies to the Inala group for missing your big day. I am told by Lisa that all went very well though. Don't forget her contact details:

Ph 5608 3079; email grandfamily@internode.on.au
Tracey did a wonderful job as usual on our Congress. It was even better than last year and Channel 7 sent a news team so be looking for coverage. **Val French AM is to be congratulated for that.** Start preparing for the next one which promises to be even better.(June 2009)

The reports on both conferences from this month follow, kindly prepared by Tracey while I am recovering. Make sure you read them as there is some great news from them. **(The Hon. Margaret Keech MP Minister for Child Safety made some special announcements for us.)**

As always a highlight of our Congress for me is catching up with those of you I rarely see and making new contacts and this year was the best yet. There were at least six different support groups represented! An amazing achievement.

The guest speakers had some very important news for us and I would like to thank Narelle and Susan for the use of their equipment for the first screening of the KinKare powerpoint presentation with a special thank you to Mary for the stamps.

Special mention also needs to go to the grandparent parents who spoke at both conferences and those who gave interviews to the media later. Without these very special people standing up, our cause would have much less impact. It is not easy to do, but is so important.

The feedback this month has concentrated on the personal page and in particular on the jokes. I am so glad you like them. Remember they are sent in by readers and that is what makes them so appealing to all. I look forward to the next ones you send.

My love,
Maree

CHILD AND FAMILY NETWORK

First mini conference for grandparents was the Talera Centre function for the Child and Family Network, and in partnership with Kin Kare, Yeronga Child and Youth Mental Health Service, and the Council of Grandparents on the 21st August at the Greenslopes Baptist Church.



'The Changing Role of Grandparents' was demonstrated by Dr Sally Frye who gave her usual memorable insights into the issues for grandparents and kin carers raising grandchildren.

The Honourable Margaret Keech, M.P., Member for Albert and Minister for Child Safety and Women showed her great sensitivity in addressing the group.

Announcement of her decision to fund **20 places at Grandfamily Camps** for grandparents fostering their grandchildren through the Department of Child Safety was greeted with great pleasure. This has been an issue discussed at length at Council meetings for a while.

The Minister also undertook to meet regularly with representatives from the Council of Grandparents to discuss issues with her Department and their work with grandfamilies.

The panel involving representative grandparents was very moving and it gave the family workers present a very real insight into the unique issues and problems often faced by these special families.

The thanks of both KinKare and the Council of Grandparents must go to Dr Ron Frey who facilitated the conference and discussion on the topic. It provided a unique opportunity to get our issues brought to the attention of workers in the family support system in a new way and we have forged some new ties in another Network which will improve the delivery of services to grandfamilies.

One of the clearest points made on the day was that although we have been discussing many of these issues and problems for a long while [some five years] there is still a lot of work to be done in ensuring that those issues and problems are going to be addressed at some future time and not swept under the table or put into the 'too hard' basket.





MEETING DATES

Please call first as many groups do not meet in school holidays

KinKare EAGLEBY

Meets the second Friday of each month @10:30am,
Eagleby Community Centre
Ph Maree 3287 1664

KinKare NERANG

Meets the fourth Wednesday of the month @12:30pm
Nerang Neighbourhood Ctr
Ph Maree 3287 1664

SUNSHINE COAST KinKare

This group has now decided to hold joint meetings with
Community Solutions.
Please see below

KinKare INALA

Meets 2nd Tuesday of the month @ 10:30am
We are trying to get this meeting happening again so
please let us know if you are planning to attend. It is
quite expensive for me to go only to find no-one there.
Ph Maree 3287 1664.

KinKare GLADSTONE

Please contact Pauline
Ph (07) 4978 0501

KinKare WARWICK

**Currently needing a facilitator.
Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.**

ZILLMERE & SOUTHBANK

Indigenous Grandparent Support
Group

Meets twice monthly
Please ring Tess Ph 3252 4371

Grandparents As Parents

Community Solutions Inc.
Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay

Please phone Sharon 5437 9499

CAIRNS & DISTRICT

G'parents Support Group

Meets the first Wednesday of each month @9:30am,
Hambledon House Community Centre, Edmonton
Ph Janet or John (07) 40 555 161
Email johnjan@cairns.net.au

TOWNSVILLE region

Nth Q'ld G'parents in Need of Support (GINOS)

For details of this group, please contact
Ph. Nev (07) 4723 3520
Email trcota@bigpond.net.au

Please Note: Updated phone number



Group Meetings

For those who would like their meetings placed in this
column, just drop me an email or letter and I would be
only too pleased to spread the word.

There is no requirement to be a KinKare group.



Newsletter Items

Just another reminder to all groups, the **newsletter
articles are for distribution** to any relative carers.
Don't hesitate to pass on the newsletter in its entirety or
relevant articles as you see fit.

The only thing we ask is that the intent/content of the
article is not compromised.



Please Note

All contributions to the newsletter
are gratefully accepted.

Please email them to me for transfer to the newsletter.

If you need someone to chat to, we
are always happy to hear from you.

Phone Danni 3299 1764

or Maree 3287 1664, or your local
support group leader.





COGs 2nd Annual Congress

This much waited event took place on Friday 5th September in Brisbane at the same venue as last year. Once again we were treated to home made scones with jam and cream for morning tea! About 60 people participated in the Congress with grandparents coming from Cairns in north Queensland, the Clarence Valley and Lismore in NSW and the Sunshine Coast.

While many of us apart from Dr Maged Rofail were unfamiliar with attachment theory, the guest speakers, Narelle Nelles and Susan Gregory, soon brought us up to date and much better informed. Some of their work is included later in this article.

Tracey Douglas chaired the Congress and welcomed our special guest, Jann Stuckey MP, State Shadow Minister for Child Safety and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community Development. Jann is the member for Currumbin on the Gold Coast. Much of Jann's speech is reflected in her media release for the day and that is reprinted on the back of the newsletter for you.

One of her strong points was that she was taking our cause back to the LNP party room to strengthen their policies around our issues and problems. She was strong on the point of working to getting payments for grandparents in line with current foster care payments through the State to match the NSW payments.

Narelle and Susan expanded our knowledge on attachment theory and its application to grandparents raising grandchildren. Their 12 tips is included in full for your interest. There is also a copy available of their presentation which sets out in detail how the theory works and its implications on children. We were particularly interested in how attachment theory could be used as an effective argument in considering the placement of children with their grandparents or in cases where they are denied any access to their grandchildren.

Dr Maged Rofail continued this theme in his panel discussion and questions about the value of the theory to grandparents and their various situations. Maged also gave an overview of where the Council is up to following last year's Congress and its request that the Council follow up on legal issues. Two legal speakouts have been held with the assistance of OPSO this year and Maged is in the final stages of preparing a submission to the appropriate bodies. In the afternoon session, we held two workshops, one with Narelle and Susan on attachment theory and one with Maged on legal issues and the application of the theory in law. We also encouraged people to visit the Seniors Enquiry Line's table where they were promoting "Grandma,

you make me want to touch the sky". Our NSW visitors were impressed and took copies home with them.

The day finished on a very optimistic high with everyone energised and ready to move forward to a possible National Congress in June next year. Our challenge will be finding adequate funding for this special 2 day event so we can have grandfamilies attend at no cost. Narelle and Susan have already marked their diaries!

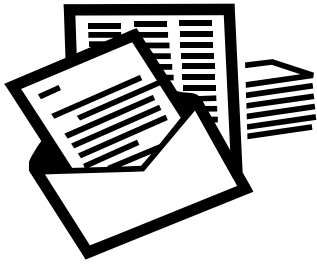
The Council would like to thank all who helped out in any way to make the day run smoothly and make it the success it turned out to be.

Anyone wanting copies of the Attachment Theory presentation can email Tracey on tadcom@austranet.com.au or ringing 5596 5523 and leaving a request to have it mailed to you.

12 Tips for parenting children in foster care or kinship care:

1. Nurture these children
2. Try to understand the behaviors before punishment or consequences
3. Interact with these children based on emotional age
4. Understand how these children have experienced love, attachment and trust
5. Be consistent, predictable and repetitive
6. Sift out what part of their behaviour is caused by you
7. Model and teach appropriate social behaviors
8. Listen to and talk with these children
9. Have realistic expectations of these children
10. Be patient with the child's progress and with yourself
11. Take care of yourself
12. Take advantage of other resources

Adapted in part from: "Maltreated Children: Experience, Brain Development and the Next Generation" (W.W. Norton & Company, New York, in preparation)



Our Personal Page

Our special guest at the Congress was Jann Stuckey MP who spoke up in support of grandparents. This is a copy of her media release of 5/9/08.

Jann Stuckey MP
Shadow Minister for Child Safety
Shadow Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community
Development Member for Currumbin

LNP supports grandparents as carers

The second Congress of Grandparents met in Brisbane today with the conference's key theme centred on attachment theory and relationships in Grandfamilies.

LNP Child Safety spokesperson Jann Stuckey who addressed the congress said the huge role grandparents play in the raising of children deserves recognition.

"In Queensland kinship care is only a mandatory consideration for the Department of Child Safety for Indigenous children," Ms Stuckey said.

"For too long the voice of grandparents has been neglected and taken for granted by a Government system that has under-valued their role.

Furthermore the importance of grandparents or other kinship care should not be limited to only Indigenous children.

"We have a wealth of loving grandparents available to provide kinship care for children of abusive neglectful parents.

"Right now in Queensland the Bligh Labor Government are embarking on a \$15 million foster carer recruitment drive to find another 500 carers.

"Why is there no investment being directed towards grandparents when key stakeholders indicate the long

term outcomes of such an arrangement are more beneficial to the healthy development of a child?

"Statistics show that kinship care is one of the fastest growing forms of care in Australia, yet proper recognition by the Beattie-Bligh Government is missing."

Children placed into grandparent or kinship care reap many benefits, including:

- * Maintaining family, community and cultural ties
- * Likely to have increased contact with parents, siblings and friends
- * Family has investment in wellbeing of child
- * Child more likely to feel secure, loved and have a sense of belonging
- * Trauma associated with removal lessened
- * Shared care is a traditional parenting practice in some cultural groups

"Attachment between a child and one primary carer is essential for the child to feel safe and protected," Ms Stuckey said.

"A child who suffers from detachment in their early life is often confused, anxious and uncertain, and finds it difficult to form relationships, explore the world around them and learn new skills.

"The Bligh Government's policy fails to address the importance of attachment theory."



Laughter is the Best Medicine!

On my birthday I got a really funny card from a friend. It joked about how our bodies might be getting older, but our minds were still 'tarp as shacks'. I wanted to thank the friend who sent the card, but I couldn't. She forgot to sign it!

My friend and I were celebrating our fortieth birthday the same year. As a gag gift, I gave her a CD by the band UB40. For my birthday, she retaliated with a CD as well. The group? U2!