

# Jarjums Living with Grandparents

## Aboriginal Parent Easy Guide

It is normal in our culture for children to spend lots of time with grandparents. Sometimes grandparents become 'parents' again when their grandchildren or 'grannies' come to live with them for periods of time. This can happen for lots of reasons and grandparents usually say 'Yes' no matter what it takes.

**Living together can be good for children and grandparents too!**

### **When children live with grandparents:**

- > they get lots of love and support
- > brothers and sisters can stay together
- > children can stay connected to family and culture.



Grandparents make their 'grannies' feel special and loved. Spending time together creates lifelong memories.

### When children live with grandparents, they can feel:

- > happy – they love being with you
- > unhappy – they just want mum or dad
- > worried about what's happening at home
- > angry and confused.

Children can show stress by:

- > being very quiet – not doing things they normally enjoy
- > 'misbehaving'
- > not sleeping or eating much, having tummy aches or headaches.

If children are upset, don't take it personally – they are just trying to make sense of it all. If you are worried about a child, talk with your health worker or doctor.

### Things that can help children:

- > staying at the same school, if possible
- > telling teachers what's happening
- > keeping children in touch with parents, family and friends
- > regular routines such as bedtime and meals
- > having clear rules in your home, so children know what is OK and not OK
- > talking about feelings
- > telling children what's going on – but not too much about adult problems.

### Children living with grandparents can mean:

- > a full house
- > lots to do
- > extra cost
- > impact on relationships and health.



### Going to school

Even if children are with you for a short time, they need to go to school every day. This is a legal requirement for children up to 16 years. Talk with the school about what's happening – many have Aboriginal workers that can help.

*Living together  
takes everyone time  
to get used to.*

## Things that can help grandparents

Ask someone you trust for help:

- > around the house or yard
- > taking children to school
- > with homework – older siblings can be good at this
- > with things such as clothes, school supplies, books or toys.

Get children to help out around the house. This teaches them responsibility and helps you too.

## Keep healthy:

- > eat well, exercise and get as much rest as you can
- > take medications your doctor prescribes
- > talk with a friend, doctor or health service if you feel low or stressed
- > look after your relationships with friends, family or partner – they are important supports for you.

## Getting along with your adult children

It's best for children if you get along with their parents.

Try to:

- > be someone your children can talk to – it can help them deal with their feelings
- > stay calm and don't offend
- > encourage people to get help if they need it
- > accept that your children might not listen to you!

## Money matters

Many grandparents 'stretch' a pension to care for children.

- > Talk with your adult children about how they will help with money.
- > Ask Centrelink what you are entitled to.
- > Make sure you get any concessions such as council rates, transport, gas and electricity.
- > Check what's in your local area for grandparents such as free childcare, respite or other services.
- > Church groups may be able to help with food and other things.
- > There are services that can help with budgetting and negotiating bills – see page 4.

*Always talk kindly about parents in front of children. Children love them no matter what.*



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### Helplines

#### Parentline NSW

Phone 1300 1300 52

9am - 9pm weekdays and 4pm - 9pm weekends for advice on child health and parenting.

#### Kids Helpline

Phone 1800 551 800, 24 hours

Telephone and web counselling for young people aged 5–25 years.

[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

#### Centrelink Grandparents Advisers

Phone 1800 245 965

Information on payments and services available.

#### Legal Aid NSW:

Phone 1300 888 529

Free legal advice and information.

[www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

**Lifeline:** 13 11 14

**Domestic Violence Line:** 1800 656 463

**Healthdirect:** Phone 1800 022 222, 24 hours To speak to a nurse.

[www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

**SIDS and Kids:** 1300 308 307

**Safe sleeping for babies:** [www.sidsandkids.org](http://www.sidsandkids.org)

**Child Abuse Report Line:** Phone 131 478, 24 hours

If you are worried a child is being abused or neglected. You can ask to speak to an Aboriginal worker if available.

**Healthdirect:** 1300 022 222, 24 hours to speak to a nurse

[www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

**Mensline Australia:** 1300 789 978, 24 hours

Speak to someone about relationship or family concerns.

[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

#### StepUP Loans

Phone 02 6621 7397

StepUP loans are personal loans between \$800-\$3,000 for terms up to 3 years with a concessionary fixed interest rate (5.99%) and no fees. Available to individuals and families on low incomes holding a current Health Care Card, Pension Card or eligible Family Tax Benefit Part A.

#### Anglicare North Coast, Financial Counselling

Phone 02 6643 4844

If you call the Anglicare financial counselling service you can meet with someone who can explore your financial options and support you in your decisions.

[www.anglicarenorthcoast.org.au/?page\\_id=16](http://www.anglicarenorthcoast.org.au/?page_id=16)

### Websites

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For parenting information

[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

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Various resources to help parents at any stage in life.

### Local Services

#### Aboriginal Legal Service Lismore:

Phone 1800 643 - ALS Lismore

3/15 Molesworth Street, Lismore NSW 2480

Phone 02 6623 4400

#### Aboriginal Maternal and Infant Health - Lismore Community Health

Phone 02 6620 7687

Provides antenatal care to Aboriginal women and women with Aboriginal partners, from early pregnancy through to 6 weeks after the birth of their baby. No referral needed.

#### Gurgun Bulahnggelah Aboriginal Health (Jullums)

Phone 02 6621 4366

Provides bulk billing medical and general health services, including counselling referrals and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and adults.

[www.gurgun.com.au](http://www.gurgun.com.au)

#### Aboriginal Outreach Worker and Counsellor - Interrelate

Phone 02 6623 2750

Yarning and counselling, running health and wellbeing workshops, and empowering people to make positive and healthier life choices

#### Child and Adolescent Trauma Counselling Service

Northern Rivers Community Gateway

e: [reception@communitygateway.org.au](mailto:reception@communitygateway.org.au)

Phone: 02 6621 7397

#### Brighter futures

Phone 02 6621 6992

Support and services to improve the emotional, social, health and educational developmental outcomes for families and their children.

#### Beanies Goorie Playgroup - YWCA Northern Rivers

Phone 02 6625 5800

Every Thursday 11am - 1pm during school terms and is for Aboriginal families with children 0-5 years living in the Goonellabah area.

*Refer to Service Listing for contact details of other local services*