

# grandcarers support

Today there are more children in NSW being cared for by their grandparents than there are children in foster care. We refer to grandparents in this situation as 'Grand Carers'.

Here on the NSW Far North Coast with our larger than State average ageing population it means we have a growing number of seniors stepping up and becoming the primary carers of their grandchildren.

Grandcarers take on the role of parenting out of love and concern for the two generations involved and often at great personal cost.

Grandcarers are eligible for a number of supports and benefits from Commonwealth, State and Local Governments and community support services. Key entitlements are listed in this fact sheet.



## What does it mean to be a Grandcarer?

The care Grandcarers provide may be for short, intermittent or long periods and under a formal or informal arrangement. Formal arrangements can include those where the care of the child is mandated by a welfare authority or a family law parent and/or court order. Informal arrangements are those where the family members have come to a private agreement about who cares for the child or children.

Being a grandparent is more than helping the parents with babysitting or school pick-ups. You may be a grandparent or non-parent carer if you:

- provide ongoing care for children, and
- are not their legal parent.

## Is help available?

If you're a grandparent or non-parent carer, including a foster and kinship carer, you can get advice and help to understand and access the supports and benefits that are available to you.

The Department of Human Services has workers called Grandparent Advisors who can help grandparent or non-parent carers by:

- providing tailored information about payments and support services based on your family circumstances
- arranging appointments with specialist staff, including social workers
- arranging referrals to federal, state and community service providers, and
- helping with any other Medicare, Centrelink or Child Support enquiries.

To speak to a Grandparent Adviser about how they can help you and the services and benefits you are eligible to receive call the **National DHS Grandparent Advisor Line on 1800 245 965**.

For information about the assistance available go to:

[humanservices.gov.au/grandparentcarers](https://humanservices.gov.au/grandparentcarers)

[humanservices.gov.au/nonparentcarers](https://humanservices.gov.au/nonparentcarers)

## Benefits and support services

Grandcarers are eligible for a number of benefits from Commonwealth, State and Local governments and community support services. Some examples are listed below with links to additional information. The Grandparent Advisors can advise you of all benefits available, if you are eligible for them and support you through the application process.

### Foster Child Health Care Card

A concession card to get cheaper medicines and some discounts for foster children/grandparents/kinship in primary care. For more information go to:

[www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/foster-child-health-care-card](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/foster-child-health-care-card)

### Double Orphan Pension

Helps with the costs of caring for orphaned children or children who are unable to be cared for by their parents. For more information go to:

[www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/double-orphan-pension](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/double-orphan-pension)

### Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy

Grandparents who are in receipt of a mainstream income support payment from Centrelink, such as Age Pension, Carer Payment, Newstart Allowance, Carer Payment, Parenting Payment & Disability Support Pension, should apply for Additional Child Care Subsidy by calling **13 61 50**/Families and Parents Line.

Grandparents who are working are also eligible to access 100 hours of Child Care Subsidy per fortnight at a subsidised rate.

### Legal Support

Legal Aid assists socially and economically disadvantaged people to understand and protect their rights. Grandcarers can access Legal Aid to assist them in legal matters regarding their grandchildren.

Phone: **02 6621 2082**

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

### School Support Vouchers

The Back-to-School Program “(the BTS Program)” acknowledges the contribution and role of Grandcarers on the NSW Far North Coast. It provides a \$50.00 Target gift voucher for each school-aged grandchild in the care of their grandparents to help pay for back to school expenses. The Program is funded by the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR).

Vouchers are distributed through local primary and secondary schools and are distributed in Term 1 of each school year. To receive a voucher the Grandcarer needs to contact their grandchild’s school. The school provides the number of Grandcarers and grandchildren to the Program to enable provision of the Target vouchers.