

Children living with grandparents

Aboriginal Parent Easy Guide



Parenting SA

It is common 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. 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 can make their 'grannies' feel special and loved. Spending time together makes memories for life.



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Helping parents be their best

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.

Daily routines help children feel safe and secure, especially during times of change.

Things that can help grandparents

Ask someone you trust for help:

- > around the house or yard
- > taking children to school
- > with homework – older children 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.

Services

Aboriginal health services

Adelaide

Nunkuwarrin Yunti, Adelaide:

Phone 8406 1600

Wonggangga Turtpandi Primary Health Care Centre,

Port Adelaide:

Phone 8240 9611

Maringga Turtpandi, Hillcrest:

Phone 7425 8900

Southern Adelaide Local Health Network,

Aboriginal Primary Health Services:

Noarlunga Phone 8384 9577

Clovelly Park Phone 8179 5900

Muna Paiendi Health Service, Elizabeth:

Phone 8182 9206

Country centres

Pangula Mannamurna Health Service, Mount Gambier:

Phone 8724 7270

Ceduna/Koonibba Aboriginal Health Service:

Phone 8626 2500

Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service:

Phone 8683 0162

Southern Fleurieu Health Service, Aboriginal Health Service,

Victor Harbor:

Phone 8552 0600

Pika Wiya Community Health Centre, Port Augusta:

Phone 8642 9999

Riverland Community Health Service, Barmera Hospital:

Phone 8588 0420

Nunyara Wellbeing Centre, Whyalla: Phone 8649 9900

Moorundi Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service,

Murray Bridge: Phone 8531 0289

Port Pirie Regional Health Service, Aboriginal Health Team:

Phone 8638 1100

Umoona Tjutagku Health Service, Coober Pedy:

Phone 8672 5255

Tullawon Health Service Inc, Yalata:

Phone 8625 6237

Nganampa Health Council, Alice Springs:

Phone 8952 5300

For grandparents

Centrelink Grandparents Advisers: Phone 1800 245 965

Information on payments and services available

Grandparents for Grandchildren SA: Phone 8212 1937

Support and information for grandparents www.gfgsa.com.au

SA Government:

www.sa.gov.au/topics/seniors/older-aboriginal-people

Child health and parenting

Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS):

Phone 1300 733 606, 9am–4.30pm, Mon to Fri for an appointment. You can be linked with an Aboriginal staff member www.cyh.com

Healthdirect: Phone 1300 022 222, 24 hours

To speak to a nurse www.healthdirect.gov.au

Women's and Children's Hospital: Phone 8161 7000

www.wch.sa.gov.au

SA Dental Service: Phone 8222 8222

8.30am–4.30pm, Mon to Fri

Information on dental services for children and adult

Parenting SA: For more Parent Easy Guides

www.parenting.sa.gov.au

Raising Children Network: For parenting information

www.raisingchildren.net.au

SIDS and Kids: Phone 1300 308 307

Information on safe sleeping for infants and bereavement support www.sidsandkids.org

Kidsafe SA: Phone 8161 6318

For safety products and advice on keeping children safe from injury www.kidsafesa.com.au

Money

Anglicare SA Financial Counselling Service:

Phone 1800 759 707

For help with budgeting and negotiating bills

Legal

Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement (ALRM):

Phone 1800 643 222, 24 hours

Information and support with legal matters www.alm.org.au

Women's Legal Service: Phone 8221 5553 or 1800 816 349

(Outside Adelaide) 10am–4pm, Mon to Fri

Free, confidential legal advice www.wlssa.org.au

Violence

Domestic Violence Crisis Line: Phone 1800 800 098,

24 hours. If you are concerned for your safety or in urgent need of assistance. You can also be connected with Aboriginal specific support services if you wish

Drugs and alcohol

Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia DASSA:

Phone 1300 131 340

Provides confidential drug and alcohol counselling and information

Parenting SA

A partnership between the Department for Education and the Women's and Children's Health Network.

Phone (08) 8303 1660 • www.parenting.sa.gov.au

Parent Easy Guides are free in South Australia.

Important: This information is not intended to replace advice from a qualified practitioner.

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