

# Children living with grandparents

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!**

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this website may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material.

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## Children living with grandparents

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.



**ACT**  
Government

AN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARENTLINK GUIDE

[www.parentlink.act.gov.au](http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au)

## Things that can help children:

Things that can help children include:

- 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...

Children living with grandparents can mean:

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

This guide's content was produced by Parenting SA, Women's and Children's Health Network.

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

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## Looking for more information?

ACT Government Publication No. 17/0604 (November 2017)

## 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.

## 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 budgeting and negotiating bills — see below.

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

## 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.

### Get 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!



ParentLink — for other parenting guides, online parenting information [www.parentlink.act.gov.au](http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au)

Child and Family Centres — for parenting information and support  
[www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/childandfamilycentres](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/childandfamilycentres)

Raising Children's Network — covering topics for parenting newborns to teens <http://raisingchildren.net.au>

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation t 6296 8900 [www.gugan-gulwan.com.au](http://www.gugan-gulwan.com.au)

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service t 6284 6222 [www.winnunga.org.au](http://www.winnunga.org.au)

Relationships Australia Dhunlung Yarra Service is dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples t 6122 7100 [www.racr.relationships.org.au](http://www.racr.relationships.org.au)