

BEING A CARER

Who is a Carer?

In March 2010, the federal government tabled the **National Carer Recognition Bill**. More than one in eight Australians provide care or assistance (without being paid) to another person who has a disability, illness, or who is frail.

The object of the Act is to 'increase recognition and awareness of carers and to acknowledge the valuable contribution they make to society'. The Bill establishes a broad definition of the term 'carer'.

A carer is defined as an individual who provides personal care, support and assistance to another individual who needs it because that other individual:

- has a disability; or
- has a medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness); or
- has a mental illness; or
- is frail and aged.

Within this Bill, carers are not individuals who provide assistance under a contract of service, as a volunteer, or as part of the requirements of a course of education or training.

<http://www.workingcarers.org.au/>

Family and friend carers are known under the title of '**Informal Carers**' and are usually the primary care giver, as opposed to 'Formal Carers' who are paid providers of care services

Often family and/or friends do not identify with the label '*carer*', they see themselves as providing support and love to their relative, spouse or friend.

On that note, the care provider may not be recognised as a 'carer' by the person they are caring for, rather as an extension of their role of a husband, wife, sister, grandparent or close friend.

Carers usually give their time to care because of commitment to, and love for, the person in need of care. The closeness of these relationships means that the type of care provided is diverse and every situation is unique. Care can include emotional, spiritual, and social support as well as physical assistance and control of financial and other life / health decisions.

Responsibility of the carer may be great, and the financial and physical drain can, at times, be quite substantial.

SERVICES TO HELP

Carers NSW: is the statewide peak organisation for carers, which has an exclusive focus on supporting and advocating for all carers in NSW, and has a wide range of information and resources to support you in your caring role. **1800 242 636** <http://www.carersnsw.org.au/about-us>

Working Carers Gateway: This website has been created to help people who are juggling working AND caring roles. <http://www.workingcarers.org.au/>

Connecting Carers NSW (CCNSW): provides support to foster, kinship and relative carers across New South Wales. 24 hour telephone support, ongoing education, peer support and advocacy to assist carers in their vital role caring for children and young people in out of home care (OOHC). **1300 794 653**
<http://connectingcarersnsw.com.au/>

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres: Provide carers with information and organising, purchasing, or managing respite care assistance packages for carers. Examples of respite care assistance include in-home respite care; support workers to assist you when you are taking a break away from home; and residential respite care. **1800 052 222** <http://www9.health.gov.au/ccsd/index.cfm>

COTA NSW: Has information for Grandparent carers raising grandchildren. Supplies contact numbers for Grandparent Support Groups throughout NSW. **(02) 9386 3860** or **1800 449 102** for regional NSW callers. <http://cotansw.com.au/programs/grandparenting/>

Centrelink: Has a Grandparent advisory service. You can speak to a grandparent adviser directly by calling Freecall **1800 245 965**.

Raising Children Network: This website offers up-to-date, research-based material on more than 800 topics spanning child development, behaviour, health, learning, communicating, education, entertainment and technology, sleep and safety.

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/grandparent_kinship_carer_services.html

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW (ECC): is the peak body for all culturally and linguistically diverse communities in New South Wales. **(02) 9319 0288** <http://www.eccnsw.org.au/Links.aspx>

Disability Service – IDEAS (Information on Disability & Education Awareness Services) – provides information on disability services, equipment suppliers and accessible travel, as well as other high profile speciality information resources maintained by other agencies **1800 029 904**

www.ideas.org.au/information/

No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) – provides small loans to low income households. Administered through community centres. **1800 509 994**

www.nilsnsw.org.au/nsw-nils-schemes

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR CARERS

You must be an Australian resident to receive payments from Centrelink.

[Carer Payment](#) provides financial support to people who are unable to work in substantial paid employment because they provide full time daily care to someone with a severe disability or medical condition, or to someone who is frail aged.

[Carer Allowance](#) is a supplementary payment for parents or carers providing additional daily care to an adult or dependent child with a disability or medical condition, or to someone who is frail aged. Carer Allowance is free of the income and assets test, is not taxable and can be paid in addition to wages, Carer Payment or any other Centrelink payment.

If you are already receiving the Carer Payment or Carer Allowance, the [Carer Supplement](#) is an annual lump sum payment to assist carers with the costs of caring for a person with a disability or medical condition.

[Carer Adjustment Payment](#) is a one off payment to help families deal with the increased costs of caring for a child aged 6 years or younger who has had a sudden and severe illness or accident.

[Child Disability Assistance Payment](#) is an annual payment to assist parents with the costs of caring for a child with a disability.

The [Pensioner Education Supplement](#) helps students with the ongoing costs of full time or part time study in a secondary or tertiary course.

PAYMENTS TO HELP CARERS WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN

There are a number of payments to help families with the cost of raising children.

[Family Tax Benefit](#) helps parents or guardians with the cost of raising children. It is made up of 2 parts - Family Tax Benefit Part A and Part B.

[Parenting Payment](#) also provides income support to parents or guardians to help cover the cost of raising children.

[Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance](#) provides extra help to pay for approved child care when eligible parents undertake activities such as job search, work, study, training, rehabilitation to enter the workforce as part of an Employment Pathway Plan.

[Double Orphan Pension](#) helps with the costs of caring for orphans or children whose parents are unable to care for them in certain circumstances. No income or assets test is required.

OTHER ASSISTANCE CARERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

The [Continence Aids Payment Scheme](#) helps eligible people with permanent and severe incontinence to pay for incontinence products.

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/payments-for-carers> or call **13 27 17**

GRANDPARENT CARERS

There are several payments to help non-parent carers who provide care to a child, including:

[Child Care Benefit](#) which helps cover long day care, family day care, occasional day care, outside school hour care, vacation care, pre-school, and kindergarten child care

[Child Care Rebate](#) which covers 50% of out of pocket child care expenses, up to a maximum amount per child per year, in addition to the Child Care Benefit

[Jobs, Education and Training Child Care Fee Assistance](#) which can help you meet the cost of approved child care by paying some of the 'gap fee' not covered by Child Care Benefit for the hours of care you need for approved activities such as job search, work, study or training

[Grandparent Child Care Benefit](#), if you are a grandparent with primary care of your grandchild, you may be able to get extra help with child care fees. Grandparent Child Care Benefit covers the full cost of approved child care for up to 50 hours for each child per week. It is paid directly to your child care service provider

[Family Tax Benefit](#) which is available to help with the costs of raising or caring for children. It is made up of 2 parts - Family Tax Benefit Part A and Part B. You may be eligible if you are a carer of a child, whether it is your birth child, grandchild, foster child or adopted child

Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB) – is available to customers that claim Child Care Benefits as reduced fees, cannot be claimed as lump sum payment. A grandparent that is in receipt of Centrelink payments / Pensions can claim up to 50 hours per week for each child attending **'approved Child Care'**. It is paid directly to your child care service provider.

* More detailed information on frequently asked questions for grandparents and carers go to:

http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/themes/families?utm_id=7

Call Family Assistance Office on **13 61 50** or visit your closest Centrelink Office for more information.

* Also available from COTA NSW: **A Networking Resource** for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

<http://cotansw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Grandparents-Raising-Grandchildren-Networking-Resource.pdf>