

# Family News

The Hobart Family Relationship Centre Newsletter

## *Relationships that Matter...*

I have some very fond memories of being about 10 or 11, sitting in my grandmother's kitchen on hot summer's days, the radio tuned in to the cricket, drinking hot cups of tea and dunking ginger nut biscuits.

Grandparents often have a positive effect on their grandchildren. They are the people we listen to as children when they tell stories of the olden days. Grandparents never seem to be too busy to spend time with their grandchildren.

Grandparents can provide warmth and care to younger children on top of the love given by parents. Families meet at grandparents' houses; children get to play with their cousins and know they will receive special attention.

The new Family Law Act recognizes the important place of grandparents – and other extended family members – in the lives of children following separation.

After a separation it is important to continue to actively involve grandparents in the lives of children. It's desirable that conflict between parents does not spill over to grandparents.

Grandparents often find themselves very conflicted should their son or daughter be separating. They may feel tempted to take sides; they may have strong feelings about the separation and about their son or daughter's spouse; there are loyalty issues; and, above all else, they often worry about 'how are the little ones going and what can I do to help them?'

Grandparents can play a crucial role for their grandchildren especially in terms of being a stable influence for children whose worlds are otherwise undergoing change. Grandparents are also often called upon to provide some more direct influence, care and protection for their grandchildren at these times.

We often get a strong sense of place and of belonging from our grandparents. In strengthening family relationships, it's important for us to provide support and encouragement to grandparents as well. They can be a central part of the puzzle.

**Michael Voumard**  
Manager



### Staff:

#### Manager

Michael Voumard

#### Client Services Workers

Liz Selkirk

Emily Wood

Sarah Brooks

#### Family Relationship Officers

Chris Dole

Sarah Tammens

Louise Knopman

Filomena Colavecchio

#### Child Consultants

Nicola Mason

Louise Knopman

Marianne Robertson

#### Community Development Consultant

Michael Kelly

#### Adjunct Care for Children

Emily Wood

## *Grandparents and Divorce*

We all know couples who have broken up, but it is when our own children tell us that their family is in trouble that the pain really hits. Now that the level of divorces are so high there is wider acknowledgement of the distress this causes not only to the couple, but to the children as well. What is often not spoken about is the grief that this causes the older generation... "When my daughter told me that her husband was leaving her and the children my first thoughts were, of course, about the emotional cost both to her and to her young son and daughter. Later I had time to think about what it meant to me as a grandmother".

Hundreds of grandmothers and grandfathers have been through the trauma of a divorce in the family. Each have a story to tell. A very upsetting element is to hear how grandparents become involved in the wrangle between the divorcing couple. In many sad cases grandparents find themselves cut out of their grandchildren's lives. This is often because the parent who has custody of the children either moves away, or because little attempt is made to keep in touch with the ex-partner's parents. Other grandparents find themselves with a fresh "hands on" link with their grandchildren providing childcare to enable a parent to work outside the home.

*Excerpt taken from the 'Grandparents Magazine' website, story by Jill Curtis. For the full article, follow the link: [www.grandparentsmagazine.net](http://www.grandparentsmagazine.net)*

## *Grandparents Raising Grandchildren*

If you were asked how many grandparents raising their grandchildren there are in Tasmania, what would you say? If you are like most people, you might think there are a few - you may even know someone in this situation, but you might also be surprised at the numbers who are living in your region or local community.

Grandparents are doing a wonderful job, stepping in at times of crisis or loss to take over the day to day care of their grandchildren in the absence of the biological parents. These situations can arise because of drug and alcohol issues, neglect or abandonment, long term illness of or death of the biological parents.

Across Tasmania, as in other states, there are a growing number of grandparents who find themselves faced with taking on the parental responsibility of their grandchildren. Without their willingness to become involved, these children would be placed in Foster Care.

The '*Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Tasmania*' website aims to provide an overview of information and relevant links to services that are available for grandparent families.

Further information is available from the website:  
[www.grandparentsraisinggrandchildrentas.com.au](http://www.grandparentsraisinggrandchildrentas.com.au)

*Excerpt taken from the 'Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Tasmania' website.*



'Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Tasmania',  
Phone. 03 6234 7948

## *Phrases of Encouragement*

Becoming a better parent/mentor/care-giver happens with small improvements at a time...

### **You do a good job of...**

Encourage children when they least expect it. Even a comment about something seemingly small and insignificant can make a child feel good about themselves.

### **You have improved in...**

Children will generally continue to try if they can see improvement in any activity they put their minds to. Sometimes they just need to know they are getting better, so they need someone to tell them.

### **I like you, but I don't like your behaviour...**

When dealing with children whose behaviour can test you, it's best to separate the deed from them.

### **You can help by...**

To feel useful and helpful is important to everyone. Kids want to be helpful, we just need to give them a chance.

### **How will you know you can't unless you try...**

Sometimes a little encouragement and knowing someone believes in you makes all the difference to giving something a go.

### **So you did make a mistake, what can you learn from it?**

Mistakes are part of learning, without them we wouldn't grow, help the child to see what they can learn from the mistake.

### **I'm sure you can do it, don't give up...**

Showing a little faith in what the child is doing can be just the tonic the child needs to persevere. Resilient learners know that they may not achieve something straight away – many kids today give up if they can't succeed immediately.

### **You should be pleased/proud of yourself...**

Self praise is about the best praise a child can get. Sometimes kids need some prompting that they should be pleased/proud/happy about themselves or their activities.

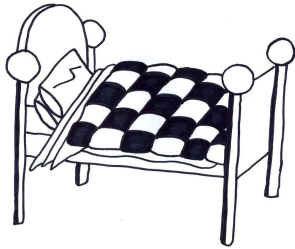
*Tips taken from '10 Phrases of Encouragement' by Michael Grose – Happy Kids 161*

## *Grandchildren...!!!*

..."I didn't know if my grand-daughter had learned her colours yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what colour it was. She would tell me, and always she was correct. But it was fun for me, so I continued. At last she headed for the door, saying sagely, "Grandma, I think you should try to figure out some for yourself!"

*Taken from the 'Grandparents Magazine' website. For more stories, follow the link: [www.grandparentsmagazine.net](http://www.grandparentsmagazine.net)*





## *Daylight Savings Time*

Tips for Parents and Grandparents:

A change like daylight savings time can influence how both parents and children behave and feel. Here are a few tips on how to make the transition as smooth as possible:

Tips for children under 5:

Focus less on explaining the time change and more on arranging the environment around them. Keep routines the same (even if that means having dinner earlier than usual for a few days) to provide a sense of continuity to the child. Gradually adjust schedules to make up the difference in time. Parents and grandparents can expect bedtime and wake up times may be a little more unpredictable for a week or so following the start of Daylight Saving Time. Room-darkening shades that block out the outside light changes can help with the transition.

Tips for older children:

By the age of 6 or so, parents can alert and anticipate the change with their kids in simple, concrete ways. Focus on relating the time change to the children's schedule. For example, since kids this age enjoy counting, parents can encourage kids to count the hours of daylight between lunch and bedtime or point out there is "more light outside" when the child wakes up.

Kids can help their parents or grandparents reset the clock at home to make it more real. Rest assured that kids are quite resilient, so the disruption to the entire family should be rather brief.

*Excerpt taken from:* [www.grandparentsmagazine.net](http://www.grandparentsmagazine.net)

## *'Getting it Right for the Kids' Information Sessions*

The Hobart Family Relationship Centre (HFRC) have started running information sessions. The sessions will help prepare parents to negotiate parenting arrangements using a child focused and child inclusive framework.

The sessions will be running through to mid December – alternating each week on Thursday afternoons (4.30 – 5.30pm) and Friday lunch times (12.30 – 1.30pm) and are held at the Hobart Family Relationship Centre, 178 Macquarie Street, Hobart.

If you are interested in attending, please contact the Hobart Family Relationship Centre to book your place.

*"My Mum and Dad are a part of me, of who I am...  
when they put each other down and say hateful things  
about each other, that is like they are saying those things  
about me..."*

*Rachel, aged 11  
Excerpt from 'Because it's for the Kids'*

### How to Contact Us...

**Office:**  
178 Macquarie Street  
Hobart TAS 7000

**Phone:**  
03 6211 2100

**Fax:**  
03 6211 2125

**Email:**  
[admin@hobartfrc.com.au](mailto:admin@hobartfrc.com.au)

**Website:**  
[www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)

**Family Relationship  
Advice Line:**  
1800 050 321