

When Grandparents take on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren the following facts need to be taken into consideration by the government.

NB: I live in a country area. This is my perspective from the area I live. I look after 5 grandchildren aged 4,6,8,12,16

1. Housing

Most older people usually downsize their accommodation due to their age, lifestyle etc. They can accommodate extra people for short periods of time (holidays, visits) but over a prolonged period of time it becomes unmanageable. There are no government agencies that will assist with extending, upgrading these older people's accommodation so that the grandchildren and grandparents are not overcrowded in their homes. Overcrowding can lead to many problems such as health issues, accidents in the home and stress issues. Government agencies should be able to assist in rehousing or extending houses so that the grandchildren can be homed safely and stress free. The assistance is important to older people as there is discrimination amongst lending houses to loan people money who are over a certain age.

2. Home Help

Many older people, who are in reasonable health for their age, take on the responsibility of grandchildren, but they are still prone to viruses and other illnesses. Although most older people take precautions against illness the children are out and about and pick up viruses which are then transmitted to everyone at home. Younger adults can cope better than older people with these things. The older people get the harder it becomes to overcome these common illnesses. To try and get home help is absolutely impossible unless they pay for it privately themselves. HACC will not assist unless the child or children are mentally or physically handicapped.

3. Respite

There are no facilities here for respite or holiday activities.

(The children are members of various organizations, but unfortunately most activities are in Perth 350kms away or Albany 160kms away)

Summary

We as grandparents take on the responsibility of our grandchildren for whatever reasons and we do it for love. We try to give these children the guidance, the opportunities, the hope for a better future.

These children have had to see things that no children should ever see and it has affected them each in different ways. We as their grandparents try to give them as normal a life as is possible.

It is absolutely fantastic when people say what a great job we are doing and how well the children look and how polite and friendly the children are, but what is everyone doing to try to help. ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.

I think that it is about time someone in government realizes that these children are our future. The problem of children being taken from their parents is not going to decrease in fact I think it is going to get worse. What if:- one of these grandchildren follows the same path as their parents and they have children who are taken from them for the same reasons you will not be able to give these grandchildren to their grandparents because they were deemed unfit to look after their own children.

The cycle needs to be broken and governments need to step in and really find out where the rot is and stamp it out.

The money that is being handed out to those who abuse the system could be better used for those who are in need. Grandparents should be able to access better payments better assistance not have to rely on charity.

NB: When my grandchildren came to me I had approximately \$10,000 which I could access. It was gone in 3 – 6 months for the following reasons:-

Clothes and Footwear

School Uniforms, Fees, Stationery and Text Books

Food, Cleaning products, Personal Hygiene products

Car Seats and Pram

Crockery, Cutlery

Beds

Bedding

Electricity

Gas (LPG)

Telephone