



## Establishment Payment to informal relative carers – information for grandparents and other relatives

### Background

There are a number of reasons that grandparents and relatives assume the care of children within their family. Parents and their families have primary responsibility to provide safe care for children and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support (the Department) is not usually involved in situations where families make their own family care arrangements.

For the purposes of this document, 'informal relative carers' refer to those relatives who assume responsibility for the care of children in their family where the Department has had prior involvement due to concerns for a child's wellbeing. A plan is developed with the family and it is agreed that the child will live with their grandparents or relatives.

This informal care means that children, who may otherwise be taken into the Chief Executive Officer's care, continue to be cared for by their family. The child's parents must agree to the family care arrangement. Parental responsibility remains with the parents.

### What is an Establishment Payment?

In recognition that there are initial costs involved when a child goes to live in these informal relative care arrangements, the Department has introduced an Establishment Payment.

The Establishment Payment is a contribution towards the costs of setting up accommodation arrangements to meet the child's needs in the living arrangement. This will normally involve the provision of items for the child such as furniture, bedding, clothing and age appropriate toys and equipment.

### The safety plan

The Department will organise a *Signs of Safety* meeting with the family to develop a plan. The plan will set out what actions will be necessary to provide a safe living arrangement for the child.

Long term planning is vital for the stability and emotional wellbeing of children. It is important to consider all the issues that you may face when taking on the full-time care of a child. This may include:

- Can your house accommodate a larger family?
- Will your health allow you to cope with the rigours and demands of caring for a child?
- The challenges associated where a child has difficult behaviours or a disability.
- Disruption to other family members in the household.
- Will you (or your spouse) need to cut down or leave your paid work to provide care for the child?
- Costs involved.



## How often is the Establishment Payment paid?

Once it is agreed that the child will live with you, the Establishment Payment will be paid. The payment is made for each child you take into your care under the family arrangement. The payment will not affect your Centrelink entitlements.

You will only receive the Establishment Payment for a child once. If, for example, the child goes back to live with their parents and then for some reason they return to your care, an Establishment Payment will not be paid again.

## Local services, support agencies and organisations

Bringing up children is challenging. You may find that your life and plans for the future change when you take on the care of a child. The child will also have some adjusting to do as they get used to your way of doing things, your routines and your rules. You may benefit from connecting to local services, support agencies and organisations such as:

- playgroups and child care centres;
- community centres;
- carer associations and support groups;
- education and training services;
- counselling services; or
- Parenting WA.

The Department can provide information on these services. You can also access information and services available to families from the Department of Local Government and Communities - Communities on (08) 6279 1200 or 1800 654 432, or visit their website at [www.communities.wa.gov.au](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au).

The booklet *Grandfamilies: A Resource Guide for Western Australian Grandparents Raising Grandchildren* is an easy to read, practical guide that includes telephone numbers and websites of relevant government and non-government agencies and support groups. The booklet is available from the Communities website or you can call Communities on (08) 6551 8700 for a copy.

## Commonwealth Government benefits and assistance

You may be eligible for Family Assistance payments and other support payments and allowances from the Commonwealth Government to help with the cost of raising a child in your care.

You will need to contact the Department of Human Services (DHS) to discuss your personal circumstances and test your eligibility for assistance. Contact the DHS on 132 468 or visit your local DHS office. For language assistance, you can telephone 131 202.



## Useful contacts

### Department of Human Services (DHS) Grandparent Advisers

Grandparent advisers are in selected DHS offices to support grandparents with full-time caring responsibility for their grandchildren. Grandparent advisers can help you by:

- assessing your family circumstances;
- providing information and help to access payments and services;
- arranging appointments for you with specialist staff such as social workers; and
- arranging referrals to other federal, state and community service providers who may also be able to help you.

Telephone: 1800 245 965 Web: [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

### Parenting WA

Parenting WA offers an information, support and referral service to parents, carers, grandparents and families with children up to 18 years of age. The services are free and no referral is required. Parenting WA Line is a 24-hour a day, seven day a week telephone information service.

Telephone: 6279 1200

Country free call: 1800 654 432

Web: [www.communities.wa.gov.au/parentingwa](http://www.communities.wa.gov.au/parentingwa)

### Centrecare

Centrecare provides specialist social services in metropolitan and regional areas of Western Australia. This includes family and relationship counselling, individual counselling, specialised men and women counselling, children counselling, and family dispute resolution. Some of the other categories of service provided include financial advice, youth and family support, and accommodation and support.

Telephone: 9325 6644 for the office closest to you, including country areas.

Web: [www.centrecare.com.au](http://www.centrecare.com.au)

### Anglicare WA

Anglicare WA assists people with relationship issues, financial problems, and housing difficulties.

Telephone: 9263 2000 Web: [www.anglicarewa.org.au](http://www.anglicarewa.org.au)

## Do you require more information?

Your local Department for Child Protection and Family Support district office can provide further information if required. Contact the Department on telephone (08) 9222 2555 or 1800 622 258 for the contact details of your local office or visit our website [www.cpfs.wa.gov.au](http://www.cpfs.wa.gov.au).