families commission
kōmihana ā whānau

Giving New Zealand families a voice *Te reo o te whānau*

RESEARCH REPORT NO 1/10
FEBRUARY 2010

changing roles

THE PLEASURES AND PRESSURES OF BEING A GRANDPARENT IN NEW ZEALAND

A FAMILIES COMMISSION REPORT

The Families Commission was established under the Families Commission Act 2003 and commenced operations on 1 July 2004. Under the Crown Entities Act 2004, the Commission is designated as an autonomous Crown entity.

Our main role is to act as an advocate for the interests of families generally (rather than individual families).

Our specific functions under the Families Commission Act 2003 are to:

> encourage and facilitate informed debate about families

> increase public awareness and promote better understanding of matters affecting families

> encourage and facilitate the development and provision of government policies that promote and serve the interests of families

> consider any matter relating to the interests of families referred to us by any Minister of the Crown

> stimulate and promote research into families, for example by funding and undertaking research

> consult with, or refer matters to, other official bodies or statutory agencies.

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A FAMILIES COMMISSION REPORT

ANNE KERSLAKE HENDRICKS
FAMILIES COMMISSION

WITH WEB RESEARCH
UMR RESEARCH

CONTENTS

HE MIHI WHAKATAKI

Whakarongo ake au ki te manu nei te mā Tui.
Tuia i runga, tuia i raro,
Tuia i waho, tuia i roto
Tuia te herenga tangata
Kā rongo te pō kā rongo te Ao.
Ki te Whai ao ki te māramatanga.

He Rārangi maunga tū te Pō tū te Ao.
He rārangi tangata
He mate, he mate, he mate.

A koutou i tangohia atu e te ringa aitua o Tangaroa
Haere, haere, haere.

Kia koutou rā te hunga ora e noho mai na i nga Marae maha o te motu.
Tena koutou e kawe nei i ngā kaupapa mō nga Whanau katoa.

Kia kaha kia manawanui.

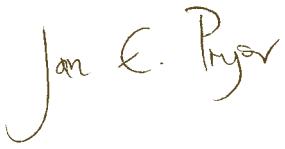
Ko te Komihana ā Whānau te Reo o te Motu mo te Whānau. E tautoko ana hoki te Komihana ko te iwi Māori tonu te tangata whenua o Aotearoa – ko ngā tikanga Māori i tuhia ki roto ki tenei ripoata he tirohanga na ngā mātua tūpuna me ngā Whānau i raro i tenei kaupapa te Tūpuna me te Mokopuna. Kāhore he kaupapa nui atu i te Whānau,

Kā nui nga mihi ki tenei uri o Ngati Apa, Nga Wairiki, Te Aitanga a Hauiti.
Te Tumuaki Tuarua o Te Atawhai o te Ao a Tākuta Dr Cherryl Waerea-i-te-rangi Smith mo te kōkiri, te rangahau te tautoko me te tuhi i tenei ripoata. Tena koe.

Ko te mea nui kia tau te Rangimarie ki runga ki ā koutou katoa, i ngā wa katoa.

“He aha te mea nui?” “He tangata he Whānau.”

Kia ora.



Dr Jan Pryor
Chief Commissioner

PREFACE

Changing Roles: The pleasures and pressures of being a grandparent in New Zealand paints an intricate picture of grandparents' lives, views and needs. The report offers a wealth of information about grandparents in modern New Zealand, which will be of use to policymakers, decision-makers, service providers, researchers and families and whānau themselves.

We know that, on the whole, grandparents enjoy their role, particularly spending time with their grandchildren. Many grandparents believe that an essential part of their role is passing knowledge and information down through generations. For many Māori and migrant grandparents, this includes sharing language skills, cultural practices, traditions and beliefs.

This report doesn't just tell us what we know. It challenges assumptions in several important areas. Challenging our assumptions about who grandparents are is important to ensure policymakers and service providers are responsive to the needs of contemporary grandparents. Grandparents are as varied and diverse in their identities and family structures as are families themselves. And therefore their needs are changing in many ways.

For example, separation and re-marriage mean that today's families negotiate complex arrangements. A child might have a step-grandparent because a grandparent has re-married. Or it could be that a parent has re-married, and their new partner brings with them an additional set of grandparents for their children.

Urbanisation as well as global mobility have added additional complexity to our relationships. Some families now span continents. Having recently become a grandparent to a child born in the United Kingdom, I understand the challenges of grandparenting from a distance. Although distance makes it harder for grandparents to be actively involved in their grandchildren's lives, many grandparents are finding creative ways to maintain strong family ties across the miles.

Importantly, not all grandparents are older people. Despite the traditional depiction, grandparents interviewed in this study were aged in their 30s and upwards. Our research findings suggest that there are likely to be around 18,000 grandparents in New Zealand who are under the age of 45.

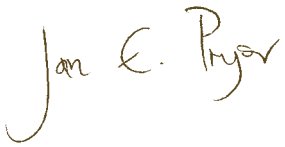
It is clear from this report that there are some grandparents who need more support. One of these groups is a subset of migrant grandparents living in a new country away from their social networks, frustrated by language and cultural challenges. Another group is the growing number of grandparents raising their grandchildren.

The lives of whānau across Aotearoa weave together to form a rich tapestry that includes our past as much as it does our future. Te reo o te whānau – the voices of families – are captured through research and dialogue, and then woven into policy and practice. In doing so, we give life to the dreams of those who have enriched our lives with their wisdom and experience. We acknowledge tangata whenua, and particularly thank Dr Cherryl Waerea-i-te-rangi Smith for her contributions and guidance throughout the process of undertaking this study.

I believe this report gives depth to the understanding of who grandparents are today, and highlights their strengths and needs in their full diversity.

“He aha te mea nui? He tangata, he tangata, he whānau.”

What is the greatest of all? It is people, people and family.



Dr Jan Pryor
Chief Commissioner

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from multi-method research involving New Zealand grandparents. It draws on data from nine focus groups (held with New Zealand European, Māori, Samoan, Cook Islands and Korean grandparents) and a nationwide telephone survey of 1,178 grandparents. The data are supplemented by additional information drawn from other Families Commission consultations with grandparents and their families, and national and international literature. It adds to our understanding of the roles and experiences of grandparents living in New Zealand. Based on the telephone survey results, we estimate that there are likely to be around 700,000 grandparents of under-18-year-olds in New Zealand, making up 24 percent of the adult population.

The Families Commission's vision is that *Families are the best that they can be.* The Commission recognises that grandparents play important roles within many New Zealand families, particularly in terms of the many and varied forms of support they provide.

Aware that grandparents may themselves require support, the Commission identified a need for further information about how grandparents balance their own needs and interests with caring and family responsibilities, and any pressures associated with doing so. The research would also identify the support and information grandparents need in order to achieve this balance. A multi-method approach was undertaken to provide an evidential basis for advocacy for grandparents.

The primary aims of the project were to find out:

> What the pleasures and pressures are in being a grandparent in New Zealand today.

> How grandparents balance their own needs and interests (including paid work, voluntary, social and family activities) with caring and family responsibilities.

> What support and information grandparents need in order to do so.

> What information others need so that they are able to provide relevant support and information to grandparents.

> How cultural beliefs and practices influence the grandparenting role.

To learn more about the extent and effects of contributions made by grandparents to New Zealand families, the research team also looked at their provision of childcare, practical, emotional, financial and other forms of support.

Diversity

Blended and step-families[1] have become common in New Zealand,[2] consequently many grandparents will have experienced changes within their own family, with associated increases in the size, range and complexity of family networks. Grandparents can be same-sex or opposite-sex, biological grandparents, adoptive grandparents (through formal or whangai[3] arrangements), step-grandparents and surrogate grandparents. Both grandfathers and grandmothers play active roles in supporting grandchildren and their families. Some adults will become grandparents at a relatively young age (eg, early 30s); some older people will never become grandparents at all. The age diversity of grandparents in New Zealand must be taken into account by those working with and for grandparents, particularly when considering appropriate channels for disseminating information and support.

1 Within blended and step-families, at least one adult within the couple is not the biological or adoptive parent of one or more of the children.
2 Families Commission (2008c) *Kiwi Nest* report.
3 The term 'whangai' refers to the customary Māori practice of children being raised by kin members other than their parents (McRae & Nikora, 2006). The practice is further described later in this report.

Grandparenting is also influenced by cultural practices, familial obligations and responsibilities – with changes in these areas likely to continue to evolve as New Zealand becomes more ethnically diverse.

Grandparenting pleasures

Many grandparents in both the focus group and telephone survey populations expressed a desire to spend more time with their grandchildren. The research findings indicate that most grandparents are balancing involvement with their grandchildren with other commitments and perceive that there are many pleasures associated with being a grandparent, particularly the joy of nurturing and observing grandchildren's development. Active involvement with grandchildren can enrich the lives of both generations.

Grandparenting pressures and the need for balance

Some grandparents experience considerable pressures and challenges integrating their grandparenting role with other aspects of their lives. Nevertheless, even those grandparents who face challenges display resiliency and flexibility as they describe how they have adapted to changes in family dynamics and structures, as well as technological, societal and other changes. These include the desire and need to develop computer and cellphone skills (eg, emailing, texting) to communicate with grandchildren and other family members.

Our research suggests that the grandparents most likely to feel under pressure are:

> grandparents who are raising their grandchildren (as the primary caregivers)

> grandparents juggling multiple demands on their time, including childcare

> Māori grandparents, who need support to ensure that they are able to share traditional wisdom and practices with their mokopuna[4] (in the face of increasing pressures on traditional ways of teaching roles and responsibilities, and the erosion of traditional whānau supports through urbanisation and emigration)

> grandparents whose finances are stretched due to the financial contributions they are making to their grandchildren and their families

> migrant grandparents.

Each of the migrant grandparent groups participating in our focus groups – Samoan, Cook Islands and Korean – highlighted both the joys and challenges of sharing their language, traditions and beliefs with grandchildren who are growing up in New Zealand.

Although technological changes have made it easier for grandparents to maintain strong relationships with family members who do not live in close proximity, we also heard occasional comments about the downside of such technology. For example, the costs of cellphone top-ups and call charges (which grandparents can be expected to pay), and the use of text messages to make constant demands on one grandparent's time.

Some grandparents with whom we consulted described being pulled in many directions due to multiple responsibilities, which not only limits the time they have for themselves but also potentially strains relationships with partners and other family members.

4 'Mokopuna' is the Māori term for grandchildren, or descendants.

Support and information needs

Grandparents' cultural, social, psychological, financial (and other) needs should be taken into account. Support and information for grandparents must be directed through other channels (such as those accessible to parents) in addition to those targeted at older people, as not all grandparents are 'older'. Without adequate support and access to information to assist with lifestyle changes and other transitions associated with grandparenting, particular groups of grandparents (eg, migrant grandparents, grandparents raising grandchildren) can be vulnerable and potentially feel stressed and isolated.

For those grandparents who are still active in the labour market, efforts to promote family-friendly work arrangements will make it easier to balance their own paid work with time they want to spend with their grandchildren.

Cultural influences on grandparenting

Grandparenting is influenced by cultural roles and expectations. Reflecting cultural values, within the telephone survey population Māori and Pacific grandparents were more likely than grandparents as a whole to be living with one or more grandchildren. Māori and Pacific grandparents, on average, also had more grandchildren than grandparents from other ethnic groups. Grandparents told the research team about the responsibility and desire they feel to pass on skills, knowledge and wisdom. For the Māori, Samoan, Cook Islands and Korean grandparents who took part in our research, this frequently involves sharing cultural practices and beliefs, and teaching grandchildren a language other than English.

Through the Families Commission's whānau ora strategy, the Commission is seeking to be instrumental in adding value to whānau voices on issues of relevance and importance to whānau Māori. Emphasis is given to the development of strong, resilient whānau able to manage through times of challenge and change and lead their own development. Within the whānau, Māori grandparents are repositories of cultural knowledge and wisdom; the kaumātua leadership role within iwi and whānau has compatible responsibilities with the grandparenting role and both roles should continue to be honoured and valued.

Contributing to families

Grandparents' involvement in their grandchildren's lives runs across a continuum, ranging from grandparents who have no contact at all with their grandchildren (not always by choice), to grandparents who are raising grandchildren full-time. National and international research literature supports our findings that some grandparents make significant changes to their own lives so that they can support their grandchildren (and sometimes to support their grandchildren's parents as well). This can involve complex financial and social decisions, including changes to living conditions and household structures, juggling or reducing paid work to fit in with caregiving commitments, and moving within and across countries. Although almost half of the telephone survey grandparents said that they had put their needs and interests on hold to look after their grandchildren, responses to other questions suggest that most had done so willingly. However, about one-third of grandparents said that it was not easy to turn down requests to look after their grandchildren.

Grandparents participating in this research talked and wrote about their main caring and family responsibilities in a range of different ways. These encompassed the emotional, cultural/spiritual, cognitive and physical dimensions of grandparenting, and reflected their own, and their adult children's, socio-economic circumstances. For some grandparents,

providing support for their families can have negative effects on the grandparent's physical, financial and emotional wellbeing. A number of grandparents, in both focus group and telephone survey samples, talked about the financial support they provide to their families, ranging from small and occasional to significant and ongoing contributions.

Many grandparents in New Zealand support their families by providing childcare. Grandparent-provided childcare makes a strong contribution to the New Zealand economy. Grandparents frequently provide care for their grandchildren to enable parents to undertake either part- or full-time work. Some grandparents juggle their own paid work and their caring commitments, while other grandparents give up their paid employment or change their working hours so that they can undertake the caring role. Within the telephone survey population, 69 percent of grandparents reported looking after one or more of their grandchildren on a regular or irregular basis (often while parents were at paid work). Seven percent lived with one or more grandchildren, including two percent who were raising at least one grandchild.

Grandparents who raise grandchildren provide vital support to these children and to their parents, and Worrall's (2009) research suggests that the effect of stability and committed care can result in improvement in the children's physical and psychological health over time.

Conclusion

Grandparents' contributions to New Zealand families must be recognised and valued within families, as well as by communities, government and society. Grandparents need a stronger voice in the development of policies and services that impact on them. Policies and service provision must be responsive to the diverse nature of grandparents' roles, family structures, lifestyles, relationships, cultures and demographic characteristics.

It is clear that grandparents play a significant role in the lives of many New Zealand families, providing support across a wide range of areas. In particular, the provision of both regular and irregular childcare is of considerable assistance, helping parents to remain in the labour market as well as allowing them time for other activities such as study, or a break from the demands of family life. Financial contributions, small and large, are another way in which some grandparents are supporting their grandchildren and their families, even though this can lead to their own finances being stretched.

The way forward

The Families Commission intends to advocate for grandparents so that they are well supported in balancing their grandparenting roles with other aspects of their lives. The Commission will work with other agencies to promote better access to information, services and support for grandparents, as well as to increase grandparents' awareness of what is already available. The Commission will continue to seek opportunities to learn about grandparents' needs and issues, through our work programme and external networks. This will include working closely with the Commission's own Whānau Reference Group and Ethnic Reference Group, as well as other agencies working with and for grandparents. The Commission will promote better access to information, services and support for grandparents who require it, as well as increasing grandparents' awareness of what is available.

Looking forward, the Families Commission will explore the most appropriate ways to provide information for grandparents, covering the variety of topics and issues raised in the research. In particular, there is a need for more reliable and consistent information to be made available with regards to government-provided financial and other support for

which grandparents might be eligible. Grandparents also need to be aware of their right to request flexible working arrangements.

The focus will be on enabling grandparents to develop and negotiate solutions and compromises that will allow them to meet their own needs. At the same time, the information provided to grandparents will assist them with making choices about the extent and frequency of contributions made to grandchildren and their families.

For most grandparents the pleasures of grandparenting outweigh any pressures. The benefits and positive experiences of grandparenthood should be promoted and grandparents encouraged and supported to be actively involved in their grandchildren's lives.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Families Commission recognises the many and varied contributions that grandparents provide within families in their grandparenting role. This research was undertaken to learn more about how grandparents play that role and whether or not grandparents balance their own needs and interests (including paid work, voluntary, social and leisure activities) with childcare and other family responsibilities. The research looked at pressures associated with this balancing of needs and interests. It also explored the cultural dimensions of grandparenting and identified the areas in which grandparents have unmet needs for support and information. A multi-method approach was undertaken to provide an evidential basis for advocacy for grandparents.

1.1 CONTEXT

Grandparents play a key role in many New Zealand families. Typically, a person assumes the role of grandparent when their adult son or daughter has a child of their own. People can also become step-grandparents or foster grandparents. Relatives other than grandparents may assume a grandparenting role and occasionally non-kin adults (eg, friends, neighbours) act as surrogate grandparents; for example, by providing support to families without grandparents of their own living nearby.

National and international researchers have looked at the differing roles grandparents play in supporting families. Grandparents can provide practical, emotional and financial support and their roles can include adviser, teacher, caregiver, mentor, friend and historian. The importance of family support networks and the role that grandparents play within them is illustrated in the following comment:

> [There is a] generational presence from grandfather, sons and grandsons aged 72 down to two years old… The family gathers at the family home monthly to discuss issues to plan strategically for the future, focusing on health, education and housing […] There is a lot of love, respect, caring and openness – we are proud grandparents watching the importance of family love, respect and unity. (Families Commission, 2006, p. 26)

The grandparent experience cannot be generalised, given the diversity of individual experiences. As noted by Keeling, Glasgow and Morris (2008) and other researchers,

there are wide variations in grandparent-grandchild relationships and significant differences among them, influenced for example, by:

> the grandparent's gender

> age

> health

> proximity to grandchildren

> amount and frequency of contact

> nature and duration of the relationship

> cultural beliefs and practices

> sexual orientation

> changing features of household composition (at both parent and grandparent levels)

> family dynamics.

Grandparents' involvement in grandchildren's lives runs across a continuum, ranging from grandparents who have no contact at all with their grandchildren (not always by choice), to grandparents who are raising grandchildren full-time. It was estimated that in New Zealand over 10,000 children are in kin/whānau care (Worrall, 2009), many of whom are being parented by their grandparents. The exact numbers are not known because large numbers of kin carers have informal arrangements not captured by government statistics. Grandparents step into the parenting role – often unexpectedly and at very short notice – when parents are unable or unwilling to, or have been found by the court not to be suitable as primary caregivers. For grandparents raising grandchildren in these circumstances, life can be very challenging, particularly in terms of emotional and financial demands. Some are required to move back into the paid workforce to support their grandchildren so that costs associated with food, housing, education and so on can be met.

Some grandparents make significant changes to their own lives in order to support their adult children and care for their grandchildren. These changes are likely to involve complex financial and social decisions. For example, some grandparents move within New Zealand, or from another country, so that they can be closer to their grandchildren. Such moves necessitate major lifestyle changes, and are likely to affect grandparents' living conditions, social and support networks and employment prospects.

This project complements other work undertaken by the Families Commission, such as previous research and advocacy on balancing paid work and caring roles. The project also aligns with the New Zealand Government's Positive Ageing Strategy[5] that sets out Government's commitment to positive ageing and reaffirms the value of older people in society. It should be recognised, however, that grandparents in New Zealand are not all 'older people'; the youngest grandparents (albeit a very small percentage) are in their early 30s.

5 http://www.osc.govt.nz/positive-ageing-strategy/publication/index.html

1.2 AIMS

Recognising the diversity of grandparenting experiences, the Families Commission decided that further information was required about how grandparents manage their grandparenting roles in order to effectively focus the Commission's advocacy efforts.

The primary aims of the project were to find out:

> What the pleasures and pressures are in being a grandparent in New Zealand today.

> How grandparents balance their own needs and interests (including paid work, voluntary, social and family activities) with caring and family responsibilities.

> What support and information grandparents need in order to do so.

> What information others need so that they are able to provide relevant support and information to grandparents.

> How cultural beliefs and practices influence the grandparenting role.

The research team also explored the contributions that grandparents make to families including the provision of childcare, practical, emotional, financial and other forms of support.

To answer the research questions, the Families Commission engaged with grandparents through focus groups and a nationwide telephone survey and the findings were supplemented by information drawn from the Families Commission's online Couch polls, and an older people's forum.

Drawing on the research results, the Families Commission intends to advocate for grandparents so that they are well supported in balancing their grandparenting roles with other aspects of their lives.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

When the project commenced, a literature scan was undertaken by a member of the Knowledge Services team at the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). This revealed that there is a growing body of international research literature exploring the experiences of grandparents and the roles that grandparents play within families. However, there is a relative shortage of information about the experiences of grandparents in New Zealand. This influenced the research team's decision that the project should have both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative component was included to complement the findings from the qualitative components by gathering data from a large and representative group of grandparents, and thus provide the Commission with an evidential base from which to develop advocacy actions.

The research team contacted national and international researchers working in the grandparenting field, as well as drawing on the research literature. Key findings from the literature are woven throughout this report. In particular, the report draws on New Zealand research exploring grandparents' provision of childcare to enable parents to balance their paid work commitments and family responsibilities, and the research of Worrall (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) who looked closely at the experiences of grandparents raising grandchildren.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The research had two primary components: a series of focus groups, and a nationwide telephone survey. These were preceded by an online poll, focusing on grandparents, that ran on the Families Commission's website *The Couch*. The poll was used to gather initial data that would help shape the research questions for the qualitative and quantitative research that followed.

The Families Commission Ethics Committee granted ethics approval for the project. A research team from the Families Commission and WEB Research developed criteria for selecting the geographical locations and participants for the focus groups, and a process for recruiting the grandparents. This included consultation with the Ethics Committee and cultural advisers.

The research team recruited grandparents for the focus groups from a diverse range of backgrounds and locations through a combination of methods:

> word of mouth

> networks within ethnic communities

> a pre-existing Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group

> a church group

> a notice in a primary school newsletter.

Potential participants were offered written information about the project, and invited to contact the research team with any questions prior to deciding whether or not to take part. Signed consent forms were obtained from all participants. Focus group meetings were held at differing times of the day and night, at a range of venues throughout New Zealand. On completion of each focus group, participants were given a grocery voucher in recognition of their time and contributions to the research.

The telephone survey recruitment process follows.

1.5 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

A strength of this project was the mixed-method approach, with the quantitative data from the telephone survey complementing the qualitative data emerging from the focus groups and strengthening the findings on which to base our advocacy efforts.

Quotas and weights were used to ensure that the demographic characteristics of the telephone survey sample were in line with those recorded in the 2006 census, ensuring that the sample was representative by age, sex and household size. Focus group participants, however, were largely self-selected; many more grandmothers took part than grandfathers.

Although the focus groups were led by experienced facilitators, variations in group size and associated time constraints meant that some participants had more opportunities than others to discuss topics in greater detail. The flexibility of the focus group methodology allowed for topics outside the focus group discussion guidelines to be introduced. This provided rich data, although on the other hand meant that several groups ran out of time to talk about some of the topics intended for discussion.

Within most focus groups participants were already known to each other, meaning that conversation flowed freely from the start of the discussions. However in the small number of groups where participants were not known to one another a longer 'warm-up' period was required. There was evidence to suggest that some participants were reluctant to discuss particular topics in a group setting, demonstrated by several participants speaking with (or in one case, emailing) facilitators after the large group had dispersed, to describe sensitive issues that they had not wished to raise in the group.

Within the telephone survey, only grandparents who had a home telephone line (or, for the Pacific oversample, were already on UMR's database) were able to participate. The telephone survey was conducted only in English, meaning that potential respondents who did not speak English were unable to participate. Within the focus groups, attempts were made to ensure that at least one of the facilitators in each group was of the same ethnicity as the majority of the focus group participants. This meant that focus groups with predominantly Māori participants were led by Māori facilitators, the Korean group was led by a Korean facilitator, and the Samoan group by two Samoan facilitators. The focus group with Cook Island grandparents was led by Pākehā facilitators, as no Cook Island facilitator was available. This may have constrained the group discussion.

We acknowledge the diversity of grandparents' individual experiences, circumstances and relationships within families. We are also aware that people who chose to participate in focus groups and surveys potentially have different circumstances and opinions from those who do not.

The research highlights areas for further exploration. In particular, learning more about the experiences, support and information needs of grandparents from more diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds than those in our samples, as well as those of grandfathers, migrant grandparents and step-grandparents, would further extend our knowledge about grandparents in New Zealand.

1.6 GRANDPARENT ENGAGEMENT

1.6.1 *The Couch* online poll

As a preliminary step to assist with trialling and shaping the research questions for the focus groups and telephone survey, a poll ran on the Families Commission's website, *The Couch*, during October and November 2008. It explored grandparents' roles in New Zealand families, with two surveys running simultaneously. One was aimed at grandparents and the other at parents, with both surveys sharing similar wording. Responses were received from 356 parents and 208 grandparents, and the results were posted on the Families Commission website.[6] Because poll participants were self-selected, they were not a representative sample. Therefore the poll results should be considered indicative only. (Verbatim comments from respondents to other Couch polls are also included throughout this report, drawing on observations relevant to grandparents' roles within families.)

1.6.2 Focus groups

The Families Commission contracted WEB Research to conduct nine focus groups from November 2008 to February 2009. The groups were held in eight different locations covering the North and South Islands, large city centres, provincial cities and rural areas. Grandmothers and grandfathers of varying ages participated, including some who

6 www.thecouch.org.nz/member/report/30 and www.thecouch.org.nz/member/report/31

were simultaneously balancing paid work and caring for grandchildren. New Zealand European, Māori, Pacific (predominantly Samoan and Cook Islands) and Korean grandparents were represented. A small number of people who were not grandparents also attended several groups (for example, expectant grandparents, a community liaison worker and a woman who was supporting her participating father).

In total, 82 participants were involved in the focus group discussions. The groups consisted of:

> grandparents raising their grandchildren (1 group: predominantly of NZ European ethnicity)

> Māori grandparents (3 groups)

> Pacific grandparents (2 groups: one each of Samoan and Cook Islands grandparents)

> Korean migrant grandparents[7] (1 group)

> two groups (predominantly of NZ European ethnicity) consisting of any grandparents who wished to participate.

More information about each group is presented in Appendix 1. The questions which provided the basis for the focus group discussions are presented in Appendix 2.

1.6.3 Nationwide telephone survey

During March and April 2009, a nationwide telephone survey was run by UMR Research. The survey gathered further data about topics of interest and potential areas for advocacy identified during the preceding Couch poll and focus groups. Survey questions were co-developed by the Families Commission and UMR Research, drawing on a range of sources.[8] The survey questions are shown in Appendix 3. Random samples were drawn using both quotas and weights to ensure that the demographic characteristics of the sample were in line with those recorded in the 2006 Census. This also helped ensure that the sample was representative by age, sex and household size. An estimated response rate of 41 percent was achieved. This is in line with expected response rates by international standards.

The quantitative survey covered a nationally representative main sample of N=1,000 grandparents with at least one grandchild or step-grandchild under the age of 18 years. The ethnicity of respondents within the main sample is shown in Table 1.

7 During the planning phase, members of the project's Advisory Group suggested that the Families Commission contact a Korean academic, based at a New Zealand university, who was researching migrant Asian families and the acculturation process. This research highlighted issues for migrant grandparents that required further exploration. Consequently, Korean migrant grandparents were invited to participate in a focus group. The research team was now aware that this was a group who could face varying degrees of social and cultural isolation, having moved to New Zealand as older adults, often in order to provide childcare and other forms of support to their families.

8 For example, questions previously used in *The Couch* poll and focus groups; one question was adapted from a question used in an Australian Institute of Family Studies survey (Millward, 1998).

TABLE 1: ETHNICITY OF TELEPHONE SURVEY RESPONDENTS	
QUESTION F6.	
	ALL (N=1,000) %
NZ European	83
British	11
NZ Māori (main survey)	8
Other European	3
Pacific Island (main survey)	1
Asian	1
Other	2
Refused	1

Base: All respondents, multiple response

The main sample was supplemented by 'booster surveys' (oversamples) to bring the total population for Māori respondents to N=162 and for Pacific respondents to N=100. These respondents were spread among the main sample and the booster surveys in the following way:

> 77 Māori and seven Pacific respondents were in the main sample of N=1,000 respondents.

> 85 Māori and 93 Pacific respondents were only part of the Māori or Pacific booster surveys.

Including the booster surveys, a total of 1,178 grandparents were interviewed.

UMR had anticipated that the number of Māori and Pacific grandparents reached initially would underrepresent their numbers in the general population, due to challenges in reaching these populations. For this reason, the sampling framework included plans to oversample Māori and Pacific populations, so that reasonable estimates for Māori and Pacific peoples could be generated.

Telephone numbers for the main survey and the Māori oversample were generated from the Telecom White Pages. Random digit dialling was conducted off this sample so that unlisted numbers were captured. For the Pacific oversample, this was supplemented by calls to mobile phone numbers to people who had participated in previous UMR surveys.

The sample population was stratified into 23 telephone directory regions, together with gender quotas, calculated from 2006 Census data to be representative of the general population. The quota for each of these regions was determined according to the number of residential addresses in each of these regions. Gender quotas were also set for each of these regions.

The sample for the Pacific booster survey was mainly drawn from a database of people who previously participated in UMR surveys. The samples for the main (N=1,000) survey and the Māori booster survey are considered representative of their target populations. Because of the smaller sample size (and higher margin of error) and likely language barriers, the Pacific booster survey should be considered indicative only. The

survey was conducted only in English, meaning that grandparents who did not speak any English were unable to participate.

1.6.4 Integrating the data

This report identifies and integrates the key themes emerging from the quantitative and qualitative data. A quantitative data report (drawn from the telephone survey findings) was prepared by UMR Research and sections of text and associated tables from the UMR report are presented throughout this report. The full quantitative data report is available from the Families Commission website. Qualitative data drawn from the focus group findings were analysed and written up by WEB Research in conjunction with the Families Commission and the main findings have been incorporated into this report. Approaches to data analyses for the quantitative and qualitative data are described in Appendix 4.

The Couch poll focus group and telephone survey data were complemented by additional information drawn from other Families Commission polls and information shared by participants in the MSD's Voluntary Community Coordinators and Positive Ageing Ambassadors' Forum (November 2008). The research team ran a workshop session to discuss and explore key topics at this forum.


CAPTAIN

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 TRENDS

Demographic, social and economic trends support a focus on grandparents and highlight the importance of responding to grandparents' needs, given the focal roles they play within many New Zealand families. The age structure of the New Zealand population is projected to undergo significant changes over the next 40 years or so. It is expected that there will be an increase in older people (numerically and proportionately) and further significant ageing of the population as a whole. Those aged 65 years or over – large numbers of whom are likely to be grandparents – are projected to make up 17 percent of the population by 2021, and 22 percent by 2031 (Statistics New Zealand, 2007e, Families Commission, 2008c).

Fergusson, Maughan, and Golding (2008) describe demographic changes in the United Kingdom that have increased the likely importance of grandparents in contemporary family life. In particular, with life expectancy increasing and women choosing to have fewer (or no) children, and starting families later than previous generations, so-called 'beanpole families' have emerged. These families have long, thin groups of several generations – that is, each generation has relatively few members in it.[9] The reduction in the number of aunts, uncles, siblings and cousins places increasing emphasis on the role of grandparents.

Petrie (2006) makes similar observations about demographic changes within the New Zealand population. He also notes that because of the trend towards the longer duration of healthy, disability-free lives, the 'young elderly' are more likely to be able to provide assistance within their families, including support to grandchildren as well as other family or whānau members. Fergusson et al (2008), however, observe that rising rates of divorce and remarriage have a significant impact on the composition and availability of kin groups.

2.2 GRANDPARENTS' AGES

Keeling et al (2008) observe that the roles of grandparent and grandchild can potentially span a period of up to 40 years. Children are likely to have had 'meaningful contact' with up to four grandparents, and most grandparents have multiple grandchildren. Yet Armstrong (2003) advises that the transition to grandparenthood may be becoming less of a certainty and can no longer be taken for granted, given demographic trends such as later motherhood, childless unions, divorce and singlehood. Drawing on her study of social ageing among women in New Zealand, she suggests that "being a grandmother is a common and generally important marker of social ageing for women in contemporary New Zealand" (p. 200). She also notes that many societies recognise transition to the grandparent role as a marker of 'old'. However, it is important for policymakers and providers of services, information and support to grandparents to recognise that grandparents are not all 'older people'. In New Zealand, the youngest grandparents (albeit a very small percentage) are in their early 30s. One of these grandparents participated in one of our focus groups.

At the Families Commission's request, UMR Research included a question in two consecutive nationwide omnibus surveys[10] asking at what age grandparent respondents aged 35 and above first became a grandparent. The omnibus survey findings revealed that the median age for becoming a grandparent was 45–49, with the mode (the most common age) being 50–54. It is reasonable to assume that the true median is closer

9 References to beanpole families tend to be based on Western families, and the situation is unlikely to be represented across all cultural groups.

10 Omnibus surveys gather data on a wide variety of topics during the same interview. The UMR surveys were telephone surveys of a nationally representative sample of New Zealanders, 18 years of age and over. Across the two surveys, the total sample size was N=1,578. The margin of error for sample size of 1,578 for a 50 percent figure at the '95 percent confidence level' is ± 2.5%.

to 49 than to 45 years old, given that 51 percent of respondents became grandparents under the age of 50 and 47 percent became grandparents at 50 years of age or older. The proportion who became grandparents before 50 is barely a majority.

There was an apparent relationship between the age respondents became grandparents, and both ethnicity and income. Among Māori respondents, 53 percent became grandparents before the age of 45 years. Across all respondents, 37 percent of those with personal incomes of $15,000–$40,000, became grandparents before the age of 45 years, compared with 27 percent of those with personal incomes above $40,000.[11]

The research findings suggest that a grandparent's age could affect the extent and frequency of contact they have with their grandchildren. In the main telephone survey, the data generally showed that younger respondents had much greater day-to-day involvement in their grandchildren's lives:

> For respondents under the age of 55, 13 percent were living with one or more of their grandchildren, compared with just four percent of those aged 75 or older.

> For respondents under the age of 55, 41 percent looked after one or more of their grandchildren on a regular basis, compared with 15 percent of those aged 75 or older.

While respondents under the age of 55 were more likely than those aged 75 or older to say that they had put their career or interests on hold to look after their grandchildren, there was little difference between those under the age of 55 and those aged 55–74. This is likely to reflect the fact that respondents over the age of 75 were less likely to have pre-school- or primary school-aged grandchildren. Respondents under the age of 55 were, however, more likely to say that:

> Their family expected them to look after their grandchildren (28 percent compared with 18 percent of those aged 55–64).

> Their finances were stretched because of contributions they made to their grandchildren (28 percent compared with 15 percent of those aged 55–64).

The age diversity of grandparents in New Zealand must be taken into account by those working with and for grandparents, particularly when considering appropriate channels for disseminating information and support.

2.3 CULTURAL FACTORS

The research team believed that it was important to explore the cultural dimensions of grandparenting. The link between the grandchild and the grandparent is of great importance in establishing and maintaining cultural heritage, and providing education about cultural values, protocols and genealogy. Discussions in the focus groups explored the nature of the grandparent role, and corresponding obligations and rights, in which cultural factors are significant.

For Māori, the role of extended family – including grandparents – is particularly significant for the wellbeing and sustainability of whānau, hapū and iwi, in terms of providing support, sharing resources and nurturing children. Pacific and Korean grandparents also have similar important roles within their families. Māori, Pacific and Korean grandparents can face challenges related to variations between traditional and contemporary roles, as discussed later in this report.

11 The sample was not large enough to filter this by whether or not grandparents were in paid work, so those with personal incomes below $15,000 (often retired) were not compared.

While cultural roles and responsibilities were central to the lives of Māori, Pacific and Korean grandparents who participated in our focus groups, most New Zealand European grandparents were also committed to high levels of engagement with their grandchildren. Although not explicitly linked to cultural traditions, some of the stories told by New Zealand European grandparents were shaped by cultural norms about the grandparents' role.

Families Commission (2008c) describes how, over time, New Zealand has become more ethnically diverse, with understanding of the term 'family' being influenced by the migration of families from around the world and their associated cultures, social norms, religions and family types.

Elliott and Gray (2000) looked at family structures in New Zealand, drawing on a literature review and 15 interviews with migrants from the Pacific, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. In most cultures in their study, the family is considered more important than the individual and there are family-focused duties and responsibilities.

> The strongest obligations within families are those of care – financial, physical and emotional – both for children and for ageing parents. Adult children provide care for ageing parents. In return the parents provide important household help and care for grandchildren. In this way cultural values and language are maintained. In some cultures, birth order is important in dictating levels of obligation, mirroring hierarchies of responsibility. (Elliott & Gray, 2000, p. 5)

Elliott and Gray (2000) noted that parent-child obligations in migrant families are often two-way, covering three generations. Although cultural values and language are frequently maintained through the intergenerational contact, there can be tensions between the generations; loneliness and isolation can be experienced. A participant from China is quoted in Elliott and Gray's report:

> Many of the older generation come to be with their children and grandchildren in New Zealand but they are not settled into society. They feel cut off and need more information about what's happening around them and at home. Some say they feel disabled – 'No legs as they can't drive; [mute] as they can't speak English, deaf because they can't understand. They love the environment but they have sacrificed a lot; their friendships, their homes and cultural activities.' (p. 42)

Similar themes emerged in our own focus group findings, particularly in the experiences of Korean migrant grandparents.

Da (2003) explored childcare arrangements in a group of 40 Chinese migrants to Australia. Da found that the role of grandparents in the provision of childcare emerged as highly significant in a family's domestic arrangements and the economic opportunities of the mother (eg, allowing women to study and pursue a career). Help from grandparents was planned strategically on the basis of family needs and was contingent upon grandparents' availability (eg, whether they were retired, healthy or already committed to the care of another grandchild). Da found that the grandparents in her study offered not only practical help, but also 'quality and safety of care' for grandchildren, as well as 'emotional comfort' for the migrant parents. Da reports that grandparents can also maintain cultural values that may have been weakened by migration, a theme that also emerged in our own findings.

Families Commission (2008f), *New Kiwis, Diverse Families*, draws on the experiences of refugee and migrant families and their preferences and priorities for early childhood care and education. Mandarin-speaking, Assyrian and Sudanese families all acknowledged

the importance of grandparents, particularly grandmothers, for their contribution to the care of young children. Families that did not have support from extended family members felt this lack acutely.

Within the group of eight Assyrian mothers, three of the mothers had parents or parents-in-law living with them, or close by. These grandparents were involved in childcare and valued for this role:

> We live together me and my mum, my sister and my husband of course… She [my daughter] actually sleeps beside my mum because she loves her grandma… She's always with her so she takes care of her … it's working very well. I'm loving it …. I mean I can't find any better place to go than my mother, to be honest… I'm one of the luckiest people probably cause we live together … we are very close and she takes very good care of him… (Assyrian mother; Families Commission, 2008f, pp. 32–33)

> [I start] work at seven o'clock ... and usually I got my parents-in-law who live just next door to me. So we give them a call and they just come in and when it's eight o'clock they wake him up and get ready to [take him to] kindy and then walk cause they can't drive… And then when it's time to pick up at 11.30[am] or 12.30[pm] they walk and pick him up again… (Assyrian mother; Families Commission, 2008f, p. 33)

Assyrian and Sudanese mothers expressed concerns that their reliance on older family members for childcare represented a degree of hardship for the grandparents. Other participants observed that older family members often needed considerable support themselves and could not reasonably be expected to help with the care of young children.

Stuart, Jose, and Ward (2009), in their study of parent-adolescent dynamics in the acculturation process, found that a number of parents would like a change in New Zealand immigration policy that would allow extended family members to come to New Zealand. The lack of cultural continuity was felt as a loss:

> We miss our parents physically, but New Zealand gives us an opportunity to support them. Our kids miss those learning lessons they could have got from their grandparents, aunts, uncles. New Zealand meets our economical need but we miss our culture. (Asian mother; p. 27)

Yet if grandparents do not receive support with their transition to a new life in a new country, it can be stressful. Lepani (2001), who interviewed older people living in Australia, noted many tensions for migrant grandparents from non-English-speaking backgrounds. She cautions that without appropriate support and opportunities to lead their own lives, grandparents can feel trapped:

> Many [migrant grandparents] came out to Australia and worked very hard to give their children many opportunities, and now they are also being expected to provide free babysitting while both parents work. Material expectations among the younger generation, and an assumption, born of older ideas of traditional family structure that grandparents are there to help with the children, are coming into conflict with the desire of older ethnic parents to use their retirement to begin to have some free time to socialise and explore life. Without the extended family structure and the accessible sociability of village street life, the grandparenting role can become another prison in isolated suburbia. (p. 39)

To find out about how cultural beliefs may influence the role of grandparents in New Zealand, Couch poll respondents taking part in the grandparents poll were posed

the following question: *Grandparents play many different roles in their grandchildren's lives. How do your cultural beliefs influence your grandparenting role?*

Some Couch members stated that their cultural beliefs influence their grandparenting roles via the religious and/or philosophical beliefs they practise together as a family:

This is a huge part of my role in helping to bring up my grandchildren – I am referring to my religion, which is my culture. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

We go to church and this affects my grandparenting. I grew up with a high value on family and family get-togethers and so we visit when birthdays are celebrated. Caring [and] loving each other is role-modelled and supported. Playcentre is highly valued in our family and I role model and support [their philosophies] like positive discipline, no smacking, you can do it attitude, respecting the earth and respecting other peoples, especially the Māori culture. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Other respondents indicated that they feel it is very important for their grandchildren to know what their cultural background is, to know and to understand their 'roots':

We share family history with the grandchildren – they should know where they come from – we are alive so we tell them about our history – given to us from our parents and grandparents. (Grandfather, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

[I] see myself as a role model, show her where she came from, and help her understand her family and her history. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Couch members also pointed out that in accordance with their own cultural beliefs, they support their own (adult) children's parental roles, as well as supporting their grandchildren:

Their parents are struggling with their own lives, moving around a lot and not living together so we provide the grandchildren with some stability and a place to relax away from the stresses of their home life. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

I believe that parents need all the support they can get, especially from their own parents wherever possible. I got very little support from my parents when I was a mother, and so I want to be much more available to support my children and give them a break from their kids, as well as giving me the chance to develop a close relationship with my grandchildren. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Specific cultural practices and beliefs were described by some Couch members to indicate how their culture influences and affects their relationships with their grandchildren:

Cultural beliefs are very important in my grandchildren's lives and I ensure that they learn as much as possible; waiata, korero, karakia, tikanga, kawa, purakau etc. (Grandmother, Māori/Samoan, Couch poll respondent)

My cultural beliefs play a very big role in my life and that of my children and grandchildren. I like to teach my children and mokos to appreciate the simple things in life and how to live off the land, nurture and respect the land. (Grandmother, Māori, Couch poll respondent)

Having a deaf blind person in our family it is important that our grandchildren grow up understanding Deaf Culture and be fluent New Zealand sign language users. They also need to be taught to be confident in who they are and what they believe, while respecting all people and their differences. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Probably being brought up by an English father the classics, reading, manners and education are important. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

On the other hand, some Couch members felt that their cultural beliefs and practices do not affect or influence their grandparenting roles:

I don't think this makes any difference in my grandparenting role. I love the children and that is what matters. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

2.4 GRANDFATHERS

Wilton and Davey (2006) note that research on grandparents, as individuals and within families, has concentrated almost exclusively on grandmothers and overlooked the role of men as grandfathers. Drawing on a wide range of published source material (primarily international research literature, as there is very little New Zealand research on grandfathers available), Wilton and Davey examined the situation of grandfathers in the context of social and family change. They explored the actual and potential roles of older men as grandfathers within families, and made comparisons between New Zealand and other similar countries. They suggest that grandfathers could be in a life stage where they can be more nurturing

and emotionally expressive (eg, to grandchildren), and perhaps less pre-occupied with the need to provide material support to their family than when they were fathers.

Due to changes in social expectations, Wilton and Davey suggest that contemporary fathers could be more emotionally expressive and available to their children than previous generations of men. Grandparents participating in our research also talked about the positive changes in New Zealand cultural norms. For example, a grandfather in one of our focus groups commented that he was at the birth of his grandson and described it as a special moment. By contrast he was not allowed to be at his own son's birth decades earlier.

A focus group grandfather reflected on how it is easier for him to express his love for his grandchildren, rather than to his adult children:

I do find it easier to say 'I love you' to my mokopuna than to my own kids. I do find it much easier. I'm teaching my mokopuna to say… 'I love you Poppa'. And it is a natural thing, but I never did it with my own. Maybe when they were small I said it, but then they grew up. You don't say 'I love you' to men! (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

Grandfathers as well as grandmothers participated in our focus groups, although more women than men took part. (Grandmothers and grandfathers were equally welcome to participate; gender was not a criterion for selection.) Although most participants in the Samoan focus group were women, this group in particular highlighted the active role that grandfathers play in raising their grandchildren.

Analysis of the telephone survey data indicate that grandmothers are likely to outnumber grandfathers by approximately 390,000 to 310,000. (Life expectancy at birth for females in New Zealand still exceeds that of males.[12])

Amongst the telephone survey respondents, grandmothers were less likely than grandfathers to be working full-time (20 percent compared with 34 percent). This possibly gives grandmothers more time than grandfathers to look after their grandchildren on a regular, predictable basis (28 percent of grandmothers compared with 21 percent of grandfathers).

12 http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/life_expectancy/NZLifeTables_HOTP05-07/Commentary.aspx

Grandmothers were a little more likely than grandfathers to say that they had put their needs and interests on hold (50 percent compared with 45 percent), and slightly more likely to say that they were satisfied with the balance between time spent with their grandchildren and time spent on other commitments (80 percent compared with 72 percent).

Grandmothers were more likely than grandfathers to express interest in receiving information on how to balance their own time with time spent with grandchildren (34 percent compared with 27 percent). There were no significant differences between grandmothers and grandfathers in terms of interest in receiving information on other aspects of grandparenting.

2.5 SURROGATE OR VOLUNTEER GRANDPARENTS

For a range of reasons, not all older people are grandparents and not all grandparents have ongoing contact with their grandchildren. Some older people appreciate opportunities to act in a grandparenting role, by contributing their skills and knowledge in a voluntary capacity. For example, participants in the Hospital Grandparents scheme, run by Starship Hospital in Auckland, provide regular caring support on a one-to-one basis, for children and families. Hospital Grandparents care mainly for children whose families cannot be with them all the time, long-stay children, children from out of town and those whose caregiver wants to have 'time out'.[13] Although many volunteers are grandparents, some are people without grandchildren of their own, and some are younger people. There are also other volunteer programmes within Starship and Auckland Hospital that are staffed by volunteers of grandparenting age (eg, the toy library, playrooms, information desks and the Family Support programme).

SAGES is a MSD programme through which older people are trained as home and life skills mentors for families and individuals in their community.[14] Mentors are generally mature people with good life experience and practical household management skills. They assist others to develop their skills in home management, cooking, budgeting and parenting. The Ministry's Family and Community Services arm contracts 17 non-government organisations to deliver SAGES. These organisations recruit and train mentors and match them with families. The programme's aims reflect those of the New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy.

Families and individuals can self-refer by contacting SAGES providers in their area. Social service agencies can refer clients on to a SAGES provider. In some areas, SuperGrans are providers. The SuperGrans[15] organisation has operated in New Zealand for 15 years, with nine branches throughout New Zealand (operating as registered charitable trusts). Notwithstanding the name of their organisation, SuperGrans do not have to be grandparents; the volunteers are mainly women 40 plus with life skills and time to devote to clients. They offer mentoring and "practical tuition in household management … [and] provide clients and their families with further knowledge that can assist in improving the family's wellbeing and self esteem".

In Australia, participants in the Grandfriends scheme are older people who volunteer to share local knowledge and skills with students, act as a surrogate grandparent or friend to children, help children with literacy and numeracy skills and act as a 'grand friend' to staff.[16, 17]

13 http://www.starship.org.nz/index.php/ps_pagename/contentpage/pi_id/73
14 http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/our-work/strong-families/sages.html
15 http://www.supergran.org.nz/
16 http://www.peninsulanews.asn.au/News/03/03Nov04/GrandFr.asp
17 http://www.camdenadvertiser.com.au/news/local/news/general/a-grand-granfriend/1229632.aspx

Beyond schemes such as those described above, some families enter into informal grandparent-like relationships with older people. In the following comment provided by a Couch poll respondent (responding to the parents' component of the poll), the important role of an older couple described as 'surrogate grandparents' to one family is described:

[There is] an older couple we regard as grandparents to our children, as their real grandparents are all deceased. This has a fabulous spin off for all our family, the children have a grandparent relationship that they would otherwise miss and my husband and I have a close friendship with an older couple without the strain that sometimes comes with an in-law relationship, we all just accept each other as we are. We all enjoy picnics and board games and support each other through tough times. It is great to listen to stories of a different age, especially for our children, and to be able to share major family events, both ours and theirs, and be part of a continuum that our children would otherwise miss. (Female, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Another respondent expressed a desire to either receive more help from her own parents, or from a hypothetical 'Rent a Granny':

My parents had many children and now are busy studying and working for things that interest them. I respect their decision. But sometimes I wish I had more help in the traditional sense of grandparents providing time and help to their children. We rely on paid day-care to have our under-fives so that we can get chores done or our hair cut on a day we aren't working ... yet the grandparents are critical of this arrangement, but have never offered to baby-sit. Rent a Granny would be great. (Female, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Yet being a surrogate grandparent can have its own pressures. A forum participant who was asked by a family to be a surrogate grandparent, responded that she would rather be considered as a friend, willing to provide occasional childcare. She felt that agreeing to a surrogate grandparent role could potentially mean that she would feel under pressure to provide care, and a sense of letting the family down if she was not available due to her own commitments.

However, it would appear that there are clear benefits to both generations (and to communities) if opportunities to act in a grandparenting role are available. Grandparents are able to share their practical knowledge and skills, and in other ways mentor families who would otherwise miss out.

2.6 STEP-GRANDPARENTS

As a consequence of separation and subsequent re-partnering at either parent or grandparent level, grandparents can become step-grandparents. A person can become a step-grandparent in one of three ways (Ganong, 2008):

> The later-life step-grandparent: an individual remarries or re-partners with a person who has grandchildren already.

> The inherited step-grandparent: an individual's adult son or daughter marries or re-partners with someone who already has children of their own.

> The long-term step-grandparent: an individual remarries or re-partners years before step-grandchildren are born.

Thus, if grandparents are divorced and re-partnered, grandchildren acquire extra grandparents. If parents separate and re-partner, grandparents can acquire step-grandchildren. Managing time, loyalties and relationships can be complex.

Ganong (2008) notes that due to an increase in step-parents, step-grandparents are now also more prevalent in number. Wachter (1997, in Ganong) estimates that by 2030, American grandparents will have one step-grandchild for every 1.7 biological grandchild. We are not aware of any comparable New Zealand estimates, although the *Kiwi Nest* report[18] (Families Commission, 2008) states that in 2001, close to one-fifth of all women who have children had been parents in step-families or blended families.

Ganong (2008) notes that the relationship between step-grandparents and step-grandchildren is influenced by many variables, particularly proximity, contact, age of step-grandchildren, step-grandparents' gender and within-family perceptions and definitions of family and extended family. In Breheny and Stephens' (2007) study, in addition to their own children and grandchildren, some people also identified step-children and step-grandchildren as important family members. However, the authors note that while these relationships may be considered important, they are not always accorded the status of full family membership: "the 'not quite family' status was sometimes highlighted to distinguish between primary and more peripheral family members" (p. 31). Thus, distinctions were made as to who qualifies as a 'genuine' family member. Breheny and Stephens propose that it is likely that understandings of family undergo constant shifts, so that ideas about who constitutes family will continue to change in response to changes in family formation.

Gunn and Surtees (2009), in their study exploring the ways lesbians and gay men create and maintain family in contemporary New Zealand society, noted the breadth of adult involvement – including 'extra sets' of grandparents – in the lives of some of the families who participated in the study:

> Rhianna and Lena have seven grandmothers … and they've got three grandfathers … they've got this incredibly diverse and colourful large family, and it's just all full of love really. You know, they're so lucky. (p. 23)

Gunn and Surtees described the breadth of study families' connections, between children and the many adults invested in their lives, as both successful and positive.

2.7 SUMMARY

As noted in the Families Commission (2008c) *Kiwi Nest* report blended and step-families[19] have become common in New Zealand, and many of today's young adults have lived in them. This means that many grandparents will have experienced changes within their own family, with associated increases in the size, range and complexity of family networks. Grandparents can be same-sex or opposite-sex, biological grandparents, adoptive grandparents (through formal or whangai[20] arrangements), step-grandparents and surrogate grandparents. Both grandfathers and grandmothers play active roles in supporting grandchildren and their families. Some adults will become grandparents at a relatively young age (eg, early 30s); some older people will never become grandparents at all.

Kiwi Nest (Families Commission, 2008c) refers to the "complex living arrangements of many children today" (p. 109), raising questions about the status and role of the parents and step-parents and their rights and obligations and the associated level of complexity of any policy delivery to these children and their families. The effects of such complexity on grandparents' lives must also be taken into account.

18 Drawing on MSD data.
19 Within blended and step-families, at least one adult within the couple is not the biological or adoptive parent of one or more of the children.
20 The term 'whangai' refers to the customary Māori practice of children being raised by kin members other than their parents (McRae & Nikora, 2006). The practice is further described later in this report.

Grandparenting is also influenced by cultural practices, familial obligations and responsibilities – with changes in these areas likely to continue to evolve as New Zealand becomes more ethnically diverse.

Grandparents in New Zealand make up a very diverse group that spans ages and cultures and this diversity should be reflected in policy decisions that may impact grandparents' lives. Policies and service provision need to respond to the diverse nature of grandparents' roles, family structures, lifestyles, relationships, culture and demographic characteristics.

3. FINDINGS

Within this section, key findings from the consultations associated with this project are presented. First, the pleasures of grandparenting are briefly outlined, followed by identification and description of the main pressures associated with grandparenting, and discussion about how – and whether – grandparents are managing to balance their own needs and interests with family responsibilities.

3.1 PLEASURES

There are many pleasures associated with being a grandparent and grandparents in all our consultations confirmed this. Telephone survey respondents almost always saw grandparenting as a positive experience. A strong and recurring theme among the focus groups was the love/aroha that grandparents feel and express towards their grandchildren and the joy of nurturing and observing their development.

Some focus group grandparents appreciated the opportunity to offer time and resources to their grandchildren that were unavailable to their own children when they were growing up, as shown in the following comments:

As iwi, as parents, there is no book to teach you how to be Mum and Dad, and when you reflect, you start being part of your grandchildren's lives, you realise you can do things better. So I've taken every opportunity to spend quality time, more constructive time to teach them things I didn't have the time or the patience to give my own [children]. (Focus group grandparent, Māori)

And what's been really good is that I've done things with [my grandson] that I couldn't do with my own children, because of finances… (Focus group grandmother)

A Couch poll grandparent offered a similar comment:

When I was a child I was embedded in an extended family myself and looking back I derived much security from it. I learned how grandparents can enhance a child's life by providing memorable events. We can afford to expose our grandchildren to theatrical events and other activities that cost more money than their parents can afford at the moment. It is a lot of fun and keeps us young in heart apart from giving their parents a break. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Grandparents also spoke about the responsibility they felt to pass on skills, knowledge and wisdom. For Māori, Pacific and Korean grandparents, this frequently involved teaching cultural practices and beliefs, and teaching grandchildren a language other than English.

A Couch poll respondent described multiple pleasures of grandparenting, including reciprocal sharing of knowledge and support:

Develop relationships, pass on values and faith, see [grandchildren] making good choices and when they don't, helping them learn from them, having fun, keeps me young, give and receive love, able to teach them, see them pass on to others what they have received from us, see them become leaders/influencers of others, see them helping others, mentor others, they help me with some tasks that my diminished strength is not able to do, they support me in caring for my husband, they keep me in touch with today's world with its music, movies, sports, language, they have linked me with other cultures which has been immensely enriching. In my 70th year I am still working part-time, but give family priority. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Most telephone survey grandparents felt that they were in control of the amount of time they spent with their grandchildren, and where they did not feel in control they typically wanted to spend more – rather than less – time with them. Grandparents who said that they wanted to change the amount of time that they spent with their grandchildren were asked how they would like to change that time (Table 2).

TABLE 2: CHANGE IN TIME SPENT WITH GRANDCHILDREN (SUMMARY TABLE)

Q32. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE THE AMOUNT OF TIME THAT YOU SPEND WITH YOUR GRANDCHILDREN? WOULD YOU LIKE TO:

	ALL (N=469) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=396) %	MĀORI (N=91) %	PACIFIC (N=47) %
Spend more time in general with your grandchildren	86	86	82	N=34[21]
Arrange to look after grandchildren on a regular, predictable basis	12	12	23	N=12
Spend less time in general with your grandchildren and free up time for your other interests	3	2	10	N=12
Have grandchildren live closer/same country	2	3	–	–
Spend less time looking after grandchildren, in general	2	1	7	N=6
None	5	6	3	N=1

Base: Those who wanted to change the amount of time they spend with their grandchildren; multiple response

In terms of contact, 57 percent of grandparents reported seeing one or more of their grandchildren at least once a week (Table 3). Māori and Pacific grandparents were much more likely than other respondents to see their grandchild/ren every day.

TABLE 3: FREQUENCY OF SEEING YOUR GRANDCHILD/GRANDCHILDREN

Q4 AND Q5. HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE YOUR GRANDCHILD/THE GRANDCHILDREN YOU SEE THE MOST OFTEN?

	ALL (N=1,000) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=834) %	MĀORI (N=162) %	PACIFIC (N=100) %
Every day	13	11	34	47
Several times a week	23	22	25	25
Around once a week	20	21	9	7
More than once a month	12	13	6	5
Once a month	9	9	2	3
Less than once a month but several times a year	15	15	15	6
Less often	8	8	8	3
Never	–	1	1	4

Base: All respondents

21 For telephone survey sub-samples below N=50, the tables show the number of responses rather than the percentage. Analysis of any sub-sample below N=50 should be treated as indicative only (the margin of error for a sample of N=50 is ±13.9 percent).

3.2 PRESSURES AND CHALLENGES

Although it is evident that there are many pleasures associated with grandparenting, there are also pressures. Participants in the telephone survey, focus groups and forum were asked to describe any pressures that they faced as a grandparent.

3.2.1 Key pressures/challenges

3.2.1.1 Telephone survey

Within the telephone survey population, answers from those respondents who identified the main pressures that they face as a grandparent are depicted in Table 4.

TABLE 4: MAIN PRESSURES THAT GRANDPARENTS FACE

Q26. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE MAIN PRESSURES THAT YOU FACE AS A GRANDPARENT?

	ALL (N=1,000) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=834) %	MĀORI (N=162) %	PACIFIC (N=100) %
Having enough time with grandchildren	9	9	8	6
Distance	7	8	4	4
Energy levels/Stress/Major responsibility	7	7	9	9
Behaviour and upbringing	7	6	9	13
Financial	6	6	12	12
General concerns about grandchildren's future	4	4	2	–
Balancing other commitments	3	3	2	1
Problems with parents	3	2	3	1
Health and disability	2	1	4	3
Pressure to look after grandchildren	1	1	1	–
Technology	1	1	1	–
Other	–	–	5	3
None	52	52	45	53
Unsure	3	4	3	1

Base: All respondents; multiple response

Grandparents who felt under pressure were often living with one or more grandchildren, looking after one or more of them on a regular basis and/or seeing one or more grandchildren every day. Māori and Pacific grandparents were more likely to say that they felt under pressure, although there was no clear relationship between feeling under pressure and the age of the grandparent or the number of grandchildren.

Pressures described by telephone survey grandparents included the following:

In many ways we become the de facto parent. There is so much pressure on our [adult] children to work that we have to carry out the role of parent in so many situations. For example, we go out to collect a sick child from school rather than their parents doing so. (60–64-year-old Asian grandfather with five grandchildren living with but not raising at least one of them)

I am usually the one stuck between my children and their children. I am often dragged into an argument and get involved where I have to act as the judge. And provide the extra cash. (60–64-year-old NZ European grandfather with four grandchildren)

Just over half of the telephone survey respondents reported that that they faced no main pressures. Overall, relatively few agreed that looking after their grandchildren could be a strain, that they were not always able to cope and/or that the amount of time they spent with their grandchildren put them under pressure.

3.2.1.2 Focus groups

Focus group grandparents described a range of challenges and pressures in caring for, and supporting, their grandchildren and their families; the primary issues are listed below.

> **Negotiating boundaries around their time and the contributions** they are asked, or feel they need, to make to their families, especially around the provision of childcare. Demands may be influenced by expectations of what a grandparent 'should' do.

  As grandparents we get taken advantage of a lot… 'You're my mother – it's what you should be doing.' (Focus group grandmother, Māori)

One of the Korean migrant workers described life as a grandparent who 'did everything' as that of 'a domestic social worker.'

In the following discussion, grandparents in one focus group describe how their grandchildren were dropped off at their grandparents' homes with minimal supplies, with expectations that the grandparents will provide what is needed:

Before my daughter moved in, she dropped the mokos off with three nappies and they were there for the weekend. Nanny[22] get the rest, sort of thing.

Yeah. And then they take them away with them.

And two changes of clothes. That's all, but that's alright – Nana will take them to the shop and buy them something to wear. And I do…

And I do – but that's me because I suppose I can afford it, but there's a lot of Nannies out there who can't afford to do that … they can't afford to. Like buying a pack of nappies for a baby … sometimes it's cheap when you get specials, but for some families that's like two days worth of bread … (Grandparents, Māori focus group)

> **Concerns about the risks to grandchildren** who had been living within unstable family environments were expressed by grandparents raising grandchildren and other grandparents in several focus groups. Concerns were raised about the drug and alcohol abuse of adult children, family violence, parents in jail, unstable living arrangements and the effects of the children's separation from their parents:

  I need to say that we had problems with our grandchildren, my son's children … they had a lot to do with drugs, and alcohol, and the children were just left and forgotten about, so we threatened to put CYFS onto them and we thought that might do something, but you know, it didn't. So we took the children and … we saved them, we saved those children. (Focus group grandparent raising grandchildren)

  The parents are a hassle. The boys' parents. Their mother's in a mental unit, but they're slack – she keeps getting hold of our phone number and she starts ringing up every day and then I've got to change my phone number. Their father's in and

22 'Nanny' is a term often used by Māori to refer to a grandmother.

out of court – drugs and booze. I get nervous from the point of view he's trying to find the boys or, you know, just general hassle. (Focus group grandparent raising grandchildren)

My daughter was out of it, cause she's a drug addict and … my grandchildren's father was – he's not now, as bad, he doesn't drink now – an alcoholic and he used to beat my daughter up all the time and he'd come home drunk and he belted her up and she had a candle going and the house caught on fire. (Focus group grandparent raising grandchildren)

> For some grandparents, **a sense of powerlessness in the decision-making process** around their grandchildren's welfare:

We as grandparents when we take our mokos on, we haven't got a leg to stand on… (Grandparent, focus group)

The problem that we're facing is the 'nanny-state', and I'm sorry to say it like that but the Privacy Act and all the other acts that say a person can't give us advice because we aren't the parents of the children, and I think that's important … we are concerned for the children, about the welfare of these kids… (Focus group grandfather, living with and helping to raise grandchildren)

> **Tensions** experienced as the grandparents observed their adolescent or immature adult children's behaviour, and its impact on their grandchildren. In the following excerpt, a grandparent who has his adult daughter and her young children living with him describes the relationship between him, his partner and his adult daughter's partner:

We don't want [her partner] part of [our grandchildren's] lives. At the moment he's not allowed to be part of their lives, CYFS are involved. We try to get away as much as we can, but we don't want to leave her, cos as soon as we leave she heads over…to be with him. (Focus group grandfather, living with and helping to raise grandchildren)

> **The real or implied threats about access** to their grandchildren when relationships between the grandchildren's parents were strained or ended:

My son and his wife had a bit of an argument about three weeks ago and she threatened to take her four [children] to [another city] and we went straight away, went and got legal advice for custody of our moko. …We wanted custody of our moko, but they got back together the next day. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

> Some grandparents raising grandchildren expressed **high levels of tension, stress and frustration as they tried to maintain their own time, space and relationships**. These grandparents must look after their own needs, although their grandchildren's needs often take priority:

I used to play indoor bowling in the winter, I've had to give all that up ... even with the kids in care, the hours don't fit for me to go and do things for myself … I need some evening time and that's totally out of the question, I mean I don't regret the boys, but…I can't walk out the door, like if you've got a partner you can walk out the door and down the street, but I can't do that [because my wife has passed away] … they're not old enough. I wouldn't leave them on their own. It doesn't make me angry, it's just something I miss, you know, you should have time out for yourself. I'm slowly getting there, but it's been a long road. (Focus group, grandparent raising grandchildren)

For some grandparents, there was an underlying sense of resignation in their comments:

And you have to be able to look at yourself in the mirror and think these are children with needs and we're doing the best we can to give them everything we can and the best life we can, we'll support them. How could you not?

[Later in the discussion…]

I think you have to move on too … how I thought my life was going to be and how it is now is quite different … it's almost like you have to say 'That's never going to be', and you either let it go and just accept what it is, because otherwise you'll just whip yourself up. You just have to accept it and get on with it. (Focus group grandfather, living with and helping to raise grandchildren)

- **Intergenerational differences** relating to rights, responsibilities and tolerated behaviours were significant issues for some grandparents, most often in relation to:
  - a perceived lack of respect for parents and/or grandparents

    The grandchildren … treat their mother, my daughter, like she's nothing … she is on her own now … she is working seven days a week. (Grandmother, Cook Islands focus group)

  - differences in parenting styles between the grandparents and the children's parents (and their partners), leading to tensions.
- **Isolation arising from physical or emotional distances, sometimes compounded by cultural or language barriers.** This included grandparents who lived some distance from their grandchildren and other family members, grandparents who for other reasons had limited access to their grandchildren and those who were migrants who were vulnerable to feelings of isolation. Grandparents who spoke English as a second language, particularly those with limited English language proficiency, described challenges transmitting their language and culture to grandchildren who are growing up in New Zealand.
- **Financial pressures.** These included occasional requests and demands from grandchildren (eg, for pocket money), payments towards education costs (eg, school fees and clothing), setting up savings accounts for grandchildren, subsidising family holidays and substantial contributions towards mortgage payments and home deposits. Grandparents were concerned about the increasing costs of groceries and the impact of the recession on their adult children's lives. Section 3.2.4 discusses grandparents' financial pressures and contributions in more detail.

3.2.1.3 Strained intergenerational relationships

In addition to the threats to access to grandchildren outlined above, another pressure mentioned by a small number of families during the consultation process related to strained intergenerational relationships. Relationships between grandparents and other family members are not necessarily positive. Citing de Vaus (1994), Ochiltree (2006) notes that if the relationship between parents and grandparents is difficult or tenuous, developing an ongoing close relationship with grandchildren may not be easy:

I would love to have a less one-sided relationship with my mother and my children have been short-changed with grandparents as they are not supportive of our family. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

As my family live in Australia the effect [of] the occasional call or letter on myself and children is pretty negligible. There has been little support or contact during the lives of the children from their paternal grandparents. How do I feel? Sadness really, that there has been no involvement, and more so from the viewpoint that the grandparents have really had no desire to maintain the contact or to initiate a relationship with their grandchildren. (Father, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

Grandparent-to-grandparent relationships may also be arduous, if dysfunctional relationships exist within the family:

[The] maternal grandfather – as long as I draw breath he will never see that child and CYFS are of the same opinion. He is a violent man, he is very, very dangerous. He abuses women, he abuses children – he just does not care. [Grandparent, focus group]

In the following comment, a Couch poll respondent suggests that one set of grandparents contributed to negative outcomes emerging in the younger generation:

Family are there to support each other and I am very grateful for my family and very sad that my husband's parents have laid such a low self-esteem burden on all their seven children, which we see now being passed down to the grandchildren, one of whom is suicidal and anorexic. (Mother, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

Clearly, where relationships are strained, this can lead to stress across all generations. Grandparents, parents and children can all feel that they are missing out.

3.2.2 Separation

Separation affects many New Zealand families. Over 5,000 married couples with children divorced in 2006 and an unknown number of unmarried parents separated (Families Commission, 2008b). A study undertaken by the University of Hertfordshire and the Family Matters Institute (2009), found that amongst those grandparents whose relationships with their grandchildren had been cut off following separation, some experienced considerable emotional distress, health problems and considerable financial losses (eg, on legal fees to gain access to grandchildren). It was common for paternal grandparents to be denied access following a particular hostile separation after which the mother had been given custody. The lack of contact was also reported to affect the grandchildren themselves.

Ferguson (2004) cautions that it is important to consider the intricacies of grandparent-grandchild relationships in families affected by parental separation, as well as to consider how the interests of all family members can be best balanced:

> Policies and services to support grandparents need to be understood and defined in the light of the feelings of grandchildren and parents as well as those of the grandparents themselves. (p. 41)

Grandparents responding to the telephone survey and Couch polls, and focus group and forum participants, described some of the challenges they and their families faced maintaining relationships with grandchildren (and extended families) following adult children's separation from their partners:

About five years ago my son split with the mother of his daughters. Two years later he established a new relationship. He has a son in this relationship. I gave significant support to him and the girls. It looked as though things were working well for the girls until the new partner entered the picture, then the mother of the girls used the adversarial approach of the Family Court. I tried to be supportive but the court system hurt my son too much. I am now somewhat estranged from him, his new partner and his son. I actively support his daughters as they try to understand that he is unable to see them as much as he would like because of the untenable situation the Courts put him in. I have been devastated at the estrangement with my son and at not being able to create a good relationship with his new partner and at the effect this situation has ongoing to the girls. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Our son's relationship broke up and there have been many challenges with his daughter's mother who will not allow us to see her son, who is not our son's child but still very special to us. There are also issues with me being 'allowed' to see our grand-daughter. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

My son is divorced from his first wife and remarried. I sometimes need help to know how to relate to my ex-daughter-in-law, her parents etc. The complexities of blended families [are] a mine field for grandparents. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

We have got one grandchild we don't get to see because the parents won't let us. They split up when she was 18 months old and now she is nearly four. (45–49-year-old Māori grandmother with four grandchildren, telephone survey respondent)

A Grandparents Plus report (2009), citing research by Buchanan and Griggs, suggests that grandparents supporting families undergoing separation, act as 'buffers' against negative effects, providing continuity for children in times of considerable change.

In Families Commission (2008b) focusing on caring for children after separation, the authors also describe grandparents (as well as other extended family members) as an important source of support for children after parental separation. Parents said that where shared and weekend contact was maintained, contact with grandparents had continued much as it had been prior to separation. Within some families, children apparently had more contact (with extended family), as parents received support from the family after separation.

Several Couch poll respondents wrote about the support they provided to their adult children following separation:

[Following the] break up of my daughter's marriage four years ago ... I tried to support my daughter and her children as much as I possibly could. I was very happy to be in a position to help, but it was heartbreaking at times for her and the children, and naturally grieved me, too. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Weston and Qu (2009) explored the closeness of relationships between Australian grandparents and their grandchildren, as well as the impact of separations on these relationships, as perceived by the children's parents. Separated parents were asked to indicate whether the children's relationship with each set of grandparents had become closer or more distant. At least half of the separated parents believed that the relationship between their own parents and the children had not changed following separation. Non-resident fathers were more likely to suggest that relationships between their own parents and children had become more distant than closer; the reverse was true of resident fathers and resident mothers.

Ross, Hill, Sweeting, and Cunningham-Burley (2009), in their study of the relationships between grandparents and teen grandchildren, found that the attitude of parents and grandparents to continued contact with grandchildren is important in maintaining links in families affected by divorce or separation. They found that key influences on maintaining bonds between grandchildren and grandparents (on the side of the non-resident parent) were the existence of a good relationship between parent and grandparent prior to separation, and recognition of shared experiences.

In one of our focus groups, grandparents shared their concerns about tensions in the relationships they had with their adult children's partners, and the potential loss of contact with grandchildren, should parents separate:

When you've got boys, boys tend to go off with their girlfriends and then if they have a baby, you might not get to see that baby. If [the couple] break up mothers always get the babies, or mostly get the babies. Then they start to hate everything about their kid as well. That's what I'm scared of, I'm scared my son will have a bad relationship with somebody, they'll have a baby that I will want to keep forever and can't…

The truth is, I don't like my daughter-in-law – I put up with her for my son, and now of course my moko. She's not a very nice person … When they got together she got pregnant and I found out she's got older kids, but we accepted her into the whānau because of our son and our moko. But I don't like her. I just put up with her.

And that's easy to do when they're just the boyfriend or the girlfriend, eh. It's harder to do if they're the mother or the father of your moko. (Grandparents, Māori focus group)

Ferguson (2004) observes that some grandparents will prioritise the parenting of an adult child (who may have increased emotional needs post-separation) rather than giving attention to grandchildren.

3.2.2.1 Information for grandparents

A Ministry of Justice (New Zealand) website provides a fact sheet outlining "Tips for Grandparents and Other Family/Whānau When There's Been a Separation Involving Children".[23] The sheet suggests to grandparents and other adults in the extended family how they might support children whose parents have separated. Comments made by some focus group, forum and Couch poll respondents suggest that grandparents would welcome additional information about how to manage issues arising from separations within families, including information (eg, legal advice) for those grandparents who are concerned that they may lose contact with their grandchildren post-separation.

3.2.2.2 Divorced or permanently separated

Within the telephone survey population, divorced or permanently separated grandparents were more likely than respondents as a whole to be working full-time (35 percent compared with 26 percent of all respondents in the main survey). Fifty-seven percent of divorced or separated respondents were under the age of 65, as were 58 percent of all respondents in the main survey.

Divorced or separated respondents were a little less likely to say that they took care of their grandchildren on a regular basis (18 percent compared with 25 percent of all respondents in the main survey).

Thirty-seven percent of divorced or separated respondents strongly agreed with the statement 'I would like to change the amount of time I spend with my grandchildren' (compared with 28 percent of all respondents in the main survey). This was mostly associated with respondents wanting to spend more time with their grandchildren.

Divorced or separated respondents were more likely to say that their finances were stretched because of the financial contributions they made to their grandchildren and/or their family (27 percent compared to 17 percent of all respondents in the main survey).

3.2.2.3 Re-partnering

Ganong (2008) suggests that the role of grandparents may need to be renegotiated when an adult child remarries or re-partners. He emphasises that "it is imperative that the oldest and middle-generation adults get along if grandparents are to maintain relationships with grandchildren after middle-generation adults re-partner or remarry" (p. 409).

Ochiltree (2006) describes how grandparents who continue to have a close relationship with their grandchildren after their parents divorced, may experience a period of disruption and adjustment when a parent re-partners:

> Grandparents may find themselves step-grandparenting and having to adjust to step-grandchildren who they have not known since birth and who may have been accustomed to different family rules and conventions and who also have other grandparents who are part of another extended family. Grandparents in these circumstances sometimes have unrealistic expectations that they will love these children, when it is more realistic to build a relationship that is based more on friendship. (p. 7)

23 http://www.justice.govt.nz/family/pdf-pamphlets/Courts178%20-%20FS9-%20Tips%20for%20grandparents%20and%20other%20family%20where%20theres%20been%20a%20separation%20involving%20children.pdf

When grandparents themselves re-partner, this can require consideration of values. For example, in the following quote from a grandmother in one of our focus groups, she describes how 'house rules' for grandchildren needed to be renegotiated:

The third [pressure I noted] was different values … [my partner's] values to do with the kids are much more in line with [her] daughter's, not surprisingly. And mine are quite different. Things like walking around with food … that's probably one of the main ones … I feel quite isolated in that, but I feel quite strongly myself that within my home my rules go. I think we've come to a compromise, but it took us quite a long time … we've had to work around it. (Grandmother, focus group)

This parent describes how relationships between a grandmother and her grandchildren have deteriorated, as a result of the grandmother entering a new partnership:

My natural father died 13 years ago and the relationship between my young children and my mother was a good close one, she felt having the children around her helped her grieve. After five years she met a new man who had no children and wanted none in his life. He gradually has steered my mother away from 'family' in general to the point that we only see her 2–3 times a year at Mothers Day, her birthday, Christmas and maybe one time that she can arrange him to go out for a whole day. Sad really. The children do not have a close relationship with her now. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Re-partnering when one partner is a grandparent raising grandchildren may require a significant adjustment for the other partner:

Being able to look after my two grandsons is great. I get immense satisfaction from helping them to develop into the young adults they are becoming. However there is considerable cost in health, social life and a financial cost in spite of help from the government. There is also a huge cost in married life as my husband is not the boys' natural grandfather. He has entered into what he expected to be a peaceful and sharing retirement with the two of us free to travel etc and now it is on hold for a few more years until the boys are able to manage away from home. He has accepted this has to be, but it's not the retirement he anticipated given that he has no children of his own and never wanted any. Financially and emotionally he helps to support the boys.
(Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

The research findings suggest there may be unmet needs for the provision of relationship support to grandparents who are undergoing life transitions. These are transitions that involve changes to family structures, particularly ones involving grandparents' couple relationships and relationships with existing or new members of the extended family.

3.2.3 Proximity

I think we see a good amount of [my daughter's] children, and considering the distance away, I think I do pretty well with [my grandchild] at the moment. All things being equal, I think it's fine. It's just that I would really, really like it to be more. (Grandmother, focus group)

Aware that living in close proximity to grandchildren makes it easier for grandparents to maintain contact, the research team wanted to get a sense of how close grandparents live to their grandchildren. However, the extent of contact is not an appropriate measure of the quality of the relationship (University of Hertfordshire and Family Matters Institute, 2009). Grandparents who see their grandchildren infrequently may still develop strong relationships with them; on the other hand, daily contact is not necessarily positive or affirming.

Receiving regular gifts of toys and clothing and photographs from their grandmothers helps maintain the connection between the children and them. Likewise regular phone calls. My children have only been able to meet their grandmothers in person once, so these things are important. (Mother, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

Distance can obviously have a significant effect on the amount of time that grandparents can spend with their grandchildren, especially if grandparents' ability to visit their grandchildren is restricted due to the cost of travel (a theme emerging from the consultations associated with this project). As shown in Table 5 below, 23 percent of the main telephone survey sample reported that some of their grandchildren live overseas and 27 percent did not live in the same town or city as any of their grandchildren. Many focus group participants also had grandchildren living overseas, particularly in Australia.

Seven percent of all respondents in the main survey lived with one or more of their grandchildren, including:

> thirteen percent of respondents aged under 55 years (compared with four percent of respondents aged 75 years or older)

> three of the eight Asian respondents who participated in the survey.

Reflecting cultural practices, it was much more common for Māori and Pacific grandparents to report that they were living with their grandchildren than it was for New Zealand European grandparents.

TABLE 5: WHERE YOUR GRANDCHILDREN LIVE

Q10. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT HOW CLOSE BY YOUR GRANDCHILDREN LIVE. PLEASE TELL US WHICH, IF ANY, OF THESE STATEMENTS APPLY TO YOU:

	ALL (N=1,000) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=834) %	MĀORI (N=162) %	PACIFIC (N=100) %
I live with one or more of my grandchildren	7	5	25	42
I live in the same town or city as one or more of my grandchildren, although I do not live with them	59	59	59	59
None of my grandchildren live in the same town or city as me	27	28	30	10
All of my grandchildren live in New Zealand	58	58	59	46
Some of my grandchildren live overseas	23	22	23	32
All of my grandchildren live overseas	5	5	3	7

Base: All respondents; multiple response

Living some distance from their grandchildren may cause sorrow for grandparents, particularly if opportunities to get together are infrequent:

The reality of life today is we all work until we are 65+ and as a 47-year-old grandma with all my grandchildren in the South Island versus us in the North Island, we just have to strive to have quality time with them when we can. Often the distance and separation breaks my heart, but they know who we are and as they get older I envisage they will visit on their own on the holidays. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

I love my mokos even though I would love to see more of them and have the opportunity to go and see the ones that are across the Tasman. I haven't been for a few years, but they ring me up, you know, and it's music to my ears. I can just about look at their pictures in front of me while they're talking: 'Yeah, Koro, we have to come over there some time and catch some crayfish where Dad got his.' 'Yeah, well I'll take you out there, sure,' and these are the sort of things that are sort of keeping me alive. (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

In the following quote, a grandmother describes her sadness about the fact that she has not yet met her grandson, who lives in Australia:

I don't feel like a grandmother, I think maybe because I don't have him. But then when I see him via video calling I start getting different emotions… I've still got babies of my own – two under five – so it's a different feeling for them also. It's hard to explain, especially when I haven't had [my grandson] in my arms yet. … it's highly emotional … because he's not here. Unless I hear someone speaking of him or I've seen a photo – then he comes back. Not having him in my arms I just don't feel like a grandparent and I'm not happy. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Gosling and Huscroft (2009) wrote a book aimed at 'global grandparents', to provide guidelines for grandparents about how to develop and maintain long-distance relationships with grandchildren living overseas. The book draws on the authors' personal experiences as well as information gathered from other grandparents.

Ross et al (2009) found that although many young people in their study linked close relationships with grandparents to geographical proximity, others felt equally close to grandparents who did not live nearby. Opportunities for contact with grandparents seen less frequently were seen by some grandchildren as special and not taken for granted. For example, for some young people with grandparents living overseas, with whom there was little regular face-to-face contact, close bonds had nevertheless been developed through contact by telephone and during holiday visits.

Breheny and Stephens (2007) investigated the ways that older adults in New Zealand experience family life and social relationships. Spending time with grandchildren was of great value to project participants and many had made changes to their lives to enable this to happen; for example, moving closer so that they could help with grandchildren. Echoing findings from other studies, participants described how technologies such as email and texting made it easier to keep in touch with family who did not live nearby.

Grandparents in our consultations frequently mentioned the value of acquiring technological skills so that they could keep in touch with grandchildren and other family members. (However, we also heard occasional comments about the downside of such technology; for example, the costs of cell phone top-ups and call charges – which grandparents could be expected to pay – and the use of text messages to make constant demands on one grandparent's time, as described later in this report.)

Keeling et al's (2008) study of intergenerational relationships explored young people's perspectives of grandparents in rural families in New Zealand. As well as the many positive aspects of the grandparent-grandchild relationship, Keeling et al note sadness expressed about potential limitations on opportunities for relationships to develop over time; for example, due to declining health or death, or distance in both time and place. A number of young people in Keeling et al's study maintained regular contact with grandparents living overseas through weekly phone calls, and in one family, through 'web cam' contact.

3.2.4 Financial support

…It could be a trend going through our young people now. They want money, money, money. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

There are many ways in which finances may be transferred within families to benefit family members. A flow of financial assistance from older parents to their adult children and grandchildren is more common than in the opposite direction.

Petrie (2006) notes a paucity of New Zealand data about financial transfers within New Zealand families. Through polls from *The Couch*, focus groups and the telephone survey, grandparents told the Families Commission about financial contributions, pressures and concerns ranging from occasional requests and demands from grandchildren to significant contributions towards mortgage payments and home deposits. Some of the ways in which grandparents support New Zealand families financially are described:

There have been many times that my grandmother has given me her time to watch my children whilst I recovered in hospital for eight months. She along with my in-laws supported my husband during this time and financially assisted him as we both had to cease work. Their financial help meant we kept our possessions, were fed and housed. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

My grandmother has always been generous to me and my family with gifts of cash/cheques/bonus bonds, it makes me feel that my family and I are very special to her and we are grateful for her help. (Female, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

My mum and dad are always there to look after their young grandchildren – a huge bonus when appointments need to be met… They are now in a much better financial situation and often comment that they'd much rather provide help and financial support when needed now rather than wait until they're gone. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

My grandmother gave us a large lump sum of money to use in any way we needed. This was a huge help as we had just had a baby at the time. She is also contributing the same to her other grandchildren over the next few years. She also stayed with family away from her home for several months when there was a serious illness, helping out with everything from chores to emotional support. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

My grandma supports me in my parenting choices though they aren't ones she would make herself. She is always helping others in the family. She is also very helpful to my partner, regularly lets us use her credit card, as we often don't have lump sums of money to pay for things outright. There is a lot of help received from her, financially, emotionally, physically. (Mother, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

My grandma's contribution often … has meant we have been able to carry out maintenance on our car, bought food, a fridge, washing machine etc, bought things for our children. There are no bad things that I can see other than sometimes feeling like I am taking advantage of her. (Mother, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

Financial assistance may be in the form of advice rather than a monetary contribution:

Dad has acted as a sounding board for large financial decisions, so it has been reassuring. (Female, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Davey (2006) refers to studies that have documented the varying forms of, and motivations for, financial assistance given by older family members primarily to adult children and grandchildren. She notes that questions about financial transfers within families are complex and sensitive. She raises a number of issues deserving further exploration regarding the changing patterns of intergenerational financial transfers, including inheritances, within families – ideally drawing on data from a wide range of family types and cultural/ethnic groups. A Canadian study carried out by Ploeg et al (2004), found that much of this financial assistance is linked to important life events and transitions, such as assisting adult children to buy a house or car, and contributing towards living expenses or education.[24] Grandparents were described as demonstrating a strong desire to help their children and grandchildren through important or difficult transitions so that they could "build or rebuild secure lives and futures".

A focus group grandmother described the ongoing necessity to balance the needs of various family members, in terms of the financial (and other support) she could offer:

…Another pressure is almost financial, I do in effect bail the household out all the time and that's fine. But I've got other children and … so I have to work out that everyone gets what they need. I had to work it out in my own head that people have different needs and different ages and stages, because I can't do it equally. [One son and his partner are house hunting] so I'll probably give them some money to help with the deposit … but you can't do everything for everyone. But I do find it a pressure sometimes when I think, oh, am I being really fair, this one's getting a bit more than the rest, but everyone's needs are different at different stages of their lives and we don't know what's ahead of us. (Grandmother, focus group)

While some grandparents are in a position to provide financial assistance to their families, for others it can be an ongoing strain:

The other pressure too is the pocket-money. You know, I can remember my children got two shillings. No doubt about it, prices have gone up. They got two shillings and [were] happy to get it … then the grandchildren came along … there were six of them that I had … and I hate having to say 'I haven't got [money]' and so to me that's a pressure, too, because their mates have got it. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

We also pay for two of our grandchildren to attend a private school as their mother is unable to assist them with their school work and they get some wonderful support this way, but we both have to work full-time to supply this, their uniforms and school stationery, as well as a home for them. The oldest had shifted 10 times by the time she was 18 months old and we wanted some stability in both of the granddaughters' lives once they were at school. This is not a complaint – you need to know we are not the only grandparents to be doing this type of thing, it is common. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Financial concerns were spontaneously raised as a pressure for grandparents by six percent of grandparents in the telephone survey (12 percent of Māori grandparents, 12 percent of Pacific grandparents and six percent of New Zealand European respondents). The following comments illustrate the various financial concerns that were raised:

You get families where they haven't got enough and they come clapping hands to mum and dad who help 'em out so when they're short they'll come home; we've got five deep freezers here chock-a-block and we'll hand it out if needed, we're like a built in food bank. Sometimes if they're a bit short we'll pay the bills, but that's all right we're family

24 To assist grandchildren, 31 percent provided a trust or education fund, 17 percent a gift of money, 12 percent assisted in the costs of education and six percent with living expenses.

and that's what we're here for; we brought these kids into the world and they'll do the same for their kids when the time comes so it's all right. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandfather with 11–15 grandchildren, telephone survey)

Not being able to buy things for them. You can't take them shopping, buy them presents or have a birthday party as I usually have no money. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with nine grandchildren, telephone survey)

… it costs a lot of money to go and visit and look after them. I am always the one that goes to visit. (65–69-year-old NZ European grandfather with three grandchildren, telephone survey)

Financially – to go out and buy something for them is expensive, especially on a disability benefit. (60–64-year-old NZ European grandmother with five grandchildren, telephone survey)

It's monetary. I buy clothes and food. It's what I put on myself. His father is on the DPB [Domestic Purposes Benefit] and the mother has taken off. The DPB is almost impossible to live on, so it's monetary pressure. I buy clothes, food and any extras when I can. (70–74-year-old NZ European grandmother with five grandchildren, telephone survey)

The eldest has been in and out of jail, and when parents go away to visit, we're there to support the other kids, and we supply all the money. We don't like that too much. (70–74-year-old Māori grandfather with six grandchildren, living with but not raising at least one of them, telephone survey)

For telephone survey respondents who had made a lifestyle change so that they could spend more time with their grandchildren, around one in 10 reported that this had impacted on their financial situation – specifically in terms of financial restraints (8.1 percent), less disposable income (2.0 percent) and reduced ability to save (0.7 percent).

In response to a related question in the survey, 17 percent of respondents overall reported that their finances were stretched by contributions made to their grandchildren and/or their family.

TABLE 6: GRANDPARENTS' FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS – TOTAL AGREE (TELEPHONE SURVEY)

Q27X. PLEASE TELL ME WHETHER YOU STRONGLY AGREE, SOMEWHAT AGREE, SOMEWHAT DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT?

	ALL (N=1,000) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=834) %	MĀORI (N=162) %	PACIFIC (N=100) %
My finances are stretched because of the financial contributions I make to my grandchildren and/or their family	17	16	29	32

Base: All respondents

Particular groups of grandparents were more likely to agree that their finances had been stretched:

> 32 percent of Pacific respondents and 29 percent of Māori respondents reported that their finances were stretched because of the contributions they made to their grandchildren.

> 53 percent of respondents, who were living with one or more of their grandchildren, stated that their finances were stretched as a result, as did 12 of the 17 respondents who were raising their grandchildren.

Those who felt that their finances were being stretched often felt that their commitment to their grandchildren was putting them under pressure in other ways:

> 25 percent of those who reported that their finances were stretched also reported that they had put their careers on hold (compared with nine percent of all respondents in the main survey).

> 25 percent of those who reported that their finances were stretched also admitted that looking after their grandchildren was often a strain (compared with 12 percent of all respondents in the main survey).

> 23 percent of those who reported that their finances were stretched also stated that the amount of time they spent with their grandchildren put them under pressure (compared with eight percent of all respondents in the main survey).

Despite some grandparents stating that they were under financial pressure, in response to the telephone survey question that asked, *To help you as a grandparent, what would you like to know more about?*, only a small percentage of respondents (three percent) spontaneously mentioned that they would like to receive financial information.

Within the focus groups, grandparents described financial pressures and concerns ranging from occasional requests and demands from grandchildren (eg, for toys or pocket money) to contributions towards mortgage payments and home deposits. Grandparents were concerned about the increasing costs of groceries (particularly healthy food for their grandchildren) and worries over the impact of the recession on their adult children's lives. Some grandparents reported paying for items such as school fees and clothing, others for family holidays and – in the Samoan group – for church donations. One grandmother described how (and why) she contributes to sports and education costs:

They're busy with their school and their sport, which keeps them out of mischief, which is a good thing. That's why I support them financially with their sport and their education. (Grandmother, Cook Islands focus group)

A Samoan grandparent described how gifts of money were given with no expectation of repayment:

When my children need money, I say to return it when they can, but most of the time I know that it won't come back. That does not hurt or upset me – I actually feel sorry for them. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Making a decision to assume full-time care for grandchildren has obvious financial implications. Worrall (2009) describes the direct effects of assuming care on the employment circumstances of carers. These include ceasing paid work, working beyond the expected retirement age and having the main income earner change jobs to get sufficient income to support the expanded family. She describes the struggle to manage amongst the families in her sample on low incomes. In the following comment, a focus group grandparent describes a similar struggle:

If it wasn't for the IRD money and the money I receive from CYFS, we wouldn't be able to survive. We've lost a lot of money because we've not just got [our grandson] to support, we've got a mortgage to support as well … if we didn't take him on we'd be better off, let's face it, we'd be better off. (Grandparent raising a grandchild, focus group)

Another focus group grandparent raising grandchildren expressed ongoing concerns about their ability to pay telephone and power bills. A Couch poll respondent provided the following rationale for more financial support from the government for grandparents raising grandchildren:

If older family members are caring for younger family members permanently (eg, grandparents having to raise grandchildren full-time,) then I believe they should get fulsome financial support from the Government. If not, then eventually the Government will have to support the older people anyway if they have to spend all their savings raising yet another family. Also spending all their savings may set the younger family members on the track of not being financially self-sufficient as well creating an ever repeating cycle of being on the financial back-foot. (Female, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Forum participants also spoke about financial pressures, including grandparents being expected to 'foot the bill' when families separate, money being demanded from grandparents to service family members' drug habits, the pressures of providing free or low-cost accommodation for grandchildren and their families and the expenses involved in taking grandchildren on outings (eg, bus fares, entry fees).

During the research contributing towards the Families Commission (2009b) report, (*Escaping the Debt Trap*) several families described how grandparents had helped out with loan repayments, lent money and bought items needed by grandchildren, as well as assisting with childcare.

A migrant family in the debt study included grandparents, adult children and young grandchildren living together. The grandparent reflected about how being able to save would allow them to do more with and for their family:

> I think it will be nice if I get to the point where I can save, that will be a big thing, just save as much as we can, but also live … comfortably … do more for the children as well, and the grandchildren, be able to go away with them on weekends and things like that. But not make any more debt if I can, 'cause if I can get to a situation where I am saving that will prevent more debt happening, you know. (Participant 1; Families Commission, 2009b, p. 78)

3.2.4.1 Summary

Our findings suggest that grandparents are providing a range of financial support to families throughout New Zealand and that contributions from older family members are making a significant difference to some families' lives. It is also evident that despite grandparents' willingness and desire to offer financial support, this is not always easy and may place their own current or future financial security in jeopardy.

3.2.5 Disability

Drawing on the World Health Organisation's (WHO) functional definition of disability, Statistics New Zealand defines a disability as "any limitation in activity resulting from a long-term condition or health problem". Limitations may be physical, sensory, psychiatric, neurological, intellectual or age-related, and often coexist. The most recent study of disability in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand's Disability Survey, 2006)[25] estimates 17 percent of New Zealanders have a disability. Disability increases with age, with 45 percent of adults aged 65 years and over having a disability. The survey showed that Māori have a higher disability rate than other ethnic groups in every age group.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy[26] (2001) notes that many disabled people are unable to reach their potential or participate fully in the community because of barriers they face doing things that most New Zealanders take for granted. These barriers include restricted access to facilities, societal attitudes and a lack of awareness of disability issues.

Grandparents may themselves be disabled, and/or be supporting family members with a disability, including elderly parents, partners, adult children, grandchildren or others. Through our consultations with grandparents, we heard about some of the ways in which disability impacts grandparents' lives. We have also heard from families about the ways in which they assist disabled grandparents. Several Couch poll participants explained that financial barriers limited the extent of help they are able to provide:

> If money was not an issue, we could afford to have my grandmother living with us with a nurse aid to help. The only reason she is in a home is because she is immobile and she needs to use a hoist to move. We don't have one so could not care for her. Money would also allow us to live in a house that was big enough for us all to have our own space. (Female, Māori, Couch poll respondent)

> I am prevented from helping my mother as much as we would like due to cost of travelling to another town 20 minutes away. WINZ has no financial help in this situation. (Female, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

25 http://www.stats.govt.nz/~/media/Statistics/Browse%20for%20stats/DisabilitySurvey2006/HOTP06/DisabilitySurvey200606HOTP.ashx
26 http://www.odi.govt.nz/documents/publications/nz-disability-strategy.doc

3.2.5.1 Disabilities

For grandparents who are disabled, there may be limitations on their ability to spend time with grandchildren. Families should acknowledge that, as grandparents age, there is a higher likelihood of disability as well as decreased energy and strength, any or all of which may restrict grandparents' capacity or desire to interact with or provide hands-on care for their grandchildren. A number of telephone survey and focus group respondents talked about how disability-related matters affect their lives, including the following:

> structural barriers

A respondent who uses a wheelchair spoke about needing transport to see grandchildren, and limited accessibility in family homes not set up for wheelchair users.

> decreased mobility

[I am] too old to run after [my grandchild], it's been hard as well for me because I have a heart condition. (Telephone survey respondent)

I have severe arthritis, find it hard to run after [my grandchildren]. (Telephone survey respondent)

I have my foot in a cast and I walk with a stick so I can't go out in the street to do anything with my grandchildren. (Telephone survey respondent)

> poor health

Because I am getting on and I have poor health I am not really strong enough to look after them. (Telephone survey grandparent on a sickness benefit)

[Pressures are] old age and health. (Telephone survey respondent)

I suffer from cancer so can't run around as much. (Telephone survey respondent)

I have terminal cancer and I often feel sick; my health makes it harder to look after [grandchildren]. (Telephone survey respondent)

I've had a hell of a year health wise and through this baby's life… I haven't been able to sit in the car to travel or to be there at all. I haven't had the same bonding at all. (Grandmother, focus group)

> general physical limitations

[A pressure is that] as you get older your physical fitness and ability to pick [grandchildren] up and things like that reduces. (Telephone survey respondent)

In our focus groups, Samoan grandparents in particular expressed concerns about keeping up with young grandchildren, particularly when running, lifting or bathing were involved.

Worrall (2009) reports that her study of grandparents raising grandchildren reflects international research showing a significant relationship between health deterioration and the caring role. Many of the participants in her study, or their partners, had "multiple, extremely serious and debilitating" (p. 61) medical problems (eg, diabetes, arthritis, seizures, cancer). Sixty-one percent of grandparents stated their health had deteriorated over the last four years. Grandparents' health status was much more likely to have been negatively affected when the children taken into care had psychological/behavioural problems.

3.2.5.2 Supporting family members with disabilities

Mitchell (2007) notes that although there was a growth in literature on the important role that grandparents play within families, there is limited research exploring the support that grandparents provide to families with disabled children. These families frequently face additional caring responsibilities and emotional demands.

Within the focus groups there were a number of examples of grandparents supporting family members with a disability. One provided significant care and financial support for a chronically-ill child in another city. Another offered ongoing support to a daughter with a son with Down Syndrome, and yet another assisted with mortgage repayments for a young parent who was raising a grandchild affected by Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. Several grandparents were raising grandchildren due to parents having psychiatric illnesses. A grandparent in one focus group explained that she had taken over care of her 28-year-old grandson who had broken his neck in an accident:

There is hope that it will come right at some stage, but it is going to be a long process. We are having a bit of trouble with ACC … they won't acknowledge that he has got a broken neck, so we are having to fight them … so that he can get compensation. (Grandparent, grandparents raising grandchildren focus group)

Grandparents responding to some of *The Couch* polls wrote about their grandchildren's experiences with disability:

It is hard for my granddaughter to see her younger sister engaged in physical sport and able to do all kinds of things around the house to help their mother – like vacuuming etc … It would have made my granddaughter's life much easier at high school if there had been a disability lift to reach upstairs classrooms instead of her having to struggle up and down stairs every day with a walking stick. She has spina bifida. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Parents responding to Couch polls also described support provided by grandparents (such as providing care for disabled grandchildren so that parents can have some time to themselves). One family described substantial care provided by a grandparent, to supplement other support:

We built a house with an attached unit for my mother as she helps out a lot with my daughter who has cerebral palsy. Mum spends over 30 hours a week looking after my daughter. We also have a carer who helps out for 11 hours a week and my daughter goes to a respite house for an afternoon a week. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Grandparents who are themselves disabled could also be providing support to others, in both older and younger generations.

My Mum also has chronic arthritis and yet she cares for my grandmother who is in her 90s and has age-related disabilities. (Female, Māori, Couch poll respondent)

Worrall (2009) describes a variety of disabilities affecting the children in her study for whom kinship care was being provided. These included severe physical disabilities, Down Syndrome and Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, as well as asthma, eczema and 'other issues' (such as a chronic lung condition, epilepsy, immune deficiency and developmental delay). Many carers described complex conditions that required constant care, commitment and skill to manage. Worrall mentions the grief experienced by grandparents when grandchildren's disabilities were a result of the parent's actions; for example, Shaken Baby Syndrome (a combination of serious injuries that can occur when

an infant or young toddler is violently shaken).[27] In Worrall's study, several respondents had modified their house to better meet the needs of disabled grandchildren.

Citing research by Hastings (1997), Mitchell (2007) suggests that although grandparenthood is associated with many pleasures, grandparents of disabled children may experience a period of mourning and adjustment. This adjustment may be hampered if grandparents have insufficient support and information about their grandchild's disability. Grandparents may be limited in the amount of support that they are willing or able to provide, for reasons such as distance, health (of the grandparent as well as the grandchild) and pre-existing poor relationships with their adult children.

Mitchell urges further consideration of the additional practical, emotional and financial costs that grandparents may incur when providing informal childcare for a disabled grandchild. Childcare issues for disabled children may persist as the young people age, and may become more complicated. It helps if grandparents are well informed about their grandchildren's disabilities and feel confident about managing any problems that may arise. A grandparent in the telephone survey talked about having a grandson with epilepsy:

We just have to watch him, but we are trained for that. (Telephone survey respondent)

Several telephone survey grandparents mentioned the pressures of having grandchildren with ADHD and ODD.[28]

One grandparent mentioned the concerns faced regarding children of deaf adults, particularly around communication issues:

[I] find it hard to get along with younger family members; four of my grandchildren are children of deaf adults. They have behaviours that I struggle with at times and I feel as though I niggle at them. There is little support for these children who have been overly responsible for aspects of communication between the community and their deaf parents. None of the children are deaf, but sign language is their first language and I don't sign, [wasn't] allowed to when my daughter was young. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

A Couch poll respondent described frustration at grandparents' lack of understanding of her son's condition:

Grandparents on my husband's side don't understand Aspergers and make him do things he isn't comfortable doing, saying he'll get over it. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

In addition to practical support, some grandparents contribute towards education costs for grandchildren with disabilities:

My daughter goes to a private school thanks to her grandmother. The school is much smaller and disciplined therefore she doesn't get lost in the system, but they do not have any resources for my daughter's learning disabilities. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Support may also be in the form of advocacy. In the following quote, a grandparent responding to our Couch poll explains how she advocates on behalf of her deaf daughter and her grandchild, supported by a mentor:

My role with my moko is to ensure that she gets optimum exposure to language and exposure to a hearing world as well as the world of her profoundly deaf parents. The world

27 http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/index.php/pi_pageid/23/pi_id/185
28 ADHD: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; ODD: oppositional defiant disorder.

of the child of a deaf adult is little understood by schools, needs assessors, the world at large. I have found myself a peer mentor who has challenged me to assert my boundaries around what is required for the health and welfare of my much loved daughter and granddaughter. We have regular meetings so I have the opportunity to review my role, articulate concerns, clarify thoughts, decide where to from here. Very valuable… I ask my daughter what she wants for her child and operate only in accordance with her expressed concerns. This is a time-consuming and quite draining operation, as I am unable to sign. However it is about empowerment and desired outcomes no matter how slow. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Mirfin-Veitch, Bray, and Watson (1997) interviewed 12 New Zealand parent-grandparent pairs in families of children with disabilities. (Similar to our own consultations, Mirfin-Veitch et al previously described grandparents as providing both practical and emotional support to parents of children with disabilities.) They found that if parents and grandparents belong to a particular 'sort of family', and share a positive relationship history, they are likely to have a supportive relationship:

> Parents and grandparents who enjoyed close and supportive relationships usually belong to the 'sort of family' which functioned in a particular manner historically. The birth or diagnosis of a child with a disability did not appear to have an effect on the continuation of the traditional functioning of these families. …[These 'sort of families' show] unconditional love and acceptance of all family members [and have] frequent extended family contact. (p. 306)

Secondly, Mirfin-Veitch et al suggest that a long-term positive relationship between parents and grandparents, with open and effective communication, fostered the qualities in grandparents that parents of children with disabilities found helpful and acceptable. They advise professionals working with families who have disabled children to be aware of the existing nature of intergenerational relationships within families, encouraging a level of involvement and informal support by grandparents (and other family members) that will be acceptable and useful to parents.

3.2.5.3 Related references and resources

The New Zealand Carers' Strategy and Five-year Action Plan[29] and associated resources (eg, *A Guide for Carers*,[30] 2009) are part of a wider government process to improve the choices of parents and other informal carers (such as grandparents) so they can better balance their paid work, their caring responsibilities and other aspects of their lives. A carer is anyone who supports a person with ill health, a disability, mental illness, an addiction or in their old age. Most carers see themselves not as carers, but as relatives or close friends of the person who needs support.

The Carers' Strategy focuses on carers who provide informal support for someone close to them, who may be a child, a partner, a wider family, whānau or aiga member, a friend or a neighbour.

Appendix 5 presents additional references and resources for grandparents, including some disability-focused websites with information developed specifically for grandparents.

29 http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/policy-development/carers-strategy.pdf
30 http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/what-we-can-do/community/carers/carers-a4-booklet-v8.pdf

3.2.6 Vulnerable grandparents

Ideally, families (particularly parents, but also the younger generation) will be sensitive to and conscious of grandparents' emotional, physical and social needs. If this is not the case, grandparents can be vulnerable, particularly if they do not feel able to assert their needs and wishes, or are unaware of their own rights.

Families Commission (2008a) *Elder Abuse and Neglect* (EAN) notes that some grandparents in the study on which the report was based[31] reported feeling overburdened by looking after grandchildren and "some, notably in Pacific families, felt over-utilised as a source of childcare" (p. 37). As discussed elsewhere in this report, it is not always easy for grandparents – particularly the Pacific grandparents who took part in the telephone survey – to turn down requests for childcare.

In the EAN report (Families Commission, 2008a), there were examples of grandchildren being used to extort money or property:

> Grandchildren were coached to ask the older person for money, or older people were threatened with not seeing their grandchildren if they did not provide money or property. (p. 38)

Grandparents in our project talked about financial pressures upon them (discussed in more detail elsewhere in this report), including expectations that grandparents would provide financial back-up to varying degrees:

But as they grow older they form their own lives and I guess one of the pressures is the pressure of letting go and letting them go, but they know that if they come to grief they can come back again. There's always the pressure about 'Nan's got plenty of money so she can help me out here'. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

They, being the grandchildren, think that money grows on trees and think you can pluck it off the trees. The ones that live up north think I've got a money tree outside. (55–59-year-old Māori grandmother with nine grandchildren, telephone survey)

They come and use my phone and ring their friends on the mobile and leave gran to pay. (Grandparent, Cook Islands focus group)

The EAN report describes abuse to grandparents' personal property and general disrespect. A grandparent in one of our focus groups told us how a grandson had "burned [a family home] down to the ground". In another exchange, two grandparents discussed the potential harm that grandchildren can cause (even accidentally) and their varying reactions to it:

They can wreck your houses, grandchildren. You are supposed to accept it and carry on.

Yes. It's cost me a fortune. The less I see of them the better! And you feel the same too, don't you?

No, with all my grandchildren, if they don't break my heart they are allowed to break anything that's in it that's mine. (Grandparents, Māori focus group)

31 Participants were over the age of 65, and included people of Māori, Pacific, Asian and European ethnicities from rural areas, provincial towns and large centres. Some participants had experienced abuse and/or neglect.

Another focus group grandparent, whose adult daughter and children had moved into the family home, described the general wear and tear and adjustments that had been needed in order to accommodate life with young children in the house, which led to feelings of pressure:

It's more the pressure … of having them in the house, having a toddler in the house. At our age, having a two-year-old running riot and spilling his drink on the carpet. For 20 years we've built a nice house and suddenly in two years the pressure's on … putting gates up so he couldn't fall down the stairs – having to go through the gate in the morning to get to work and just about falling over and going down the stairs yourself. (Grandfather, focus group)

Worrall (2009) refers to anecdotal evidence suggesting that kin caregivers may be at risk of harm from the children they are caring for. In an attempt to quantify this issue, Worrall asked respondents in her study whether they or other family members had received any assaults from children in their care. Of the 117 responses received to this question, 38 percent described physical injury and 61 percent mentioned verbal abuse.

Worrall also reports that some of the carers in her study were not getting enough to eat:

> They do not want to go to the food bank or ask for extra money from WINZ and when they do it is desperation that drives them, not greed. (p. 80)

Māori participants in the EAN study said that control over older people's access to mokopuna was common, describing how mokopuna were used a form of coercion:

> If you don't look after them [the grandchildren] then we won't bring them to see you. (Auckland, Māori key informant; Families Commission, 2008a, p. 53)

Some older Chinese grandparents in the EAN study described their experiences of moving from China to New Zealand so that they could look after grandchildren. After relocating, immigrant grandparents might have no-one to talk to and no control over their finances. Grandchildren can treat their grandparents disrespectfully, for example, by shouting at them. Pacific participants in the same study also talked about their isolation and the erosion of respect for older people (shown by children being 'very rude'). Similar themes emerged in our own focus group discussions. Grandparents were concerned not only by rudeness to themselves, but also the lack of respect children showed to their own parents:

I couldn't get out of there quick enough – the way those children behaved to their mother, you know, was making me sick. The way they speak to their mother. I said, 'You shouldn't speak like that to your mother' and they sort of stick their nose up in the air and think 'Who are you to talk to me – you're not my mother'. I dearly love my mokopunas, but I couldn't stand the way they were talking to [their mother] and I said, 'I can't stand this – I'm going home'. (Focus group grandparent)

The EAN report notes that lack of consideration for older people's emotional, physical and social needs causes loneliness and feelings of helplessness and can lead to depression and suicide. As noted elsewhere in this report, grandparents sometimes feel pulled in different directions, with little time for themselves:

For me as grandparent, I have my ups and downs. Being a grandmother, yeah, you know, it's fun, I love them dearly, but the downfall, sometimes it gets on top of you. Like, you end up being, now you've looked after your children and it's like you end up with the kids again.

Like as grandparents when do we get our life? When do we have a life? I get a bit down. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Photo: Michael Kerslake

Age Concern and the New Zealand Government produced an elder abuse pamphlet[32] as a component of the national Campaign for Action on Family Violence. As well as defining elder abuse, it includes suggestions for valuing and respecting older people's contributions, as well as contact details for sources of information and support.

The Families Commission fact sheet *Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect*[33] identifies risk and protective factors for elder abuse and neglect, as well as providing guidelines for older people, families and carers. Positive relationships between the generations are encouraged, as well as ensuring that boundaries are openly discussed and agreed. Families and carers are also reminded to ensure that older family members have information, or know where to get information, about matters that affect them.

> Older people are less likely to be abused or neglected when they are well-informed about their rights and prepared for physical, psychological, emotional, social and financial changes. (Families Commission *Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect* Fact Sheet)

The Fact Sheet also emphasises that older people are most likely to be valued and respected in a society where there is strong social contact and ties between the different generations, further reinforcing the value of fostering positive ongoing relationships between grandparents and grandchildren.

32 http://www.areyouok.org.nz/files/test/resources/Elder_Abuse_F.pdf
33 http://www.familiescommission.govt.nz/research/elder-abuse/elder-abuse-fact-sheet

3.3 BALANCING NEEDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.3.1 Balancing time

Overall, our research findings suggest that many grandparents appear to manage balancing time spent with grandchildren and other commitments and activities. Within both focus group and telephone survey populations, many grandparents felt that they achieved a good balance, even if some compromises were needed – although some grandparents expressed considerable dissatisfaction. The more heavily involved grandparents were in their grandchildren's lives, the more they needed to actively seek to address balance issues, which could involve learning how to assert their own needs more directly:

As I am a young grandparent I feel that I have the right skills and techniques that [are] needed, as it does not seem that long since I raised my own children. The only thing I need to enable me to achieve or maintain more balance of time is to be more assertive and say no that I will not do as much as I do, but unfortunately as a grandparent or even a parent it is not always that easy to say no. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Forum participants also spoke about the consequences of not having enough time of their own, which for some meant giving up or restricting their voluntary work. It also sometimes meant isolation or stress resulting from a lack of time to commit to their own friends, hobbies and recreational needs.

In response to an open-ended question in the telephone survey, asking respondents to identify the main pressures they faced as grandparents, just three percent of respondents spontaneously cited the need to balance spending time with grandchildren against their other commitments. Their verbatim comments, however, indicated that this was often an important issue:

It's hard for me because I also look after my elderly mother and my 99-year-old grandmother in a rest home. I can't take my grandkids there because of the hospital bugs. It can only be a short visit for the kids to see their great grandparents. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandmother with four grandchildren)

I have health issues, my work loads at home [and] at work and then having to care for a grandchild on top of that. (50–54-year-old NZ European grandmother with one grandchild)

Having the free time to see them because we are all very busy. I am busy with my own activities and my grandchildren are busy with theirs, so it is difficult to co-ordinate the time. (70–74-year-old NZ European grandfather with five grandchildren)

Limited time for myself. The main thing is giving up my career, job and social life. I can't travel, can't do anything for myself. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandmother with eight grandchildren)

In order to explore issues related to balance, pressures, commitments and expectations, telephone survey respondents were also asked to respond to a series of statements using a "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" four-point scale. As shown in Table 7, one of the statements that respondents were asked to respond to was whether or not they agreed that they were "satisfied with the balance between the time spent with grandchildren and time spent on my own interests and activities". Seventy-seven percent of respondents reported that they were satisfied with the balance (including 54 percent who strongly agreed with this statement).

The following table shows the total number of grandparents who agreed with the statements presented.

TABLE 7: AGREEMENT WITH STATEMENTS – TOTAL AGREE

Q27X. PLEASE TELL ME WHETHER YOU STRONGLY AGREE, SOMEWHAT AGREE, SOMEWHAT DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. IF THE STATEMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO YOU, JUST SAY SO.

	ALL (N=1,000) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=834) %	MĀORI (INC OVERSAMPLE) (N=162) %	PACIFIC (INC OVERSAMPLE) (N=100) %
Looking after my grandchildren is enjoyable and satisfying	95	95	95	95
I am satisfied with the balance between the time spent with grandchildren and time spent on my own interests and activities	77	76	75	82
I have a lot of control over how much time I spend with my grandchildren	55	54	65	73
I have often put my own needs and interests on hold to look after my grandchildren	48	47	62	58
I would like to change the amount of time I spend with my grandchildren	46	46	56	47
I have changed my lifestyle so I can spend more time with my grandchildren	29	29	44	51
My finances are stretched because of the financial contributions I make to my grandchildren and/or their family	17	16	29	32
My family expects me to look after my grandchildren	16	15	19	34
Looking after my grandchildren is often a strain	12	11	17	19
My grandchildren's parents expect a lot of me, but I am not always able to cope	11	10	22	29
I have put my own work or career on hold to look after my grandchildren	9	9	20	32
The amount of time I spend with my grandchildren puts me under pressure	8	8	13	22

Base: All respondents

The full telephone survey report reveals that even respondents who expressed concerns about some aspects of grandparenting reported that they were satisfied with the balance between time spent with their grandchildren and their other activities.

> 76 percent of those who reported that looking after their grandchildren put them under pressure still reported that they were satisfied with the balance between time spent with their grandchildren and their other activities.

> 71 percent of those who admitted that looking after grandchildren is often a strain still reported that they were satisfied with this balance.

Those who were dissatisfied with the balance were often those who did not see very much of their grandchildren (for example, had grandchildren living overseas, or saw their grandchildren once a year or less).

Just 10 percent of those who looked after one or more of their grandchildren on a regular basis reported that they were dissatisfied with the balance.

Of the 48 percent of respondents who reported that they had often put their own needs and interests on hold to look after their grandchildren:

> 80 percent were satisfied with the balance between time spent with their grandchildren and other activities.

> 72 percent felt that they had a lot of control over how much time they spent with their grandchildren.

> 99 percent reported that the time they spent with their grandchildren was enjoyable and satisfying.

There was some evidence that grandparents who had put their own needs and interests on hold had not always done so entirely willingly:

> 43 percent of this group did not feel that it was easy to turn down requests to look after their grandchildren, including 28 percent who reported that it was not easy at all.

Groups who were more likely to say that they had put their needs and interests on hold were:

> those raising one or more of their grandchildren (15 of the 17 respondents)

> those living with their grandchildren but not raising them (71 percent)

> Māori respondents (62 percent)

> Pacific respondents (58 percent).

Some Couch poll grandparents described being pulled in many directions, which may strain relationships with partners and other family members. As one Couch poll respondent told us:

I would like to have many photocopies of myself to share around. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

The following comments also illustrate how grandparents may grapple with meeting their obligations:

It's difficult to juggle oneself sometimes. I feel as though my obligation is to care for my husband, but I want my grandchildren to grow up with fond and lasting memories of the things they did with granny ... and the two do not happen in sync ... ever. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

It's great being a grandparent but can be very time consuming if you can't set boundaries and ensure you have time out for yourself. As a mother of a disabled daughter, it is a real pressure, but then it has been all her life. [I] also have my aging mother to support at the same time, so often feel a bit squeezed and feel like shouting 'WHEN IS MY TIME FOR ME AND NO RESPONSIBILITY!' (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Our grandchild's father died suddenly and we made the commitment to have [our grandson] stay one night a week and to have daily contact. This has impacted on my husband's and my personal time and we have continued with this commitment even though at times we have been tired and would have preferred him not to come and stay. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Yet some grandparents are (eventually) confident about asserting their own needs and turning down requests. In the following excerpts, two grandparents explain how they clarify priorities with adult children:

Working full-time I used to go home and the mokos were right behind me and I hadn't had time to chill out of my own work and [their parents would say] 'We'll be here to pick them up in the morning', and they didn't get them until Sunday and I ended up having to take them home. It just got too much, so I just said no. 'Where are you going?', 'I'm just going to the pub', or 'I'm going to a party'. 'Well, you take your children home; you look after them.' (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

I make it certain to my daughter … my exercise and my church comes first, and she knows that… I want to live my life the way I like it. When [she] rings me up [to babysit] I say, 'No, I'm going [to] so and so', or 'I've got a meeting, I've got this, I've got that', and she knows that. (Grandmother, Cook Islands focus group)

There is growing understanding that people do not make decisions about paid and unpaid work in isolation from their family. For those grandparents still in paid employment, balancing work and family responsibilities is not always easy. In New Zealand, the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 gives employees with caring responsibilities (including grandparents, if eligible) a statutory right to request flexible work arrangements and requires employers to give reasonable consideration to the request. Families Commission (2008d) explored families' understandings about flexible work arrangements, how they use them and the perceived benefits. It showed that the ability to take up flexible work is vital to the quality of life of many families with caring responsibilities. Grandparents played a key role in some of the families who participated in the research. Yet some spoke of the challenges they faced balancing work and family responsibilities, particularly those who wanted more time with their grandchildren:

> I just wanted to do stuff with the boys and be a part of their lives and I'm not because I have to work just to keep the house going. But then how do you tell a grandchild that you can't spend time with them because you've got to work to keep the house going? (Marama; Families Commission, 2008d, p. 56)

Section 3.3.4 of this report looks at how grandparents are balancing paid work and caring responsibilities, as well as the support provided by, and sought from, their employers.

3.3.2 Childcare

The Families Commission has talked extensively with families to build its knowledge about New Zealand families. The difficulty those families have balancing their work and family commitments emerges as an underlying theme in many research projects and consultations. Grandparents often assist families to balance these commitments by providing childcare, although at the same time may need to juggle their own paid work, family responsibilities and outside interests.

Consistent with the findings from other Families Commission research (as cited throughout this report) as well as international research literature,[34] many grandparents in both the telephone survey and focus group populations provided either regular or irregular childcare for their grandchildren. Whilst childcare is frequently provided when parents are in paid work, it can also be offered for other reasons – and not only during the day:

The occasional care of younger family members, although significantly reduced in recent years, was a huge benefit in the first four years that we had children (when it was a regular weekly occurrence). Just to have a whole night's sleep once a week, knowing that mum (grandma) would get up to them in the night, was a life saver in those early days. (Mother, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

To gauge the extent of childcare being provided by grandparents, telephone survey respondents were asked a series of questions about the frequency, predictability and extent of looking after grandchildren (without their parents being present), as well as the reasons for doing so.

34 Ochiltree (2006) suggests that one of the two greatest changes for (Australian) grandparents over the past two decades was the provision of childcare, particularly for infants and toddlers. (The other was the growth of grandparents assuming full responsibility for raising grandchildren due to their parents' inability to do so.)

TABLE 8: LOOKING AFTER GRANDCHILDREN (TELEPHONE SURVEY)

Q17. DO YOU LOOK AFTER ANY OF YOUR GRANDCHILDREN WITHOUT THEIR PARENTS BEING PRESENT?

	ALL (N=983)[35] %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=826) %	MĀORI (N=144) %	PACIFIC (N=88) %
On a regular basis, say on a particular day each week	25	23	34	52
On an irregular, less predictable basis	59	59	58	57
TOTAL LOOKING AFTER GRANDCHILDREN ON EITHER A REGULAR OR IRREGULAR BASIS (PERCENT OF ALL RESPONDENTS IN BRACKETS)	**68 (67)**	**67 (66)**	**72 (64)**	**76 (67)**

Base: Those who were NOT raising their grandchildren full-time (N=983); multiple response

The majority (58 percent) of those who looked after their grandchildren on a regular or irregular basis, but were not raising them, reported that they did so because the grandchildren's parents were working at the time. (This figure is less than the 69 percent drawn from the Australian LSAC data reported by Gray, Mission, and Hayes (2005), where they had included parents' work and study commitments within the same category.)

The other main reason was to give the parents a break from the children, including looking after them when the parents were at social occasions or attending to their own needs – such as getting a haircut.

TABLE 9: PARENTS' ACTIVITIES WHILE GRANDPARENT IS CARING FOR GRANDCHILDREN (TELEPHONE SURVEY)

Q24. WHAT SORTS OF THINGS ARE YOUR GRANDCHILDREN'S PARENTS USUALLY DOING WHILE YOU ARE LOOKING AFTER THE GRANDCHILDREN?

	ALL (N=670) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=551) %	MĀORI (N=104) %	PACIFIC (N=67) %
Paid work	58	56	58	57
Having time out/a break from the children (eg, going out for a meal, socialising, having a haircut)	47	48	51	39
Sports activities	6	6	14	8
Grocery shopping	6	7	5	6
Studying	4	4	5	8
Sleeping/relaxing	3	3	2	2
Receiving medical treatment	3	3	1	2
Looking after other children in the family	3	2	5	2
Housework	2	2	2	8
On holiday	2	2	2	3
Voluntary work	1	1	1	–
Unsure	2	2	–	2

Base: Those who look after any of their grandchildren without the parents being present on a regular or irregular basis; multiple response

35 Adding the number who looked after grandchildren on a regular basis to the number who looked after grandchildren on an irregular basis comes to more than the number in the 'total' row, because some grandparents looked after grandchildren on both a regular and irregular basis.

Amongst those who looked after their grandchildren on a regular or irregular basis but were not raising them, 67 percent had looked after them in the week preceding the telephone interview, as indicated in Table 10.

Approximately half (51 percent) of those who had looked after their grandchildren for 40 hours or more were neither raising them nor living with them.

Of the 39 respondents who looked after grandchildren for 40 hours or more:

> 21 reported that this was because the grandchildren's parents were in paid work (54 percent)

> 16 reported that the parents were having time out (41 percent).

TABLE 10: NUMBER OF HOURS YOU HAVE LOOKED AFTER YOUR GRANDCHILDREN

Q18. IN THE LAST WEEK, IN TOTAL HAVE YOU LOOKED AFTER YOUR GRANDCHILDREN FOR:

	ALL (N=670) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=551) %	MĀORI (N=104) %	PACIFIC (N=67) %
Fewer than 10 hours	39	40	23	39
10–20 hours	15	15	20	15
21–30 hours	5	4	8	10
31–40 hours	2	2	2	5
More than 40 hours	6	5	11	16
Did not look after them	33	34	36	15

Base: Those who look after their grandchildren on a regular or irregular basis but were not raising them

A majority (59 percent) of those who looked after their grandchildren on a regular basis reported that they looked after two or more of them (they were not asked whether or not they looked after more than one grandchild simultaneously, or whether they looked after them one at a time). The proportions for both Māori and Pacific respondents were similar, with 28 of the 49 Māori respondents who regularly looked after their grandchildren saying that they looked after two or more. The equivalent figure for Pacific respondents was 26 out of 46.

Breheny and Stephens (2007, p. 28) describe the "careful management of relationships, independence and reciprocity that older adults must negotiate." They suggest that the informal provision of childcare may serve a dual purpose: assisting the family, as well as giving the older person a point of regular contact.

Goodfellow (2004) refers to the 'care paradox' and the need for grandparents to balance family contributions, obligations and independence. She suggests that there will be differing definitions of what are considered acceptable caring commitments and the extent to which care contributes to, or competes with, personal priorities. Prior to the telephone survey, the research team heard from some grandparents that they had difficulty saying 'no' to requests for childcare. In order to determine the extent of this quandary, telephone survey grandparents were asked how easy it is for them to turn down requests to look after their grandchildren. Results are shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11: EASE OF TURNING DOWN REQUESTS TO LOOK AFTER GRANDCHILDREN

Q23. HOW EASY IS IT FOR YOU TO TURN DOWN REQUESTS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR GRANDCHILDREN? IS IT VERY EASY, FAIRLY EASY, NOT THAT EASY OR NOT EASY AT ALL?

	ALL (N=670) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=551) %	MĀORI (N=104) %	PACIFIC (N=67) %
Very easy	22	21	16	25
Fairly easy	28	28	26	18
TOTAL EASY	**50**	**49**	**42**	**43**
Not that easy	14	14	5	17
Not easy at all	22	22	39	31
TOTAL NOT EASY	**36**	**36**	**44**	**48**
Unsure	14	15	14	9

Base: Those who look after their grandchildren on a regular or irregular basis but were not raising them

These results confirm that it is not always easy for grandparents to say 'no' to requests to provide childcare, which may be an unspoken expectation of a grandparents' role. Later in the survey (amongst a series of other questions), respondents were asked how interested they would be in learning how to turn down requests for care. Perhaps surprisingly, there was not a great deal of interest in this topic, apart from the Pacific grandparents, amongst whom almost half expressed interest.

3.3.2.1 Supporting parents' work

My son and partner are like 'ships in the night'. Son finishes night shift at 5 am. His partner starts work at 6 am six days a week. My wife and I care for the child at crossover of parents' shifts and when parents are resting. The care that is given to our grandchild is 24 hours – meals, schooling and general care in the family. (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

Families Commission (2008e) *Juggling Acts* studied how New Zealand parents working non-standard hours arrange care for their pre-school children, reported that within their sample of 25 families a significant number of pre-school children were cared for by grandparents while their parents worked.

Although these families used various types of care, including formal Early Child Education (ECE) services, the support provided by partners and grandparents was crucial to keeping the parent's non-standard work sustainable. Some grandparents lived in the same household as the pre-schooler. Others were involved in the transition between an ECE service and the child's home before a parent returned home from work. In several families, grandparents were reported to have made significant changes to their lives so that they could support their children and care for their grandchildren, including:

> a grandmother who had moved cities in order to look after her grandchildren while her daughter was studying full-time to be a midwife

> a grandmother who had decreased her paid work hours so that she could provide childcare

> a grandmother who had become a registered home-based caregiver, which meant that she could care for her grandchildren in her own home and be paid for it.

Some parents in that study were reluctant to have their children cared for by grandparents for long periods of time. They were conscious of not overburdening grandparents, taking into consideration grandparents' ages, abilities, health, work commitments, social activities and their desire to maintain an independent and busy life. A grandparent in our Samoan focus group described how she sometimes needed her daughter to explain to her granddaughter that her grandmother was too tired to play and needed rest. A grandmother in another group spoke of needing to retreat to her room to 'recharge' herself after the pleasures of intense play with grandchildren (and the accompanying noise).

Telephone survey participants described some of the limitations imposed by health and/or physical problems, and decreased energy levels, which impacted on the extent to which they were able to provide care for their grandchildren:

My workload at home and at work and then having to care for a grandchild on top of that. I also have health issues that I am trying to deal with… (50–54-year-old NZ European grandmother with one grandchild)

Their energy and I'm heading in the age where I lack that, I get tired. (Over 75-year-old NZ European grandmother with seven grandchildren)

Needing lots of energy so the children are stimulated. It takes more out of you when you look after them. (50–54-year-old NZ European grandmother with two grandchildren)

[I'm] not always as energetic as the children are. Some limitations on energy, due to health reasons, I have some physical limitations. (Over 75-year-old NZ European grandfather with seven grandchildren)

Because I am getting on and I have poor health I am not really strong enough to look after them [on a sickness benefit]… (55–59-year-old Pacific grandmother with 10 grandchildren, living with at least one of them)

Families Commission (2009a) *Finding Time* explored parents' experiences with long working hours[36] and the impact of this on their family life. A number of families participating in this qualitative research had work arrangements that could not have been sustained without the ongoing support from members of their extended families, particularly grandparents (some of whom lived in multi-generational households with parents and children). Some of the care provided by grandparents was planned around a schedule, such as the grandmother who took her two-year-old granddaughter to crèche four days a week and cared for her at home on the fifth day. Other families had more flexible arrangements; for example, leaving children with grandparents who lived next door on an 'as needed' basis.

One mother described a grandmother's flexibility to respond to unexpected needs for childcare, by taking time off from her own job:

> My mum's been really good too, if I was really sick. Normally, when George is at work, he can't take a day off work, so there have been times when I was sick and couldn't look after the kids, and my mum has taken a day off work, to come and look after the kids so I could go to bed or go to the doctor or do what I need to do, so, yeah the family support … the family support is crucial really. (Family 2B; Families Commission, 2009a, p. 70)

The University of Hertfordshire and Family Matters Institute study (2009) suggests that parents of small children may prefer to entrust their children to a family member (eg, a grandparent) rather than to an external childcare provider. The cost of external childcare

36 50-plus hours worked per week.

is also an issue. Grandparents have told us that being able to assist their grandchildren and their families emotionally and financially through providing childcare can be beneficial to all three generations:

I am happier that I spend my time being with my grandchildren to help their parents increase their income and lessen their work day stress knowing the children are as happy with myself and my husband as they would be if they were at home with their parents. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Vandell, McCartney, Owen, Booth, and Clarke-Stewart (2003) studied variations in childcare by grandparents during the first three years of life and found substantial variation in the intensity and duration of routine childcare. Their study results indicate that the use of different types of grandparent care (eg, full-time, part-time, sporadic) was influenced by variables such as maternal ethnicity, age and employment conditions and whether or not the grandparent co-resides with the family.

Vandell et al (citing Presser, 1999) suggest that the growth of the "24/7 economy" will likely produce continuing pressure on grandparents to provide sporadic and extended part-time care. Families will continue to rely on informal care arrangements (such as those provided by grandparents) during evenings and weekends when formal childcare is typically not available. Vandell et al recommend that future research considers questions such as whether extended use of grandparent care occurs because families prefer it as the 'best' choice, or because they lack other alternatives. Answering such questions will contribute to the development of childcare policies that are sensitive to families' needs and beliefs.

An Australian Bureau of Statistics report (2008)[37] states that for children aged 0–12 years, grandparents were a major source of informal care used by both couple and one-parent families (19 percent and 18 percent of children respectively). Similarly, a statistical report on Waves 1 to 5 of the Australian HILDA survey[38] found that the most common type of informal childcare was provided by a grandparent not living with the family: 33.7 percent of pre-schoolers were being cared for by a grandparent while their parents were at work. While parents were undertaking non-work-related activities, almost 50 percent of households who use informal non-work-related childcare relied on a grandparent.

Using data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC),[39] Fergusson et al (2008) explored the extent of grandparents' involvement in early childcare, the types of families where it is most common, why families choose grandparental care and associations with children's behaviour. They found that grandparent care is very common, with its use varying according to:

demographic factors

> maternal characteristics (eg, levels of grandparent involvement were highest for teen mothers)

> education, where more highly educated mothers were less likely to receive childcare assistance from a grandparent

> motivations for selecting childcare

> the influence of positive intergenerational relationships.

37 http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4402.0
38 The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey is a household-based panel study which began in 2001. http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/hilda/statreport/statreport-v3-2008.pdf
39 The study is based at the University of Bristol, UK.

In our telephone survey population, there was not a strong apparent relationship between the age of the grandparent and the age of their grandchildren, with younger respondents being more likely to have younger grandchildren. This finding was important in relation to caring arrangements, with respondents being more likely to look after grandchildren who were pre-schoolers or at primary or intermediate school. This meant that younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to dedicate time to looking after their grandchildren.

MSD's Work, Family and Parenting Study (2006)[40] found that of a total sample of 1,128 parents with at least one child aged 16 or younger living at home with them, 49 percent reported relying on childcare by a grandparent as an arrangement that helped to organise paid work and family life. The Statistics New Zealand Childcare Survey 2009 has gathered data about the types of formal and informal childcare arrangements families use, including grandparental care. Information has been collected about the hours and days of week of each type of care, costs associated with these arrangements and the difficulties people face balancing work and childcare responsibilities. The Childcare Survey 2009 has been run as a supplement to the Household Labour Force Survey and the results will be available in 2010.

Gray (2005) suggests that (in the United Kingdom) grandparents' provision of childcare may make much more difference to mothers who work only part-time, allowing them to work longer hours and earn more money. She suggests that one reason for this is the logistical challenge of finding formal childcare for short periods during a day or week, for erratic hours or for weekend or evening work. Families Commission (2008e) *Juggling Acts* suggests that this is also true for New Zealand parents:

> The aspects of non-standard work that seemed to present the most challenge to these parents arranging childcare for their pre-schoolers were shifts that started early in the morning, went overnight or were during the weekend. Some forms of non-standard work, particularly on-call and seasonal work, meant parents had significantly reduced ability to plan ahead and set childcare arrangements. (p. 37)
>
> A midwife in the study, who had to be able to attend a birth at hospital within 20 minutes of being contacted noted, 'If you are on call, you need someone like my mum you can call up immediately [for childcare].' (p. 35)

Some parents in the *Juggling Acts* study talked about wanting ECE services that were a better match for their non-standard hours of work eg, by being open longer hours, open over the weekend, more flexibility in terms of attendance so that care could correspond with rotating shift rosters, and part-day rather than full-day options.

Long waiting times for entry to ECE services are a barrier to participation in early childhood education. In New Zealand, the proportion of licensed ECE services with long waiting times (ie, more than six months) has increased over time, especially in the 2006–8 period.[41] From 2002–8, the number of ECE services grew by 27 percent, however enrolments across this same period grew at a slightly higher rate, resulting in waiting times also increasing.[42] If licensed services are unable to keep up with the increasing demand, this is likely to place additional pressures on alternative sources of care, including grandparents. Mitchell (2007) notes that employment policies encourage people aged over 50 years to remain in the paid workforce (eg, to ease labour supply), but on the other hand policies encouraging mothers back into the workforce may rely

40 http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/work-family-and-parenting/work-family-parenting-report.doc
41 Education Counts update, September, 2009 http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/student_participation/early_childhood_education/55153
42 Waiting times vary by service type. For example, they tend to be relatively short for Playcentres and home-based services.

on informal childcare – particularly that provided by grandparents – as the 'glue' that holds childcare arrangements together.

Gray (2005) notes that in the United Kingdom, increased mobility of households between districts means that grandparents may not necessarily live near their grandchildren. She suggests that "the growing exodus of better-off elders from large cities to a rural or seaside retirement threatens their availability to support the middle generation with regular childcare during working hours" (pp. 574–575). In New Zealand, Petrie (2005) notes that geographic mobility is likely to increase, both in terms of internal and external migration. While he suggests that this will constrain [adult] children's ability to provide support to their parents requiring physical proximity, it will also work the other way and restrict grandparents' ability to provide support to their children. Of course, it is not only grandparents who may be mobile; grandchildren and their parents may also move, often for work or lifestyle reasons.

Petrie (2005) also cautions that the 'young elderly' may increasingly face work-life balance concerns in terms of competing demands from paid work and caring for grandchildren. He suggests that employers and the Government will need to pay increasing attention to work-life balance policies to facilitate informal family care and employment. The Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 provides a good foundation for doing so. The Department of Labour website[43] profiles a grandmother who reduced her working hours as an accountant, with the support of her employer, in order to be closely involved in her grandchildren's lives.

Within the focus groups, some grandparents made significant lifestyle changes in order to care for grandchildren. These included moving either within New Zealand or from another country to New Zealand, and living with grandchildren, either with or without the children's parent(s) present. The magnitude and effects of such changes are discussed elsewhere within this report. It was quite common for grandparents to pick up grandchildren after school and look after them when their parents were working. Several focus group grandparents also had a high level of involvement in the care and support of grandchildren during school holidays.

3.3.2.2 Childcare compensation

If children are enrolled in an early childhood care and education service, there is generally some cost to the parents. This will vary according to the type of service and age of the child. Thus, when grandparents are providing childcare, this will often mean savings for parents, if they would otherwise be paying for it. There may, however, be costs to grandparents (for example, in terms of reduced leisure time, a decrease in their own paid work hours meaning reduced income, petrol or other costs).

Should grandparents receive any compensation for childcare? Gray et al (2005), drawing on data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC), found that the majority of grandparents caring for children were not paid for the care they provided. Only 4.9 percent of grandparents received remuneration for caring for an infant, and 8.3 percent for caring for 4–5-year-olds.

The compensation issue was explored with some focus group participants and was looked at in the online Couch poll. (It was not addressed in the telephone survey.) One focus group grandparent talked about her intentions to care for her grandson through the Porse[44] childcare system and would be paid for doing so. Samoan grandparents

43 http://www.dol.govt.nz/worklife/case-studies/yvonne-robb.pdf
44 PORSE provides in-home childcare and educator training. Families are responsible for paying their educator's wage or fee. If eligible, these payments may be partly or fully subsidised by WINZ, ACC or area health authorities. http://www.porse.co.nz/

said that they are not comfortable with the term 'payment', but are happy to receive some form of meaalofa (gift, in-kind allowance) from parents, such as money or food, to recognise their contribution. Some Samoan grandparents saw their grandparenting role as a natural extension/progression from their role as a parent:

We have done this grandparenting role ever since our grandchildren were born, and have never asked for 'payment' or reimbursement – if we see a need, we will fulfil it – if there is a problem we will deal with it. Bringing them up in the home, in the church, whatever needs to be done, we will do it, 'cos we love our kids. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Financial support was important to some Korean focus group grandparents, but others did not want to be paid – for them 'reward' could be in the form of acknowledgement and being valued in the grandparenting role. Others believed that the Government should pay them for the childcare they provide.

The Couch poll findings (although not drawn from a representative sample) suggest that it would be uncommon for grandparents to receive any financial compensation from grandchildren's parents in recognition for the provision of childcare. When asked whether they received any compensation for caring for grandchildren (eg, exchange of skills or time, payment, contributions towards petrol or travel costs, benefits, meals, gifts or other compensation), the majority of Couch poll respondents said that they did not.

Of those who did receive compensation, the following quotes show examples of the varying forms and sources of financial assistance received by a range of Couch poll grandparents who provide childcare:

A childcare subsidy via Linmark educational services.[45]

[Unsupported Child's Benefit] through WINZ.

My husband and I are paid by ACC for 19 hours a day of care for our disabled grandson.

My daughter helps me with household bills.

I used to receive help in costs for running my car to take [grandchildren] to school and activities when I cared for them daily.

45 Linmark Educational Services, now incorporated into 'footsteps', provides home-based ECE services.

Compensation in the form of meals was mentioned by some *The Couch* members:

We always stay for dinner on the day I meet the children from school, plus [receive] other invitations to meals.

Love and time were other forms of 'compensation' described:

Love and quality time spent with my mokos.

A number of *The Couch* members stated that they don't feel it is necessary for their family members to compensate them for looking after and caring for their grandchildren, as it is a family's responsibility to do so:

A 'thank you' and lots of love and affection, I would not want anything more for the privilege of sharing the grandchildren's lives.

I do not believe in taking money for looking after my own whānau.

No need for [compensation], we can afford to look after them.

Families Commission, 2008e (*Juggling Acts*) notes that although some grandparents within the study were paid, or compensated in other ways, for the care they provided for their grandchildren, for many grandparents, caring for their grandchildren was a special role they felt privileged to undertake. Grandparents believed that it was important to care for and develop a relationship with their grandchildren, while supporting their own [adult] child and their partner.

One family had offered a grandparent a car and petrol to enable her to travel across town to help with childcare. Although our poll, focus groups and telephone survey did not gather data about the distances travelled to provide childcare, comments made by grandparents suggest that some travel considerable distances in order to support their families:

I have to travel into town each week to look after my grandchild, approx 50 miles. (60–64-year-old NZ European grandmother with one grandchild, telephone survey)

Usually the Wellington family shouts my airfare if I'm going to have the kids on my own for a period of time – otherwise I'm happy to pay my own way. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

3.3.2.3 Summary

Our findings suggest that most grandparents do not expect to receive financial compensation from families for providing childcare, although both parents and grandparents should consider how – and whether – other forms of compensation may be offered (such as those outlined above). Grandparents' roles in the provision of childcare should be recognised and valued so that they do not feel taken for granted. When negotiating the provision of childcare, grandparents' own needs and interests, as well as their health and general wellbeing, should be taken into account.

3.3.3 Lifestyle changes

Some grandparents make substantial changes to their own lives to move closer to their grandchildren, often in order to provide childcare. These changes may be temporary (eg, providing care while a parent is away on a short-term trip or in hospital), or permanent (eg, assuming custody of a grandchild whose parents are no longer able to care for them).

3.3.3.1 Changes undertaken

Focus group grandparents told us about lifestyle changes they had undertaken, or planned to undertake. The changes most likely to have a significant impact on a grandparent's life were a move, either within New Zealand or from one country to another, and/or assuming responsibility for raising a grandchild. For some grandparents, these were planned and conscious choices, for others the changes happened very quickly, often without time to prepare.

In the following excerpt, a focus group grandmother describes how she and her partner (who is also a grandmother) have made a decision to move within New Zealand so that they can provide care for their infant grandson. This has involved weighing up financial, social and employment factors:

Next year we are going to move to [another town] so that I can become a two-day-a-week caregiver for my grandson. I'm going to be paid by my daughter and son-in-law for doing this, we're going to do it through 'Porse', which I didn't know existed until my daughter found out when she was trying to find caregiving options. I thought, 'Oh, yay! I can get paid to look after my grandson!' When [our daughter] was figuring out what she was going to do for childcare, I suddenly thought, 'I know what I want to do, I want to look after him.' So we've done a lot of negotiating about it, we've been clearing the garden today, we might be putting the house on the market, a move, big stuff. Leaving friends, all sorts of things. But it feels the right thing to do, to give him the care that we want for him … but especially I want to be there for him, so we are going to make a change. Whether I will get [the type of work I do] there remains to be seen… Yeah, it is [a leap of faith] and I trust that I will have something to go on. I'll go knocking on the door of WINZ if I don't, but hey, I've got a grandson I've got to look after! So yes, I'm making a big change. (Grandmother, focus group)

This grandparent also describes how he and his partner have put their own goals on hold in order to provide care for their grandchildren:

[My wife] was made redundant from her job, but has taken on a full-time role in caring for our mokopunas. We have delayed [and] given away many of our personal lifetime goals to give good care to our grandchildren. Existing on one wage/salary is hard, but can be done. We love our mokopuna so much, we would not want it any other way. (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

Lifestyle changes may be permanent and long-term, or involve immediate changes to plans. For example, a grandparent who was unable to attend a focus group because of paid work commitments, asked if a researcher could visit her so that she could tell her story. The grandparent talked with the researcher at length about experiencing sometimes intolerable levels of pressure in relation to a teenage parent's dependence on the grandparent, which included sending text messages at any time of the day or night when unable to cope with parenting pressures. This frequently necessitated the grandparent responding immediately; for example, by driving some distance to take the grandchildren out of unsafe situations, such as the children spending the night sleeping in a car.

As shown in Table 12, within the telephone survey population, 29 percent of respondents agreed with the statement "I have changed my lifestyle so I can spend more time with my grandchildren".

TABLE 12: CHANGING LIFESTYLE FOR GRANDCHILDREN – FULL RESULTS

Q27X. PLEASE TELL ME WHETHER YOU STRONGLY AGREE, SOMEWHAT AGREE, SOMEWHAT DISAGREE OR STRONGLY DISAGREE WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. IF THE STATEMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO YOU, JUST SAY SO.

	STRONGLY AGREE %	SOMEWHAT AGREE %	TOTAL AGREE %	SOMEWHAT DISAGREE %	STRONGLY DISAGREE %	TOTAL DISAGREE %	DOES NOT APPLY/ REFUSED %
I have changed my lifestyle so I can spend more time with my grandchildren	15	14	**29**	19	32	**51**	20

Base: All respondents (N=1,000)

Groups who were particularly likely to agree that they had changed their lifestyle included:

> 51 percent of Pacific respondents

> 44 percent of Māori respondents

> 54 percent of those who were living with their grandchildren, including 13 of the 17 who were raising their grandchildren

> 53 percent of those who saw their grandchildren every day.

Forty-two percent of respondents under the age of 60 years agreed that they had changed their lifestyle so that they could spend more time with their grandchildren, compared with only 11 percent of respondents over the age of 75.

3.3.3.2 Effects of lifestyle changes

Lifestyle changes have associated implications for grandparents' social and financial wellbeing, and can also have implications for their careers and health. Within the focus groups, those who were most likely to be significantly affected by lifestyle changes were grandparents raising grandchildren. Their experiences were documented elsewhere in this report, where the social, financial and other effects of assuming care for grandchildren are described.

Lifestyle changes may also be behavioural, with positive outcomes for the next generation:

Having come from a home where violence was the norm, I have changed that and have a violence free way of grandparenting. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Telephone survey respondents who reported that they had changed their lifestyle were asked what aspects of their lifestyle they had changed. Thirty-seven percent of those who had changed their lifestyle reported that they had less time for other things, including 30 percent who reported that they had changed their social, sport and/or leisure arrangements:

We used to go [on] holiday for three or four months at a time and now we probably go for only two or three weeks at a time. (55–59-year-old Māori grandfather with four grandchildren)

I do not do sporting activities or go out as usual. (45–49-year-old Māori grandmother with one grandchild)

I quit my computer course. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with 10 grandchildren)

I gave up smoking and I do not go fishing or hunting if I am required to babysit. (50–54-year-old Māori grandfather with nine grandchildren)

As shown in Table 13, respondents also reported reducing their work hours or changing other aspects of their work arrangements so as to spend more time with their grandchildren. The following comments reflect examples of such changes:

We bought a business with staff to do our jobs so that we can spend more time with the grandchildren. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandfather with three grandchildren)

I had a business, but now I work from home so I can spend more time with my grandchildren. (65–69-year-old NZ European grandmother with four grandchildren)

I changed work hours to work more in the night. (60–64-year-old Māori grandfather with two grandchildren)

I have to work harder to go and see them overseas. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandmother with four grandchildren)

Some respondents moved to be closer to their grandchildren:

Moved countries, from England to New Zealand. (60–64-year-old NZ European grandfather with four grandchildren)

Other respondents reported that they changed their lifestyle by making special efforts to visit their grandchildren:

We bought a motor home so that we can travel around and see the grandchildren. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandmother with five grandchildren)

We schedule more trips to Wellington to be with our grandchild. (60–64-year-old NZ European grandfather with one grandchild)

TABLE 13: CHANGES IN LIFESTYLE TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH GRANDCHILDREN (SUMMARY TABLE)

Q30. YOU MENTIONED BEFORE THAT YOU HAD CHANGED YOUR LIFESTYLE TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOUR GRANDCHILDREN. IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU CHANGE YOUR LIFESTYLE?

	ALL (N=295) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=242) %	MĀORI (N=72) %	PACIFIC (N=51) %
Less time for other things	37	36	43	39 (N=20)
Reduced paid work hours	29	29	32	22 (N=11)
Changed work arrangements other than reducing hours	12	12	22	10 (N=5)
Moved	9	10	–	8 (N=4)
Make effort to visit grandchildren	9	9	8	2 (N=1)
Started living with grandchildren	7	6	10	12 (N=6)
Financial	2	2	1	2 (N=1)
Nothing specific	8	7	6	8 (N=4)

Base: Those who had changed their lifestyle to spend more time with their grandchildren; multiple response

Those telephone survey respondents who had changed their lifestyle were asked what impact this lifestyle change had had on their lives. The overall effects of the lifestyle changes are summarised in Table 14. It can be seen that there were some differences according to ethnicity – for example, Māori grandparents were more likely than other grandparents to say that they had "less time/less freedom" after undertaking lifestyle changes, with around one-third reporting these effects. As described elsewhere in this report, as well as being grandparents, Māori grandparents can have other roles/status (eg, as kaumātua or undertaking various cultural responsibilities) that require large commitments of their time. Therefore, it is understandable that making lifestyle changes in order to spend time looking after grandchildren may decrease the already limited time they have available for other commitments.

TABLE 14: EFFECTS OF THE LIFESTYLE CHANGE (SUMMARY TABLE)

Q31X. WHAT EFFECTS DO YOU THINK THIS LIFESTYLE CHANGE HAS HAD ON YOUR LIFE?

	ALL (N=295) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=242) %	MĀORI (N=72) %	PACIFIC (N=51) %
Feel happier/less stressed	39	41	28	47
More quality time with grandchildren	17	17	24	24
Less time for other things/less freedom	15	16	35	8
Financial costs	11	12	4	4
Tiredness and more stress	11	11	17	2
Parents are better off	7	7	4	16
Give and take – just had to make changes work	6	7	3	4
Physical and mental fitness	6	5	7	4
More time for other things/more freedom	3	2	3	4
Financial benefits	1	–	1	–
None	21	21	13	24

Base: Those who had changed their lifestyle to spend more time with their grandchildren; multiple response

Table 15 describes the impacts of different changes in lifestyle for the four most common lifestyle changes outlined earlier.

This analysis sheds some light on how those respondents who have given up time for other activities felt about those activities. The fact that around a third of those who reported that they had less time for other activities stated that they felt happier and less stressed as a result suggests perhaps that the activities they gave up were not things they enjoyed especially anyway, or perhaps that spending time with their grandchildren was more satisfying than the other things they used to do.

TABLE 15: EFFECTS OF THE LIFESTYLE CHANGE BY HOW THEY HAD CHANGED THEIR LIFESTYLE

Q31X. WHAT EFFECTS DO YOU THINK THIS LIFESTYLE CHANGE HAS HAD ON YOUR LIFE?

		LESS TIME FOR OTHER ACTIVITIES (N=109) %	REDUCED PAID WORK HOURS (N=86) %	CHANGED WORK ARRANGEMENTS (N=35)	MOVED (N=27)
Impact of lifestyle change	Feel happier/less stressed	36	47	N=15	N=9
	More quality time with grandchildren	9	19	N=10	N=9
	Less time for other things/less freedom	28	9	N=5	N=2
	Financial costs	6	22	N=2	N=5
	Tiredness and more stress	3	–	–	–
	Parents are better off	8	8	N=2	N=1
	Give and take – just had to make changes work	6	2	N=2	N=2
	Physical and mental fitness	7	6	N=1	N=1
	More time for other things/more freedom	2	1	N=1	N=2
	Financial benefits	2	–	–	–
	None	22	14	N=4	N=4

Base: Those who had changed their lifestyle to spend more time with their grandchildren; multiple response

3.3.3.3. Summary

Our research findings suggest that lifestyle changes can have significant implications for grandparents (both positive and negative) and should be given full consideration before they are undertaken (if time allows). Grandparents may benefit from additional information to assist them to consider the potential effects and implications of lifestyle changes (eg, relocation, migration, living with grandchildren) and the likely impacts on their social lives, financial wellbeing, employment prospects, relationships and other areas of their lives – both positive and negative.

3.3.4 Balancing work and caring responsibilities

Although there might be assumptions that younger grandparents are more likely than older grandparents to be in paid work, the pattern of older people retiring from the workforce at the time they qualified for New Zealand Superannuation is changing. Many people who turned 65 (previously the mandatory retirement age) choose to extend their working lives. A Statistics New Zealand (2007) report states that a growing number of New Zealanders, both male and female, are staying in the labour force beyond the age of entitlement for superannuation. Since 1991, the number of people aged 65 years and over in full-time or part-time employment had more than doubled. Many of these people are likely to be grandparents. Between the 1996 and 2006 Censuses, the labour force participation rate for males aged 65 and over increased by two-thirds to 23.9 percent, and females more than doubled to 11.6 percent. The report suggests that a number of policy changes as well as socio-economic developments are likely to have contributed to these trends (eg, the gradual raising of entitlement age for New Zealand Superannuation, and abolishment of the compulsory retirement age). The report notes that available evidence suggests that older people are more than twice as likely to be

working part-time (less than 30 hours per week), than those aged between and 15 and 64 years.

In the Families Commission research project consultations, grandparents described the various decisions made to allow them to balance paid work with grandparenting responsibilities. These choices include:

> working in a school so that school holidays were available to visit with grandchildren

> contract work to fit in with grandchildren's schedule

> swapping roles once a week, where the grandparent provides care and the child's mother does the grandparent's paid work

> buying a business and employing staff so that grandparents could spend more time with their grandchildren

> changing shift work hours to work more at night time.

Other employment changes undertaken included reducing paid work hours, and taking leave without pay. For grandparents not under financial pressure, reducing work hours can be a positive lifestyle change:

[It has] made my life easier working less hours giving me more time and energy to spend with [my grandchildren]. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

A focus group grandmother who had travelled overseas to look after grandchildren took leave without pay to do so. The travel had implications not only for her finances, but also for her relationship. The leave required separation from a partner (who did not like to travel) for significant periods.

Some grandparents expressed concerns about the pressures on women to return to the paid workforce following the birth of a child. They encouraged the development of policy changes leading to longer parental leave.[46]

3.3.4.1 Employer support

Workplace cultures that encourage flexible work arrangements generate a climate of support for grandparents with multiple caring roles (eg, caring for dependent grandchildren, as well as older family members). As noted earlier, New Zealand's Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 gives employees with caring responsibilities the right to request flexible work arrangements. Appendix 6 provides further information.

In the telephone survey, respondents who were in full-time or part-time employment were asked what, if anything, their employer could do to help support them as a grandparent. Excluding those who stated that this question did not apply to them because they were self-employed, 68 percent of those who were in full-time employment reported that there was nothing that their employer could do. As the verbatim comments below show, a number of these respondents believed that their employer already did as much as they could reasonably be expected to:

I've been lucky enough to have employers [who] allowed me to be there when my grandchildren were born. I don't think they can do much more for me. (50–54-year-old NZ European grandmother with four grandchildren)

46 The Families Commission has previously recommended to government that current parental leave provisions be extended.

I work in a Māori environment so they are aware of strong family ties. I'm given time off if I need it. (55–59-year-old Māori grandmother with six grandchildren)

They don't need to do anything more – I am on flexi time. (70–74-year-old NZ European grandmother with one grandchild)

I'm very lucky with my employer. He allows me to go south whenever I need to be there. He is very supportive. I do not need anything more from him. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with five grandchildren)

Most of the suggestions for what employers could do related to flexible work arrangements, mentioned by 13 percent of respondents. Many of the comments about flexible work arrangements related to when annual leave could be taken:

For them to stop growling when I ask for leave or want to take my annual leave. (55–59-year-old grandmother with seven grandchildren)

He could be a bit more understanding. Maybe give me the same parental leave that they give to parents of young families. (55–59-year-old Māori grandmother with four grandchildren, living with but not raising at least one of them)

Give me time off on holidays. I work with a younger woman who has children – they tend to give her more time off during school holidays to be with her children. I would also like time off to be with my grandchildren. (50–54-year-old NZ European grandmother with three grandchildren)

Other comments related to allowing employees to take occasional leave, such as when their grandchildren were sick or there were special occasions to attend (such as a school prize-giving) and/or having flexible starting and finishing times:

Let me have time off when there is a need. When they get sick at school or [I] have to travel overseas, ie, grandchildren get ill or sick. (50–54-year-old Pacific grandfather with 11–15 grandchildren)

By supporting me in attending to [my] grandchildren's needs. Support me by giving me time off work or working flexible hours. Just to be able to come to arrangements with my employer if planned ahead. (55–59-year-old Pacific grandmother with 11–15 grandchildren)

More understanding is needed like more time off work to be with the grandchildren on their school things, like prize giving. (50–54-year-old NZ European grandmother with three grandchildren)

I am in an industry that functions seven days a week – retailing. My employer could be a little more considerate and allow time for family each week. (60–64-year-old NZ European grandfather with two grandchildren)

A little bit more flexibility in small things like taking the five-year-old to visit her school before she started, taking one hour off to do things like that. (40–44-year-old NZ European grandmother with two grandchildren)

Working from home was mentioned only occasionally:

I could have my work changed so I can work from home and that would give me more time to spend with grandchildren. (65–69-year-old NZ European grandfather with three grandchildren)

Pacific respondents were particularly enthusiastic about the potential to have flexible work arrangements, with 34 percent of Pacific respondents, who were in full-time employment (excluding the self-employed), mentioning this. This is compared with 13 percent of all respondents in the main survey in full-time employment and 16 percent of Māori respondents in full-time employment.

TABLE 16: EXTRA SUPPORT FROM EMPLOYER

Q37. WHAT, IF ANYTHING, COULD YOUR EMPLOYER DO TO HELP SUPPORT YOU BETTER AS A GRANDPARENT?

	ALL (N=383) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=318) %	MĀORI (N=102) %	PACIFIC (N=58) %
Greater flexibility	13	13	16	34
Already happy with employer	7	8	7	5
Financial	6	5	6	5
Nothing	68	65	64	50
Does not apply (general)	10	12	3	2
Unsure	3	2	3	3

Base: Those who were in paid work; multiple response; excludes those who stated that it did not apply because they were self-employed

The preceding comments indicate that some New Zealand employers are already responsive to grandparents' needs for time off to support their grandchildren. This responsiveness was described in other research too. For example, Families Commission (2008e) *Juggling Acts* report, two grandmothers who worked as rest home carers described their willingness and availability to support their families at short notice, such as when a child was sick. Their workplace supported this by allowing them to take sick leave to care for their grandchildren.

For some grandparents, however, it will continue to be a balancing act, particularly if they are trying to align their own needs for restorative time off, as well as trying to meet the needs of their grandchildren:

I would like to see more flexible family time so I can spend time with the grandchildren during their holidays. However I do not want to use my holiday time as I need time to plan and claim my space and restore my energy levels and not be in a position of always having to compromise. I do [not] want to feel resentful [about] taking time off to spend with the kids. I love them but as I get older I need to have my space for renewal as well. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

3.3.4.2 Work-life balance for grandparents raising grandchildren

Wang and Marcotte (2007) have examined the labour effects of grandparents caring for grandchildren (in a USA context). They note that the "households with the least power and fewest resources are most often put in this position. And within these households, women appear to make the most substantial accommodation and sacrifice" (p. 1295). They found that grandparents with grandchildren in their homes were more likely to be in paid work and to work longer hours than grandparents not in this situation. Worrall (2007) describes the challenges faced by custodial grandparents in New Zealand in achieving work-life-family balance. She notes that grandparents "irrespective of class or calling" may need to step in to raise grandchildren (or other kin children). In her study,

employed grandparents came from a wide range of occupations, including blue-collar workers as well as executives. Achieving work-life balance was a particular challenge for those in low-paid jobs, who might have to work in more than one job to generate sufficient income. Additional factors that employed custodial grandparents might have to take into account are:

> the cost of childcare

> potential difficulties gaining employment at a later stage of life (if they need to seek work)

> whether one or other partner should relinquish or reduce the time spent in paid work so that they can care for the grandchild/ren.

Worrall notes that grandparent caregivers are less likely than younger caregivers to be able to successfully negotiate work-family-life balance:

> The need for sufficient finances to provide care keeps them in the workforce and restrictions of age, health, and the nature of the children they care for often constrains them from being able to socialise with their peers. (2007, pp. 172–173)

3.3.5 Employment options

Grandparents' employment decisions (including where, when and how long to work) can involve weighing up personal, financial or other benefits against benefits to their grandchildren. These decisions can require considerable soul-searching:

We decided to stay in Auckland because our grandchildren needed us [although] an attractive job opportunity arose in a South Island city. Sometimes I get tired but it's worth it because I am investing in the next generation which is a higher value to my husband and me than money. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Because my husband and myself have quite stressful jobs it can get quite hard to balance those and to do what I can to help my daughter with my grandson; for example, starting work later so I can take him to school on the days my daughter cannot and sometimes having to make sure I am back in time to pick him up from school when she cannot. When he is sick it affects everybody. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent, adult daughter and grandson living with grandparents)

I have recently gone back working 40 hours a week and my grandchildren have had to adjust to the fact they can't come and stay as often as they want. I also can no longer join in school activities etc. I have to admit to feeling a little guilty at times. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

A focus group grandparent considering applying for custody of his young grandchildren talked about the possibility of looking for other work that began later than his usual start time, so that he could provide help for his partner in the early morning hours:

I did actually look for another job where I could start work later… It's too much for her to do [the early morning care] by herself, so I thought maybe it's time I looked at another job where I could start work at 8[am] or 9[am] which will allow me that time to actually help her. (Focus group grandfather, living with and helping to raise grandchildren)

Another focus group grandparent who co-parented her grandson, and was in full-time paid work, told us that parents at her workplace are entitled to subsidised holiday programmes, but when she tried to enrol her grandson and get the subsidy, she was told that she was not entitled to as she was not the child's parent or legal guardian:

I said that I considered myself to be in a full-time parenting role and that it was not my intention to become his legal guardian as he had a mother who was his other parent… It took several years and submissions to my manager for it to be agreed by Human Resources that I would be eligible for the subsidy. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, focus group)

She believed that her workplace needed to broaden their view of what constitutes 'a family' and 'a parent'.

3.3.5.1 Grandparent leave

For the [grandparents] that do work, I reckon there should be like … nanny leave, grandparents' leave or something, because we've got to help out with that baby too. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

Grandparents, particularly grandmothers, often want to spend time with the family to support the parents following the birth of a baby. For grandparents who are in paid work, this will usually mean taking leave on a short-term basis. For grandparents who are more heavily committed to long-term care of grandchildren (eg, those who take over full-time responsibility of raising them), leave (whether paid or unpaid) can be rapidly depleted. Several countries have recognised the ongoing commitment that grandparents can have to provide care for grandchildren by developing policies to support this commitment.

In the United Kingdom, from April 2011, grandparents and other adult family members who care for their grandchildren or other members of their family aged 12 or younger, for 20 hours or more per week, will be able to gain National Insurance credits toward the basic State Pension from April 2011.[47] The system of credits is used in assessing the level of the state pension.

In the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) under the ACT Public Service Legislative Employment Framework,[48] since July 2008 there was provision for up to 52 weeks grandparental leave without pay, to be granted over a three-year period to permanent full- or part-time employees, and to long-term temporary employees. As noted on the ACT website, the provision of grandparental leave:

> adds to the ACT Government's reputation as an employer of choice

> assists the ACTPS in retaining mature age employees

> helps to balance employees' working, home and family life.

Eligible public services employees are required to produce evidence to establish that they have a primary caregiving role. The leave, which is available up until the child's third birthday, can be taken in a number of different ways. These include, for example, in a block or as a regular period of leave each week or month. The Government of Western Australia also introduced provision for up to 12 months unpaid grandparental leave for its employees.[49]

In Germany, legislation has been in place since January 2009[50] allowing German grandparents unpaid leave from work to take care of their grandchildren. According to the new Section 15, subsection 1a of the Federal Parental Leave Law (§ 15 Abs. 1a Bundeselterngeld- and Elternzeitgesetz, BEEG), grandparents have a claim for this (unpaid) leave against their employer, if:

47 http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/Budget2009/bud09_completereport_2520.pdf
48 http://www.cmd.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/2862/IN_grandparental_leave.pdf
49 http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/LabourRelations/Content/Public%20Sector/Public_Sector_General_Agreemen.html
50 Source: Personal email correspondence with the German Embassy.

- they live with their grandchild in one household
- they themselves take care of this child
- one of the parents is under age, or is in the last or the second last year of their education, which they begun before the age of 18, and which demands their full-time resources
- neither of the parents claims parental leave for the times claimed by the grandparents.

Grandparents are entitled to parental leave until the grandchild reaches the age of three, as long as the legal conditions for the leave are fulfilled. Up to 12 months of parental leave may be transferred, with the consent of the employer, until the child reaches the age of eight.

Any such leave in New Zealand is currently at the discretion of individual employers. A positive example of this was offered by a grandmother who was unable to attend a focus group, but instead wrote to share her experiences. An extract from her letter is reproduced below:

Approximately three years ago our four grandchildren were abandoned at our home. One month later [after] fruitless discussions with the mother and father of the children, we applied for legal custody. After several court cases and many affidavits were sworn, the children were placed in our care.

Prior to this time both my husband and myself were working fulltime. The first six months the children were in our care was particularly hard going. There were many visits to doctors – placing the eldest child in school and finding suitable daycare for the three younger children and fighting with WINZ for some level of payment to help with the daycare charges.

Fortunately I was able to put my job on hold from May until November when I returned to work on a casual basis. (Letter from grandmother raising grandchildren)

It would be to grandparents' benefit if employers were encouraged to ensure that grandparents are aware of their rights (if eligible) to flexible work practices.

3.3.6 Summary

For those grandparents who are still active in the labour market, efforts to promote family-friendly work arrangements will make it easier to balance their own paid work with time they want to spend with their grandchildren. Those efforts will also help provide additional support to their adult children who are juggling care and work responsibilities. Our research findings suggest that the primary support needs for grandparents in paid work are for:

- awareness of their right to request flexible working arrangements
- workplace cultures that encourage flexible work arrangements
- opportunities to take extended leave (eg, to meet caring responsibilities).

4. MĀORI GRANDPARENTS

Whānau is everything to me. I have a cultural and moral responsibility to be involved in my mokos' lives. (Grandmother, Māori, Couch poll respondent)

An earlier section of this report provided an overview of the cultural dimensions of grandparenting, particularly grandparents' roles in maintaining cultural heritage, assisting with the acquisition of languages other than English and educating grandchildren about cultural values, protocols and genealogy. Within this section, the traditional and contemporary roles of Māori grandparents are described, drawing on information shared during the focus groups, as well as research literature, supplemented by Couch poll comments. Data from Māori grandparents who participated in the telephone survey are presented in the tables throughout this report and are not included in this section.

In subsequent chapters, the roles of Pacific (Samoan and Cook Islands) grandparents and Korean grandparents are described and discussed.[51]

The three focus groups held with Māori grandparents were co-facilitated by Māori members of the research team. One focus group was held in a rural area, one in an urban area and one in a large city. Two group meetings took place on a marae, and one in a community centre.

4.1 FAMILY AND WHĀNAU ROLES

Durie (1997) describes the capacity to care (manaakitanga) as a critical role for whānau. Among Māori, the imagery of harakeke (the flax bush) is commonly used to portray whānau relationships and the role that grandparents play in the lives of grandchildren. The inner shoot (te rito) is nurtured by outer leaves – parents are one layer of protection, with grandparents being the second layer of protection for the fragile new growth.

Durie describes caring for children as emotional and spiritual responsibilities, involving "the transmission of culture, the fostering of lifestyle and the development of an identity" (p. 9). In the following table, he summarises the five key functions of families and whānau relating to healthy development:[52]

51 Focus groups were run with Māori grandparents because the Families Commission has an ongoing commitment to include the voices of Māori within our work programme. Building on the Commission's existing links with Pacific communities, the research team also decided to include several Pacific focus groups, as there are many Pacific families living in New Zealand.

52 This is based on a similar model developed by Durie (1994), in an address to the Public Health Association, Palmerston North.

NGĀ TAKE O TE WHĀNAU: FAMILY AND WHĀNAU CAPACITIES FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT			
FUNCTION	**TASKS**	**QUALITIES**	**APPLICATIONS**
Manaakitia The capacity to care	Responsiveness to individuals	Love	Care of elderly
	Responsibility for less abled	Compassion	Care of children
		Protection	Care of sick
Tohatohatia The capacity to share	Meet others' needs	Generosity	Support when financially distressed
	Fair distribution of goods	Selflessness	Distribution of goods (fish, crops)
	Interdependence	Fairness	
Pupuri taonga The capacity for guardianship	Protection and wise management of cultural, intellectual and physical properties	Trusteeship	Language and cultural development
		Management	Whānau economic base
		Communication	Utilisation of whānau land
Whakamana The capacity to empower	Access to resources	Effective leadership	Marae role for whānau
	Development of resources	Advocacy	Participation in hapū and iwi
	Assisted entry into wider society	Liaison	Health, education, housing
Whakatakoto tikanga The capacity to plan ahead	Readiness for change	Vision	Retirement planning
	Needs of future generations	Responsibility	Education for mokopuna
		Organisation	Economic investment

Source: Durie, 1997, p. 10

4.2 TRADITIONAL MĀORI GRANDPARENTING

The word *mokopuna* (grandchild) can be translated as someone who is a reflection of their ancestors. Traditionally Māori children were raised within the kainga (village) among a wide network of uncles, aunties, cousins and grandparents. Grandparents had a special bond with mokopuna, and grandfathers had a strong role in the lives of children alongside grandmothers. The grandparents' role was one of guidance, mentoring and passing on traditional knowledge (including whakapapa knowledge) and of having a highly respected place among whānau. Respect for the knowledge held by grandparents was a given, and grandparents had authority that was respected. In old age, parents and mokopuna would value the wisdom of grandparents and assume care of ageing grandparents.

Mokopuna-grandparent relationships were those of unconditional love and indulgence. Grandparents were teachers, guides and preservers of traditions, customs and relationships. It was common for grandparents to be the primary caregivers of grandchildren, particularly the firstborn. These particular children were held in high regard and could be identified by the fact that they were given access to knowledge well

ahead of their chronological years (Ka'ai, 2005). Mokopuna also had a role to play in caring for older members of the whānau and in particular the elderly, younger siblings and debilitated members of whānau (Walker, 1979).

4.3 CONTEMPORARY MĀORI GRANDPARENTING

For Māori who become grandparents, they can become deeply changed by the experience, as this Ngati Porou grandfather describes:

> Becoming of the tipuna (grandparent) generation, Te Ao Māori conferred on me, an inescapable obligation … to be the first and prime transmitter of cultural templates of identity, values, knowledge and interpretations to my mokopuna (grandchildren) ... I am kai-pupuri (holder) of elements crucial to their well-being just as my tipuna were in their time. This gives a deep, personal purpose and source of revitalising energy to maintain the rigour needed for this lifelong commitment. (Pohatu, 2003, p. 5)

As illustrated in the preceding quote, in contemporary Māori society, grandparents continue to have an important role in not only nurturing, caring for and protecting their grandchildren, but also in passing on knowledge of whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori identity.

The strength of the traditional grandparent-mokopuna relationship, while still being seen among Māori communities, has been affected by a number of factors. In particular, the effects of urbanisation and the impacts of colonisation on traditional whangai practices put pressure on kinship relationships.

The term 'whangai' means to feed or to nurture, and is commonly used for the customary Māori practice of children being raised by kin members, other than their parents (McRae & Nikora, 2006). These kin members provided instruction, cultural knowledge, affection and food, so that the child "is being nurtured in the fullest sense" (Bradley, 1997, in McRae & Nikora, 2006).

The practice of grandparents raising their grandchildren for traditional reasons was greatly affected during colonisation. For example, the Native Land Act 1909 prohibited the practice of whangai in its customary form. Māori were forced to legally adopt through the Native Land Court or whangai would not be able to legally succeed to land. The introduction of closed adoptions left Māori children at risk of losing their identity and today a number have lost touch with hapū and iwi.

4.4 URBANISATION

From the 1930s onwards, large numbers of Māori moved to cities for work and education. This shift away from the traditional extended whānau support, and away from traditional papakainga (home base), had a big impact on lifestyles amongst Māori. Because they were no longer able to gather around hapū and papakainga, it became increasingly difficult to maintain connections to whānau and hapū (Walker, 1979). While some whānau began to organise themselves around urban whānau or their iwi structures, there were many whānau who did not.

The breakdown in intergenerational living was considerable by the 1960s. Walker (1979) describes a 1969 survey of 100 Māori households and the impact of single-family housing on the traditional extended family construct:

> '[The survey findings] revealed that 90 were single-family units. Small houses and confined space made it difficult to continue the extended family, except in a modified form such as the mini-marae described earlier. So the norm was a single-family unit to a single dwelling, with each family responsible for its own economic wellbeing.' (p. 37)

By the 1990s, single-family households became proportionately more common amongst Māori than in the total population (Durie, 1994). This erosion of whānau support and intergenerational nurturing saw a growing concern for whānau wellbeing, which is being addressed by a number of different agencies (for example, Te Puni Kōkiri, and the Ministry of Health). In the following comment, a focus group grandparent talks about the continuing pressure of urbanisation today:

…the pressure of actually living in an urban environment removed from your own hāukainga and away from your marae or your kaumātua and kuia and whānau. So you have to either have good connections to the hāukainga or you establish networks or almost like another surrogate whānau in the urban setting … and I kind of relate to [name] in terms of your mokopuna not living in [the same area] and I think some of that is about some of the economic pressures of going home. We don't think about it in terms of pressures, because we're wanting our mokopuna to have that same connection with their turangawaewae and the marae – the whakapapa, te reo, the tikanga that relates you back to your whānau, hapū, iwi… I think probably that the urban kind of disassociation from hāukainga is, well for me, is actually a big pressure. The other thing is when there is tangihanga or these things back home how do we organise the whānau group to go back to the haukainga? Because when we are at home we automatically go to the marae and it takes a little bit more organising in terms of logistics. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

4.5 MULTIPLE ROLES OF MĀORI GRANDPARENTS

Māori women are having children at a younger age than women who are not Māori.[53] This can mean that Māori (as well as other) grandparents have both dependent children and grandchildren at the same time, which may result in multiple demands upon their time. A Māori grandmother in one focus group told us that she had two pre-schoolers of her own, as well as a grandson, the child of her teenage daughter.

The effects of becoming a grandfather prematurely were described.

Before you know it you're a grandparent… I know that my father experienced that really early, and he went into shock. He didn't expect to be a grandfather that young in his life. He still wanted to be [name] and live his life as the parent, but all of a sudden he was thrown into this role and it was a huge learning curve for them and challenges on the way. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

As well as being grandparents, there can be other roles/status that Māori grandparents have that require large commitments of their time. Grandparents and great-grandparents have played an important role in the vast number of Māori initiatives that have evolved in areas such as Māori language revival, marae restoration, whānau strengthening and hapū initiatives,[54] as well working alongside organisations dealing with health, justice and education. Grandparents and great grandparents are seen as an extremely valuable source of knowledge of Māori language, history and tikanga.

> Durie (1999) writes that in contemporary Māori communities "…there are particular roles that are enhanced if they are filled by kaumātua.[55] Those roles include 'speaking on behalf of the tribe, or family; resolving disputes and conflicts between families and between tribes; *carrying the culture; protecting and nurturing younger adults and children; and recognising and encouraging the potential of younger members* [emphasis added]." (p. 102)
>
> Durie also notes that for Māori kaumātua, adjustments to the role can include "reduced privacy, less time with family (and for the immediate family a need to share their grandparent with the wider community), longer 'working hours' and relative loss of independence. …for some kaumātua the new roles may be seen as burdensome…" [although simultaneously satisfying]. (p. 103)

One focus group grandparent talked about the pressures of time "running out" and his perceived failure to meet the expectations of him as a grandparent:

I'm fearing now that I'm running out of time, and time is not age, time is that life has just passed me by and when am I going to have time to teach my moko because by the time I turn around they are too old or they are gone. Have I missed the boat here somewhere? So as a grandparent I think I have somehow failed to be doing what I should be doing in my culture. I'd love to teach my mokopuna mihimihi,[56] but I see them coming through now… I'm saying, 'I should have done this, I should have done that, but where the hell was I?' Playing rugby, drinking, doing everything else… (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

53 http://www.huitaumata.com/publications/Documents/M%C4%81ori%20Population%20-%20Looking%20out%20to%202021.pdf
54 From the 1980s onwards, the impacts of language loss and whānau support began to be more consciously addressed. For example, the Kohanga Reo movement, which began in 1981 by the Department of Māori Affairs, in response to Māori concern to ensure the continuing survival of the Māori language.
55 Kaumātua is used here as a term that applies to both male and female elders.
56 Mihimihi are introductory speeches which take place at the beginning of a gathering after the more formal speeches of welcome. Mihimihi are generally in te reo Māori. http://www.korero.Māori.nz/forlearners/protocols/mihimihi.html

Another urged consideration of the need for grandparents to re-examine their roles within the whānau:

I say that because being directly involved in my own tribal structure, our strategies don't take into account this kind of kōrero. … [Speaker reflects on a high profile case involving family violence.] What could my whānau do to prevent that from happening? Because it could be my own whānau, my own immediate whānau that could have this happen and it really starts with the kōrero. It really starts putting it out there, not being fearful that this is an okay subject, it's safe to talk about the role of grandparents. Dare I say it … sometimes we take those roles for granted. And so we need to put it out there … because we are very comfortable about talking about the role of pakeke, the role of kuia, the role of kaumātua, in terms of our formal roles on a marae – but they play a much more critical role and that is their role in the whānau structure and how do we as whānau [not] support that? (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

The strength and positive outcomes resulting from strong whānau networks are evident in the following comment:

On my father's side we have a very close whānau and we try to get together often to celebrate whānau events. My closest friends are some of the members of my whānau, including some of my father's sisters. My husband's whānau are also very close, and we also spend a lot of time with them. My mother-in-law still regularly cares for her grandchildren; my sisters-in-law have very young children and she still baby-sits. Much of our emotional and cultural and spiritual support comes from people from our parents' generation. Through their example we have learned independence and self-reliance: that whānau looks after whānau, and how to give to and receive service from others. (Female, Māori, Couch poll respondent)

4.6 CHALLENGES FOR MĀORI GRANDPARENTS

Although amongst Māori responsibility for children is traditionally widely shared, this can conflict with legal and policy approaches to grandchildren. For example, Māori grandparents who take over the care of their mokopuna might not want to go to court to seek custody of their mokopuna but, if they do not, the children can be uplifted.

Māori focus groups also affirmed what is emerging in other current New Zealand research (such as Smith, 2008). The relationship between Māori grandparents and CYFS needs to be strengthened. Māori grandparents might avoid contact with CYFS staff, believing that there is poor understanding of their needs and inadequate knowledge of whānau responsibilities. A non-grandparent participant in one of our focus groups offered the following suggestions:

Perhaps if we had more Māori people with the skills that could advocate on behalf of whānau in those communities and situations and understood that process and could explain it better to the whānau, you know, I think we would probably achieve better outcomes as far as relationships between our whānau, and government agencies… (Non-grandparent participant, Māori focus group)

As a focus group participant explained, differing cultural values and perspectives can clash, sometimes resulting in time delays during which a child may remain in an unsafe environment:

[There] is probably not a great enough recognition as far as the government policy itself and the legislation as far as our taha Māori and our own cultural values and perspectives, and … they often … clash at times. I feel that something needs to be done as far as giving greater recognition of the roles that our grandparents played. And the roles that they should play in the raising of their mokopuna, you know, because for us as Māori, that is our tikanga – our grandparents had that same mana as parents, you know.

A lot of these mokos have these terrible things happening to them … in traditional times often if a grandparent saw the situation he'd just instantly remove the child from that situation, whereas now you've got all this legislation – 'You might go to jail and I'll go to CYFS…' And then the process could take a month or two to go through… (Focus group participant, Māori)

Māori grandparents customarily indulge their mokopuna, which can lead to financial hardship. Focus group grandparents described how grandchildren's attitudes towards the amount of, and their entitlement to, pocket money puts pressures on grandparents who hate to say no, but sometimes cannot afford to meet grandchildren's expectations or demands. As mentioned earlier, one grandmother described an assumption she has 'plenty of money'. Others felt pressured by grandchildren to provide pocket money or fund cell-phone top-ups. There was some concern expressed about grandchildren's reluctance to undertake chores or part-time work, even if there were opportunities to be paid for doing so.

Māori grandparents were sometimes critical of the way their grandchildren were parented. When there were significant concerns, some had stepped in and taken over care of their grandchildren.

Differences arose between grandparenting and great-grandparenting. Māori grandparents talked about the fact that when you have "dozens of mokopuna and great-mokopuna" you do not have the time or resources to look after them the same way. They also noted that as great-grandparents they were more physically tired and no longer had energy for looking after mokopuna. They noted a mismatch between the expectations of grandparents and their great-grandchildren. Generally children and grandchildren accept and respect the authority of the grandparent, but we heard from some great-grandparents that the great-grandchildren can be disrespectful, lacking an understanding of their role and responsibilities in keeping the family going. For instance, one grandparent commented:

My grandchildren are grown now, but it is the greats that I am having to deal with nowadays, one of whom is 12 and the other 13 ... and the 13-year-old is very lippy and I can't stand that. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Some grandparents struggled with the changes in the generations:

They are growing up in a different sort of world that you know a little bit about, but not a great deal. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

They recognised that there are many pressures on grandchildren, and they find it hard to watch the impact of those pressures on the grandchildren and the choices they make at times. Concerns were expressed about grandchildren roaming and young, at-risk grandchildren being out late or finding themselves in 'bad company'. Setting enforceable boundaries seems to be difficult for some grandparents because of the more laissez-faire attitude of the grandchildren's parents, who were perceived as wanting to avoid confrontation. Some grandparents talked about the fact that young people were becoming parents at much earlier ages, and the difficulties that this caused:

The parents of our kids now are a lot younger, the majority are a lot younger than we were… They haven't grown up. When they're having children at 13, 15 and 16 they're still kids themselves. And they think they know it all – 'Look at me, I've got a child. You can't tell me what to do because I've got a baby. I know what I'm doing.' This is how they carry on. (Grandparents, Māori focus group)

While conversation is seen as the foundation of relationships for grandparents, some grandparents reported that they found it difficult to engage in conversation with their grandchildren.

Grandmothers talked about the expectations on them to be child minders. Some choose to make themselves available and some take time off paid work on demand. Others confine their availability to evenings and weekends. Some travel long distances, including to Australia, to look after mokopuna. Tiredness is an issue.

4.7 MAINTAINING TRADITIONAL GRANDPARENT-MOKOPUNA ROLES

The focus group findings reaffirmed the powerlessness grandparents feel when they want to intervene and take over the care of their mokopuna. In particular, there is the perception that the authorities will not support them when they are trying to ensure their mokopuna's safety. Grandparents spoke of the lack of good information for grandparents about the Care of Children Act, and grandparents' rights to intervene if they are concerned about the safety of their mokopuna. Project team member Dr Cherryl Waerea-i-te-rangi Smith[57] co-facilitated two focus groups with Māori grandparents. She observed:

The focus groups made me think a lot about how, as Māori, we need to overtly teach the intergenerational roles. We have tended to take it for granted that young Māori are learning to respect their elders. We have tended to take it for granted that grandparents love their mokopuna and will cherish and look after them through selfless devotion. While these roles are still clearly there among Māori we can't take it for granted that these important relationships will survive as special relationships.

Grandparenting is taught or socialised and if your grandparents died before you knew them, or you lived in other towns, and if you have been socialised to believe that your peer group is more important, then you may not learn. If you don't attend kōhanga, kura or have a lot to do with other whānau, then the roles may not be widely reinforced. Also if your own economic survival is at risk as a grandparent, or you already have nieces and nephews in your care, or you have thirty moko, or most of your moko are in Australia, how do you have the time and the resources to nurture those important whānau relationships?

Smith concludes that if discussions within the Māori focus groups are indicative of Māori more generally, this suggests that Māori are struggling to maintain the traditional grandparent-mokopuna roles because of three primary pressures:

> Economic pressures including the need for traditional caregivers to be in the workplace and people still working after age 65. Māori die younger, so the over-65 population is small in comparison to a large rangatahi (youth) population.

> The erosion of traditional whānau supports (such as the constant presence of helpful others) through urbanisation and emigration, particularly to Australia.

57 Dr Smith, Co-Director of Te Atawhai o te Ao, is conducting her own research project *He Mokopuna, He Taonga*, focusing on the health and wellbeing of Māori grandparents raising mokopuna.

> The increasing pressures on traditional ways of teaching people their roles and responsibilities. For example, a number of grandparents made mention of the ways that technology created a divide between them and their mokopuna because grandparents can lack knowledge of its usage. They also commented on how technology (such as texting, television and computers) could create distractions, meaning that mokopuna could be present in body, but also absent.

A comment offered by a Couch poll respondent raises a question to reflect on:

I think that being a grandparent in New Zealand today is vital [to] the future health and wellbeing of our grandchildren. If we cannot teach or pass on our effective knowledge and skills, how will our mokos survive in New Zealand 10–20 years from now? A lot of these skills have been lost from one generation to another, and/or replaced by 'quick fixes' such as that which technology can provide at the push of a button. …could it be that we are just so hung up on technology (the easy way) we no longer see the effectiveness of doing things one-to-one (that is human to human) not human to technology? (Grandmother, Māori, Couch poll respondent)

4.8 LOOKING FORWARD

The Families Commission has developed a whānau ora strategy. The whānau ora strategy seeks to enable whānau voices to be heard in all of the work of the Commission. In this way, the Commission is seeking to be instrumental in adding value to whānau voices on issues of relevance and importance to whānau Māori. Emphasis is given to the development of strong, resilient whānau, able to manage through times of challenge, and change and lead their own development.

Māori grandparents are repositories of cultural knowledge and wisdom and it is vital that their roles continue to be honoured and valued. This can occur through their participation in cultural processes, based on their seniority and status as grandparents, and the vital roles they play as teachers, role models and supporters of younger members of the whānau. The kaumātua leadership role within iwi and whānau has compatible responsibilities with the grandparenting role. Both roles should be cherished, with acknowledgement of the multiple demands on the time of older Māori.

5. SAMOAN AND COOK ISLANDS GRANDPARENTS

Our focus groups included one group of Samoan grandparents and one group of Cook Islands grandparents. The focus group of Samoan grandparents was co-facilitated by two Samoan members of the research team, who led the discussion in the Samoan language. Key findings from the discussion were subsequently translated into English. The focus group discussion with the Cook Islands grandparents took place in English.

5.1 SAMOANS IN NEW ZEALAND

Data from the 2006 Census[58] show that Samoans are the largest Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand, making up 49 percent of New Zealand's Pacific population. The Samoan population is fast growing and young. Almost 38 percent are under the age of 15 years, with four percent in the over 65 age group, commonly seen to be the grandparenting ages. Samoans born in New Zealand now account for almost 60 percent (78,000) of the Samoan population and increases in multi-ethnicity are seen in the data. Up to 40 percent report themselves as being of Samoan and another ethnic group. The geographic spread of families in New Zealand today, compared with the close village communities of the homeland, also influence the way Samoan families organise in New Zealand, as well as the increase in the number of solo-headed families.

The endurance of the Samoan identity and fa'a Samoa[59] values in New Zealand is compellingly evident in the Census findings. The Census shows that 86 percent of the Samoan population registered an affiliation with religion, and over 63 percent spoke the Samoan language. The Aoga Amata (Samoan language nests) – organised by the churches and usually run by grandparents and church elders – play a significant role in Samoan language and cultural maintenance. The churches in New Zealand are the 'new village' providing community, identity, fellowship and access to information, as well as spiritual guidance for Samoan families in this new land.

58 *Samoan People in New Zealand* (Statistics New Zealand, 2006) http://www.stats.govt.nz/~/media/statistics/publications/census/2006-census-reports/pacific%20profiles/samoan-profile-updated-may2008.aspx

59 Fa'a Samoa means "the Samoan way": embracing values, obligations and traditions and essential to the Samoan identity. http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/samoans/3

5.1.1 Roles of Samoan grandparents

Changes such as those described above, reinforce that, as in the homelands, Samoan grandparents and elders are continuing to play their role within their communities. They are the holders and teachers of Samoan language and beliefs to the new generations now living in New Zealand, but dreaming of 'the return home'.[60] In the fa'a Samoa, children are a gift from God to be cherished, guided and protected. In Samoa's family-based systems, children are part of the family gafa (genealogy), the past, the present and the future yet to come – the continuation of the line. Grandparents do not confine their responsibility to protect and guide 'to their own grandchildren', as seen in the concepts of shared parenting and 'many parents'.[61] The Samoan proverb says:

O fanau a manu e fafaga i fuga o laau, a o tama a tagata e fafaga i upu.
The young ones of birds are fed with nectar; the children of people are fed with words…

Samoan grandparents are a varied group and this is reflected in their grandparenting styles. They comprise:

> relatively recent arrivals "looking after the children while our [adult] children work"

> those who have lived in New Zealand for many years and so are more likely to have jobs and links with other New Zealand communities

> those who "stay a few months with each of my children and go back to Samoa", who could be called the 'visiting' grandparents.

Grandparents demonstrate a strong belief that the journey to New Zealand is for a 'better life' for families here as well as back in Samoa. They believe that the 'better life' must be based on the fa'a Samoa, and that they have the responsibility as grandparents to make sure the Samoan language, values and traditions are learnt and observed within the changing family structures here in New Zealand.

Most grandparents live with their children as extended families. However, some grandparents live in their own houses but still provide a safe house – a support system for working parents:

I look after the children (not just my own grandchildren) … pick them up after Aoga Amata. Care for them and deliver them home when parents come [back] from work. (Samoan grandparent)

They come straight here after school. I look after them, feed them, then when parents finish work, they come and pick them up. Sometimes they stay the night. We don't want our kids roaming the streets. Seeing [grandchildren] come in after school and call out to us lightens our day. Means I see my daughter most days too. I am helping her. Sometimes I feel sorry for her, she is so busy. (Samoan grandparent)

5.1.2 Fa'a Samoa

The family is the core of Samoan society and family members, under the leadership of the family matai, pool their resources to ensure the family good. Everybody has a place in the family systems and knowing one's place and the correct behaviours of that place are the key learnings reinforced in every ceremonial and daily life event.

60 Wendt (1973).
61 Ritchie and Ritchie (1979).

Maintaining harmonious family and community relations is seen in the concept of 'o le tausiga ole va fealoai': protecting/guarding the space. This is achieved through behaviours such as respect (words and actions), obedience and nurturing the relationship. These behaviours are exhibited through, for example, sharing of resources (fishing catches, harvests), labour (planting, house building, community duties) and providing support in times of need as the faalavelave. The special place of sisters and the responsibilities of brothers to their sisters are seen in the feagaiga: the sacred covenant.

In the family systems, grandparents and elders were the holders and passers on of knowledge. They did this while they looked after young children while their parents did the jobs necessary to meet basic needs such as going to the plantation. This knowledge and information was shared and reinforced in songs and dances, in learning how to weave ie toga[62] and other mats, and in the fagogo (the stories told in the night). Children observed, listened, practised and learnt.

5.1.3 Samoan grandparents in New Zealand

Samoan grandparents in New Zealand gain great pride and satisfaction in knowing that, just as their elders did when they were young, they are supporting their children and teaching the Samoan ways. This is their exhibition of their love for their children and also their family line.

Grandparents in the Samoan focus group were significantly influenced by the cultural expectations of their role. Grandparents expressed a strong sense of duty to share the Samoan language, traditions, customs and faith with their grandchildren living in New Zealand – "providing spiritual, cultural and language growth". Samoan grandchildren are immersed in their culture through church and extended family settings and, whilst they might not be able to speak the Samoan language, many will understand it.

A Samoan grandparent summed up her caring and family responsibilities in these words:

Teaching grandchildren fa'a Samoa, the customs and traditions of Samoan culture eg, use of ie toga, practicing values, eg, faaaloalo (respect); Samoan language, spiritual growth through prayers, Bible verses. Spending quality time with grandchildren as the main caregiver, after school or in the weekends. Assisting with homework and preparing for Sunday school exams and recitals eg, White Sunday;[63] taking them to Sunday school and church; providing for their basic needs as necessary – 'When their nappies run out we buy them – we do not wait.' (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

As seen in the following comments, the key learnings grandparents try to teach are:

the Samoan language and the fa'a Samoa

> the Bible

> the need to protect young girls (as part of this)

> how to do school work and look after their clothes properly

> the place of the family evening meal together, including the evening family lotu (family service).

62 A special type of Samoan mat that is highly valued in Samoan culture.

63 Celebrated on the second Sunday of October, White Sunday is Children's Day throughout the Samoan islands and many other South Pacific island nations. Traditionally, this Sunday is a festive day for children, to remind everyone to cherish and value each child in their lives. White Sunday gets its name from the all-white attire of the children, from clothing to accessories and the flowers in their hair and around their necks. Children parade into their churches in white outfits, perform songs and give readings before enjoying a feast.

In many cases, too, their 'ways' are at odds with the ways observed by their own children today and the grandchildren:

I try to do that … the old ways … the family, the church, the language. Take the children to church. Even the way they do their meals together – the lotu i le po. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

They speak English all the time. I'm teaching them the Samoan language and fa'a Samoa. I told the parents I want to share something good, my culture, with my grandchildren. I teach them the language, when they come home from school, we read the Samoan Bible. We do games in Samoan. So that by the time I return to Samoa they will know some Samoan. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

[I teach her] how to sort her clothes for church, school. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

I travel between all my children's families (seven) and support them to know God and their Samoan language and culture, as well as taking care of their children, especially protecting their daughters. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Commitment to the education of their grandchildren was a common theme in the stories of Samoan grandparents, as illustrated by the following comment:

I teach them the language, culture, customs and traditions. We do activities and games in Samoan. Their parents send them to me to check their homework, spelling, reading etc, cause that's what I did for my own children. We as grandparents help to prepare the way for good relationships and communication between parents and children. It isn't just telling them, but also role modelling and putting into practice. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Yet while grandparents gain great pleasure from their role, they are also challenged by the way their children live today:

It's not easy. Sometimes they forget their Samoan, it's easier to speak in English … if I remind them to speak Samoan, they won't speak to me, but I still remind them. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

I teach them all this and then when they go 'home' it's all forgotten again. Our children are in mixed marriages … it's undone. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Wish I knew how to support their education a bit better? Toys and things like that … don't have... The minding is okay … wish I knew more. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

At the same time, while there are also feelings of perplexity, anger and disappointment with the changes, grandparents have an awareness of the differences between their lives and those of their children and their grandchildren today:

This is my love for my children … bringing them up in the church, the home, whatever needs to be done, we will do it, 'cos we love our kids. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

That is our role. We do this for our children, and they trust us to do this. [But] I know that if I'm not there, another Samoan parent will [guide and help]. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

There are also some sacrifices, as seen in the following words:

I had a job – they say, stay home and mind the kids. We do. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Even though I tell them – I want to go to exercise classes at the church. Make sure you come by then … sometimes they don't. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Finances were another aspect discussed within the focus group. Grandparents knew it was necessary, but they expressed a great sadness that their children had to work such long hours in New Zealand just to make ends meet. If they saw their grandchildren needed anything – such as cough medicine and "sometimes even new shoes" – grandparents went ahead and purchased those items: "Grandparents just do this". There was no expectation of repayment. This was seen to be another expression of their grandparenting role.

Books, uniforms, school things, food and napkins. I see what needs doing … so I buy. I don't say 'Here's the bill from New World'… (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

When grandparents needed help, they knew they could rely on their children to support them:

When my children need money I give. I actually feel sorry for them. But if they get some blessings they might come and give me something, food, even money. The most important thing to me is her hug! I would never ask my daughter to pay me but sometimes I ask her to help out when I am sending money/gifts back to Samoa. She enjoys doing that for me. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Sometimes, she says to me 'Do you need some money?' and I say, 'If you have some to give, okay, but if not that's okay too.' (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

The sense of responsibility grandparents felt for their grandchildren is seen in these words:

Our usefulness is knowing that we are doing what our parents did for us. We are helping make sure our children's children have a good future. We want them to know what being a Samoan means and to be proud to be a Samoan. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

So, while lives may be changing in New Zealand, Samoan grandparents continue to teach the fa'a Samoa values which they hold dear: family (aiga), respect for others (faaaloalo, va fealoa'i ma le ava fatafata), love (alofa), sharing (fetufaa'i), caring and upbringing (faafaileleina), collective responsibility (fetausia'i), and faith in God (faatuatua ma le talitonu).

O au o matua fanau
Children are the precious offspring of the parents/grandparents. (Samoan proverb)

Faavae i le Atua Samoa – Samoa is founded on God (Motto)

5.2 COOK ISLANDS POPULATION

The indigenous population of the Cook Islands is the Cook Islands Māori, closely related ethnically to the indigenous populations of Tahiti and nearby islands, and to New Zealand Māori. According to the Census undertaken in December 2002, the total resident population of the Cook Islands is 18,027, of whom 12,188 live in the outer islands. Following the economic reform programmes of 1995/96, the Cook Islands population experienced heavy losses through migration to Australia and New Zealand. Over time, large numbers of Cook Islanders migrated to New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere, primarily seeking better employment opportunities. More than 50,000 Cook Islanders reside in New Zealand.[64]

As with other migrant grandparents participating in our focus groups, cultural expectations and traditions shaped Cook Islands grandparents' experiences of grandparenting in New Zealand. For example, grandparents expressed concern about the lack of traditional support, as families in New Zealand are not necessarily living in close proximity to each other. This is illustrated in the following exchange between a focus group grandmother and the group co-facilitator:

Focus group grandmother: You know, back home, me, my grandmother, my kids, you know – we all stayed together… We had one house – all of us stay together.

Facilitator: And what difference do you think that made for you?

Focus group grandmother: It's easy. It's really easy. If my mum [got] sick, I'm there to help. But I come over here [to New Zealand]. My kid's down in [another area], one's in Australia. All over the place. Not together.

Facilitator: So it's much easier to provide support if everyone is living close by?

Focus group grandmother: Yeah.

Cook Islands grandparents also had expectations about the practice and maintenance of their faith. Some were concerned that grandchildren who were brought up in New Zealand did not attend church unless they were pressured to.

5.3 CHALLENGES FOR SAMOAN AND COOK ISLANDS GRANDPARENTS

Samoan and Cook Islands grandparents emphasised the financial barriers that they, and their adult children, faced in the upbringing of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They also described challenges imparting the languages, traditions, customs and faith to their grandchildren in an English-speaking country, and maintaining long distance relationships with grandchildren based in other countries.

Intergenerational pressures around complying with the parents' requests (for example, around childrearing practices when parents and grandparents are not in agreement) were raised by Samoan grandparents.

The growing trend towards mixed ethnicity partnerships presented not only challenges, but also opportunities for grandparents to reinforce the Samoan language and way of life with their grandchildren:

64 http://www.cook-islands.gov.ck/cook-islands.php

My granddaughter comes in the weekend, she needs help with reading the Bible. We do writing stories, some Samoan, but mainly in English. When she speaks English to me, I remind her to speak Samoan. She does Sunday school exams in Samoan. I have taught her the Samoan grace, and bedtime prayers. I teach her how to sort her clothes, for church, school, sports etc. But the problem is, all this good work and teaching, as soon as she goes home again, it is lost. Then I have to start all over again, when she comes back to me. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Our children are in mixed marriages, so when our grandchildren return to their homes, then all the good work is undone, and they forget the Samoan language and culture until they come back to me again. (Grandparent, Samoan focus group)

Some of the Cook Islands grandparents were worried about adult children's inability to secure appropriate housing for their families, and the financial strain on their adult children.

5.4 SUMMARY

The stories shared by the Samoan and Cook Islands grandparents suggest that their grandparenting roles continue to be strongly influenced by cultural expectations and traditions. Adapting to life in New Zealand can mean responding to societal, technological and other changes, as well as adapting to changes or variations in family structures and practices arising as a result of cross-cultural family relationships. Compromises are necessary. Actively sustaining close family relationships and nurturing and teaching the next generation, even in the face of mobility/geographic distance, remain a key focus in the lives of Pacific grandparents.

6. KOREAN GRANDPARENTS

A fluent Korean speaker facilitated our Korean focus group. The facilitator was an academic with a particular interest in older migrants and the acculturation process. The discussion took place in the Korean language, and the information shared during the focus group was subsequently transcribed. Key findings were discussed with the research team and translated into English.

6.1 KOREAN POPULATION IN NEW ZEALAND

The Korean population is recognised as one of the largest Asian ethnic groups in New Zealand, behind the Chinese and Indian populations. The number of Korean residents rapidly increased by more than 30 times, from 930 in 1991 to 30,792 in 2006. The population is considerably younger than other ethnic groups due to the short history of immigration to the country. While 12.3 percent of New Zealanders are aged 65 or older, this age group comprises only two percent, 642 in number, among Korean people in the 2006 Census (Statistics New Zealand, nd). Approximately 55 percent of older Koreans are women. The mobility of the population is high because a number of Korean elders are 'coming and going' between their transnational families in two countries.

Kavakli Birdal (2005) explains that 'transnational families' differ from immigrant families. "The defining factor is not the act of cross-border movement of the family, but the dispersion of the family, nuclear or extended, across international borders, where different family members spend time in one or the other country depending on various factors." Kavakli Birdal notes that the emergence of transnational families has been enabled by factors such as the rise of communication and transportation technologies and economic transformations.

The Korean population will continue to develop an older profile over coming years as the first immigrant generation ages. There are two main groups of older people in the Korean community in New Zealand. The majority of older Koreans moved to New Zealand in their old age to be close to their children and grandchildren. They are likely to be isolated by language and culture, living with limitations in adjusting to New Zealand life.

The second group consists of people who are now growing older, following their arrival from Korea as middle-aged adults. People in this group are relatively well settled and familiar with the New Zealand lifestyle. In addition, there are some ageing parents who hold a temporary visa or a multiple entry visa to stay in New Zealand in order to provide supplementary care for their grandchildren. Each group has different characteristics and challenges, not only in adjusting to resettlement and retirement, but also in exercising grandparent roles and styles in their new environment.

6.2 GRANDPARENTING IN THE KOREAN CULTURE

In the Korean culture, grandparenting is inevitably related to the filial traditions that emphasise filial obligations or duty, as well as harmony and mutual support within the family relationship (Yang, 2003). Underpinned by Confucian values, the familial principles have been highly prevalent among Koreans who were likely to live in extended families (Youn, Knight, Jeong, & Benton, 1999). Maintaining ties between generations has traditionally been seen as one of the responsibilities of Korean grandparents. Grandparents were revered as a source of wisdom and advice. Not only did Korean grandparents make substantial contributions to their families through their grandparenting roles, but they also maintained an active life through interacting with their grandchildren.

As traditional filial values change in today's Korean culture, roles and responsibilities of grandparents are challenged and reshaped. Nuclear families become increasingly prevalent, along with falling birth rates and growing participation by women in the workforce (Kim, 2005). Extended family ties are weakened by, in part, the increasing incidence of divorce and remarriage. Within the family, grandparents are less likely to be able to have the control over family decision-making that they used to have. While some grandparents are reluctant to be actively involved in taking care of grandchildren, there is a growing number of older people taking on childrearing responsibilities due to, for instance, increasing numbers of divorced parents (Kim, 2002).

Although some aspects of filial traditions are viewed as no longer prevalent, their principles and values continue to influence all generations in the Korean culture (Sung, 2007). Grandparents still play an important role in the support and care of grandchildren (Maehara & Takemura, 2007). In a retirement study conducted by the Oxford Institute of Ageing (2007), Koreans revealed the strongest intergenerational ties among older people in the 21 countries studied. They tend to provide significant financial, practical and personal support to family members and identify themselves with the family, rather than with religion or work. Migrant grandparents living in an overseas country also play a significant role in rearing grandchildren. They assist by doing household chores in immigrant families during the process of adjusting to new life in their host country (Sohn, 2007).

6.3 GRANDPARENTING FOR OLDER KOREANS

Grandparenting for older Koreans in New Zealand is complex and challenging. Their grandparenthood may be affected by the double burden that they face related to both cross-cultural adaptation as an immigrant and their own ageing process as an older adult. Being a grandparent in a transnational family may pose special difficulties physically, financially, geographically or psychologically. Communication with grandchildren can be less effective if they are not fluent in the Korean language, especially if grandchildren have a lack of interest in and command of the Korean language. A grandparent who is raising grandchildren explained: "They [grandchildren] feel more comfortable using English. So they tend to use it when conversation with grandparents becomes a little bit difficult…"

When acculturation differs within the family, grandparents may experience a shift of traditional roles. Korean grandparents' roles and styles may be reconstructed within the social, historical and cultural contexts (including the unfamiliar atmosphere of New Zealand culture) within which they immerse themselves for the wellbeing of their grandchildren and families.

6.4 FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Korean focus group participants talked about the substantial cultural expectations of Korean grandparents, particularly related to the transmission of cultural knowledge. Amongst these focus group grandparents, language barriers had a significant impact on intergenerational relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren. In particular, they described the isolation they felt from their grandchildren as the grandchildren became increasingly fluent in English, and less willing to converse with, and learn from, their grandparents about the Korean language and the culture.

Overall, Korean grandparents took responsibility for a very wide range of activities involving their adult children and grandchildren. Several grandparents lived with their children and grandchildren. Like Māori, Samoan and Cook Islands grandparents, Korean grandparents believed that teaching their grandchildren about their own culture and language was integral to their grandparenting role. Encouraging good study habits was also emphasised. A Korean grandparent explained that she promotes the benefits of education to her grandchild: "You must study hard, so that you can become 'a big man' [successful] in this society."

A major challenge described by Korean grandparents was their difficulty with English, which isolates them from grandchildren who are growing up in New Zealand and are fluent English speakers. In the words of the focus group facilitator who translated their concerns, "*Poor English skills make them separate from their grandchildren. They can't have 'real' conversations with the grandchildren who prefer to speak English*."

Most of the Korean grandparents indicated that learning English is hard for them because of their age, although there are some English language classes available for immigrants in the city in which our focus groups took place. A grandparent who attends such a class for two days a week explained:

We older people cannot speak English enough even though we have learnt it. Well, I had learnt English for three years … but soon after leaving the classroom, I forgot what I learnt. (Korean migrant grandparent)

Another grandparent, who is raising her grandchildren, said that her English is deteriorating because she is teaching her grandchildren Korean.

Some Korean grandparents indicated that they are more likely to intervene in their young grandchildren's lives than their parents do. They believed that doing so is one of the ways to discipline children at home. A grandmother explained:

My son's world [point of view] is totally different from ours. We [grandparents] are unnecessarily meddling with young grandchildren in their affairs, such as asking them to do study, take a shower, and so on. The son thinks quite the opposite. He asks us to allow the children to do what they please.

Some grandparents spoke about the feelings of isolation that can arise when a grandparent can no longer 'be useful' to the family. If they are unable to look after grandchildren, then they may feel that they have no role within the family.

6.5 HEAVY WORKLOADS

Korean grandparents assisting with raising grandchildren described undertaking multiple household and child-related responsibilities. These included meal preparation, cleaning, gardening, transporting children to activities, teaching the Korean language, accompanying children to doctors' appointments and even teaching them how to fish.

Several grandparents recognised their heavy workloads, describing themselves as a homemaker (a welfare worker at home; Gajeong Bokjisa in Korean). This generated considerable discussion within the group who concluded that this is a good term for the work they do: "Helping our children, grandchildren, washing dishes, waking grandchildren, making the food – all of that, but no pay". Grandparents highlighted the tension that this created for them when they acknowledged that they don't want to be paid, but clearly recognise it as work, although they do this for love.

Some grandparents in the Korean focus group noted that, in Korea, if adult children live with their ageing parents, they are eligible for an income tax deduction, encouraging them to live together with the older generation. They recommended a similar scheme for New Zealand.

After one Korean grandparent spoke of not having enough time with the grandchildren, another couple compared this with the situation of a grandparent living with grandchildren, who had 'too much' time with them: "Having to do everything, waking up, ironing uniforms [as] 'a homemaker'." Even though these Korean grandparents feel that their workload is too much, confronted with the expectations of their role of grandparent in Korean society, "That's okay because it's what grandparents should do."

6.6 SPECIFIC NEEDS OF KOREAN GRANDPARENTS

Through the focus group discussion, written responses to the questionnaire and conversations with the Korean facilitator, Korean grandparents identified the following areas in which they would like information, support and/or advocacy:

> education and services for grandparents relating to grandparenting in New Zealand, such as how to educate grandchildren and communicate with them

> a need for education, training and information for first-generation immigrants who become grandparents in New Zealand, including information about the legal system in New Zealand

> English-language classes tailored for Korean grandparents, to increase their confidence and their ability to communicate with their grandchildren

> information about activities suitable for sharing with grandchildren during school holidays

> regular opportunities to get together with other grandparents, similar to that provided by the focus group.

6.7 SUMMARY

It is apparent from our focus group research, and from the research literature, that migrant grandparents can be particularly vulnerable in terms of feeling isolated. Existing networks for Korean older people should make ongoing efforts to ensure that they have access to the services and support they need to counter any potential cultural, social and physical isolation. Diversity within the Korean grandparent population must be recognised, taking into account variables such as the age at which grandparents arrived in New Zealand, and their English language proficiency. There should be due consideration given to the differing characteristics and challenges Korean migrant grandparents can face, not only in adjusting to resettlement and retirement in a new environment, but also in implementing grandparent roles and styles in a new country.[65]

65 For further information about the experiences and expectations of Korean migrant families in New Zealand, see Chang, Morris, and Vokes (2006).

7. LIVING WITH GRANDCHILDREN

Some grandparents live in multi-generational households with members of their extended families. In New Zealand this is more common in some cultures than others, particularly amongst Māori and Pacific peoples. The Families Commission (2008c) *Kiwi Nest* report, citing a Statistics New Zealand report (2005), notes that in 2001, nine percent of women and eight percent of men were living in extended families:

> About 55 percent of women who lived in extended families were in families of three or more generations, suggesting women with children living with a grandparent. (p. 28)

7.1 HOW GRANDPARENTS LIVE WITH GRANDCHILDREN

Our research found that there is a variety of ways in which grandparents live with their grandchildren.

7.1.1 In the grandparents' home, with parent/s

This is often due to cultural preferences, financial reasons and/or adult children and their families moving back 'home' following separation from a partner:

My daughter separated from her partner with a great deal of animosity which led us to have her and our grandson move into our home. We have had to do a lot of adjusting and getting used to a young child being in the house again. (Couch poll respondent)

You know, I have a home, and my daughter and my son-in-law with their four children live with me, and it's wonderful. There was a time there when I was on my own, and oh man, I wished I was dead, you know. The silence. I have eight children and so the silence was quite deafening because, you know, I was used to having sounds around me all the time. So now I've got my four mokos and my house takes all my 19 mokopuna when they come up for Christmas and other times and it's just wonderful having them all around… (Grandparent, focus group)

7.1.2 In the grandparents' home, without parent/s

This is typically because the parents are unable to, or unwilling to, raise their children themselves. The following section discusses the needs and circumstances of grandparents raising grandchildren. However, there are also situations under which grandchildren may live with grandparents temporarily, for example while parents are settling elsewhere following a move, or when grandparents provide a home to support a grandchild's education. In Families Commission (2008d) *Give and Take*, one case study focused on a semi-retired couple aged over 60. They were planning to have their 13-year-old granddaughter live with them for several months when she started at secondary school, in order to give her life more stability:

> We feel that she's approaching a major crossroad in her life and at the moment the indicators say she doesn't have enough stability within her life to make sure she goes in the right direction and that's where we come in. We will fit our lives around her and try and guide her down the right road for her own future. (p. 83)

A number of grandparents participating in one of the Māori focus groups had adult children living in Australia. During the parental move from New Zealand to Australia, grandchildren sometimes remained living in New Zealand with their grandparents for a period of time. Usually this was until the parents settled (found work and housing) in Australia, or until the grandchildren completed their education.

7.1.3 In the grandchildren's parents' home

Grandparents who live in their grandchildren's parents' home are often doing so because they are actively involved in helping to raise grandchildren:

> [My son] stays at home with the in-laws, they live with us because they are Chinese, it is their culture. It is a cultural thing… Generally, especially in China, the grandparents bring up the children... When they retire they come and live with you and bring up the kids. (Families Commission, 2008e, p. 38)

A number of the Korean migrant grandparents who took part in one of our focus groups were living in the family home. Many did child-related tasks, as well as contributing to the overall running of the household. Some listed a comprehensive range of tasks and activities for which they were responsible:

Preparing meals, washing (ironing), education, cleaning, gardening, [taking grandchild to the] swimming pool, exercise, teaching Korean, picking up from school, making lunch boxes and bathing [the child]. (Grandparent living in family home, Korean focus group)

7.1.4 Sharing a home with grandchild/ren and unrelated others

For financial (and possibly for other) reasons, grandparents might share a home to decrease housing costs:

I am 44 years of age, lost my husband, bringing up a foster son and granddaughter alone, but I do have help from a friend who shares the rental home with us because he is a solo dad and can't afford to rent on [his] own. (Grandparent raising grandchildren, focus group)

7.1.5 Buying a home or property with grandchildren's parents

Again, for financial reasons, grandparents might decide to co-purchase a home. This is a long-term commitment which may be beneficial to both parties:

I have one grandchild aged 11 who lives with me, as does his mother. He has lived with me off and on his whole life… [His parents separated when he was an infant] so basically for most of his life, he's been with me. Twice she has gone off and lived on her own, but she does shift work … so with shift work it became ludicrous, I'd either have to go to his house or she'd have to drop him off [at mine] … so we both sold our houses … and bought an apartment together. (Focus group grandmother)

We are currently looking for a property that we can share together – separate living quarters but on the same property – even within the same building. We recognise that this is a win-win situation for both families and especially for the grandchild. Research has shown that a child needs at least four people who 'think the world of them' taking an active role in their lives if they are to develop holistically healthy lives. (Female, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

7.1.6 Flexible living arrangements

Some grandparents have flexible living arrangements meaning that grandchildren stay with them for short or long periods, depending on the family's needs and circumstances.

We've got this open house going. If her two big kids want to come and stay at our house they just come and park there – they've got clothes there and clothes in their own house. (Grandparents, focus group)

When I took my teenage moko on full-time, I really had to make some big adjustments, 'cos I was working full-time so that he could have a home and we actually compromised because he went to boarding school during the week and came home each weekend so that we got a balance there so that I could work and then we could have time together. (Grandparent, focus group)

Rather than residing under the same roof, some grandparents choose to live in close proximity to grandchildren and their families, such as next door or elsewhere within the same neighbourhood, enabling frequent visits:

One of my daughters just loves having noisy children in her house. And when she gets tired of them – 'cos we live side by side – that's when I usually get all of them at my house. (Grandparent, focus group)

7.2 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

As well as the practical and emotional support that may be shared in families co-residing with grandparents, there can be financial advantages as well. Findings from a new study, conducted by researchers from the University of Southern California and the University of Massachusetts, Boston,[66] suggest that children living in single-mother families that include at least one grandparent are substantially less likely to be living below or near the poverty line, compared to children living in mother-only homes.

In the United States of America, the Hartford Grandfamily Housing Development is a community of 40 affordable rental apartments described as being for "seniors and/or grandparents raising their grandchildren".[67] In addition to housing, comprehensive support services are provided (for example, counselling, behavioural health services and parenting workshops). The project aims to allow residents to maintain an affordable home in a supportive community environment, while gaining stability and self-sufficiency for themselves and their grandchildren. This provides a model for consideration in New Zealand, particularly given the growth in numbers of grandparents raising grandchildren and the housing issues that frequently accompany their situation. As described in Worrall's (2009) report, kinship care families, particularly grandparents, are likely to experience challenges finding appropriate accommodation, with issues arising such as insufficient space, and increased housing costs, and sometimes a need to modify existing housing in order to meet their grandchildren's needs.

The Age Concern website[68] includes a series of questions for older people to consider if they are contemplating living in a multigenerational household. They caution that unclear or informal arrangements can lead to family dissent or elder abuse. A series of additional issues for families to think through are presented in the Preventing Elder Abuse and Neglect Fact Sheet,[69] including consideration of different lifestyles, values and beliefs.

66 http://uscnews.usc.edu/university/advantage_goes_to_three-generation_households.html *Journal of Family Issues*, November, 2009.
67 http://www.ct.gov/agingservices/cwp/view.asp?A=2513&Q=423462
68 http://www.ageconcern.org.nz/my-home/home-choices/making-your-move
69 http://www.familiescommission.govt.nz/research/elder-abuse/elder-abuse-fact-sheet

7.3 WHY GRANDPARENTS LIVE WITH GRANDCHILDREN

Just as there is a variety of different ways in which grandparents can live either temporarily or permanently with their grandchildren, there is also a variety of reasons why such arrangements eventuate. Some of these reasons were outlined in the previous section and the telephone survey provided a further opportunity to explore why these arrangements came about.

In the main survey, seven percent of grandparents lived with one or more of their grandchildren. Living with grandchildren was much more common amongst Māori and Pacific respondents. The most frequently mentioned reasons for grandparents living with their grandchildren are presented in Table 17 below. The full table is shown in Appendix 7.

TABLE 17: MAIN REASONS WHY GRANDPARENTS LIVE WITH ONE OR MORE OF THEIR GRANDCHILDREN (TELEPHONE SURVEY – PARTIAL RESULTS)

Q11. WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY YOU LIVE WITH ONE OR MORE OF YOUR GRANDCHILDREN?

	ALL (N=67) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=42)	MĀORI (N=40)	PACIFIC (N=42)
Because your grandchildren and their parents have moved into your home	34 (N=23)	N=15	N=16	N=16
Because you are raising these grandchildren full-time, as their parents are unable or unwilling to	25 (N=17)	N=8	N=18	N=12
Because you have moved into your grandchild's parents' home	16 (N=11)	N=5	N=4	N=9

Base: Those who live with one or more of their grandchildren

NOTE: The number of mentions will be equal to or greater than the number of respondents due to the question allowing multiple responses

Full results are shown in Appendix 7.

8. GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Worrall (2009) reports that in New Zealand, the number of grandparents (and other kin caregivers) who are assuming full responsibility for raising children continues to increase, echoing an international trend. As well as grandparents, other relatives such as great-grandparents, aunts and uncles sometimes assume care. The exact number of children being raised by kin caregivers is unknown, as large numbers of carers have informal arrangements with their families and are not represented in official statistics. Worrall (2008) notes that many kin/whānau carers intervene and take children to ensure their safety "without reference to the New Zealand statutory service" (p. 9). Within her original study, those who had informal agreements gave a range of reasons, including a belief that if formal custody was sought, or concerns reported to statutory services, the children's parents may contest the issues and the child's "safe haven" would be endangered.

Based on benefit uptake data (eg, for the Unsupported Child Benefit, which is the most common benefit available to kin carers), as well as considering carers who receive no financial support, Worrall estimates that there are in excess of 10,000 children in kin/whānau care in New Zealand, many of whom would be living with grandparents.

Table 18 shows the most common reasons why the 17 respondents in the telephone survey sample were raising one or more of their grandchildren. (Additional reasons are shown in the full table, in Appendix 8. Some respondents opted not to answer this question.) Echoing the findings from Worrall's (2009) larger sample, substance abuse (either drug and/or alcohol problems) features prominently. A number of focus group grandparents raising grandchildren also cited drugs and alcohol (as well as violence and mental health issues) as reasons why they took over care of their grandchildren.

TABLE 18: MAIN REASONS FOR RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON WHY YOU ARE RAISING THESE GRANDCHILDREN?

	ALL (N=17)	NZ EUROPEAN (N=8)	MĀORI (N=18)	PACIFIC (N=12)
Parent with drug/alcohol problems	N=5	N=4	N=3	–
Parents have separated	N=3	–	N=4	N=5
Neglect	N=2	N=2	N=3	N=1
Parent/s travelling/working/living overseas	N=2	–	N=3	N=2
Parent illness/mental illness/disability	N=1	N=1	N=2	–
Cultural reasons – to pass on the language and/or culture to the next generation	N=1	–	N=2	N=1
Parents are too young to look after their children	N=1	–	N=1	N=1

Base: Those who were raising their grandchild/ren full-time as the parents are unable or unwilling to

NOTE: The number of mentions will be equal to or greater than the number of respondents due to the question allowing multiple responses

See Appendix 8 for full table.

8.1 MĀORI GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Worrall (2009), drawing on CYF's data, states that "for those children in the care of Child, Youth and Family, being of Māori or Pacific ethnicity makes the likelihood of being placed in the care of whānau/fono[70] significantly higher than if the child is New Zealand European/Pākehā". Smith (2008) also reports that over recent decades the number of Māori grandparents raising mokopuna is increasing. She notes that it is often the grandparents who take responsibility for overseeing whānau health and wellbeing. Grandparents' commitments can include caring for their own elderly or ill parents, caring for partners, supporting children and raising mokopuna. Grandparents who assumed roles as kaumātua and kuia will have additional commitments to whānau, marae, hapū and iwi. Smith's research found that despite having multiple commitments, these grandparents are unlikely to seek help for themselves:

> Grandparents are often not asking for help even if they need it. They are primarily focused on the grandchildren and place the needs of mokopuna before themselves, commonly 'going without'.[71] There are likely to be impacts on [their] health and wellbeing … when important support and help is unavailable or they do not have whānau-friendly support to access help that does exist. (Smith, 2008, p. 5)

Smith notes that grandparents raising mokopuna can be relatively 'invisible' within their communities, as it might not be known to others that they have full-time care of their grandchildren. In Section 4 of this report, the traditional and contemporary roles of Māori grandparents (including those who are raising their grandchildren) are discussed in more detail.

8.2 SUPPORT AND INFORMATION NEEDS

Cass (2007) describes grandparent care as occupying "an uneasy position on the boundaries between public and private spheres, family and state, in a context of perceived kinship obligation that may militate against the provision to them of adequate benefits and services" (p. 249). Grandparents raising grandchildren may require a range of support, encompassing their financial, social-emotional and practical needs. It is not always easy to obtain information about how and where to get the support required, nor to get reliable and consistent information. Researchers such as Worrall (2009), documented the challenges faced by grandparents raising grandchildren, and Families Commission research complements previous findings.

One focus group consisted solely of grandparents raising grandchildren, and in other focus groups between one and four participants were kinship carers. These grandparents described the pleasures of raising their grandchildren, although all faced considerable challenges. They talked at length and with considerable intensity about the pressures and lifestyle changes that they (and their grandchildren) faced. Some pressures were common to all, others more unique. For example, one grandparent talked about a desire to formally adopt a grandchild so that the child could have a new surname, as the child's current surname was known around the area in which they were living and had negative connotations.

70 Extended family.
71 Similarly, in Worrall's (2009) study, several grandparents stated that they were "going without" so that they could provide for their grandchildren; in Worrall's previous study (2005), some grandparents stated that they could no longer afford to go to the doctor themselves.

8.3 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Grandparents who are raising grandchildren and carrying out significant caring roles require adequate financial support. Appendix 9 provides information about the benefits for which grandparents raising grandchildren may be eligible.

There are still inequities in the amount that grandparents (and other kinship carers) who are raising children are eligible to receive as government benefits, compared with the amount that foster parents receive – unless the grandparent is officially acting as a foster parent. From 1 April 2009, the weekly rates for the Orphans Benefit and Unsupported Child Benefit[72] were increased to align with those of the Foster Care Allowance (Worrall, 2009). Although foster carers and kinship carers can now both be eligible for the same weekly amount, foster carers can also get additional funding. Depending on the child's situation, foster carers may be able to get other financial help for costs associated with clothing, travel, medical care, education and birthday or Christmas presents.

Grandparents' entitlement for support is based on who has care or custody of the child and the reasons for this:

> If a child is in the care of a grandparent due to family breakdown for a period of at least a year, the grandparent is eligible for the Unsupported Child Benefit (through Work and Income).

> If a child is in the care of a grandparent who is acting as a foster parent, because the child is in the custody of the Chief Executive of Child, Youth and Family, the grandparent is eligible for the Foster Care Allowance, plus other financial support for related child costs (through Child, Youth and Family).

> If a child is in the care of a grandparent who has custody of the child through a Family Court order subsequent to being in Child, Youth and Family custody, the grandparent is eligible for the Unsupported Child Benefit (through Work and Income).

The reasons why grandparents do not always seek full custody include:

> being "held to ransom" by parents

> hope that they are caregiving on a temporary basis until the parents can re-assume care

> not wishing to risk bringing the arrangement to the attention of CYFS

> to avoid dissension within the family (eg, a backlash from parents).

Māori grandparents raising grandchildren under an informal whangai arrangement might be ineligible for the government benefits that could otherwise be received within a more formal arrangement with the associated constraints of legislation. Whangai arrangements are "cognisant of the interests of the child, but … weighted more towards establishing, nurturing and cementing relationships between individuals, families and broader relational networks".[73]

72 These non-taxable benefits provide income support to the caregiver of a child whose parents can't support them.
73 McRae and Nikora (2006).

Grandparents in two of our focus groups explained the financial hurdles they had faced – or would face – if they attempted to gain custody of their grandchildren. This suggests that financial assistance towards legal aid for grandparents raising grandchildren is an area requiring further attention, and that information about such legal aid could be more easily accessible:

There is no aid for us, legal or anything else. It could cost us, the [family] doctor said, between $5,000–$10,000 to get custody of the boys. We can go through the whole process, we can get custody and in two years' time [my daughter] can go back to court, on legal aid because she's on the DPB, she can get the custody back again, just like that. But we would have to pay our own bills to actually go there and defend it. Now that's wrong. I'm sorry that's wrong. …I'm not saying we're the only ones in this situation, there are, I would say hundreds of grandparents, who have concerns about the way their sons and daughters are bringing up their children who maybe are sitting back and doing nothing about it because it is too hard. And we have been sitting now for about three months tossing up about what to do, because basically we don't know. (Grandfather, focus group)

If your children are wards of the state and you go for custody, the welfare now pay for the lawyer's fees, which is really good. They didn't [do that] when I got my grandkids, it cost me $32,000 with private detectives and everything, but now if your children are wards of the state and you go for custody the welfare pay for that – CYFS pay for that. (Grandparent, focus group)

8.4 LEGAL AND OTHER RIGHTS

A number of grandparents were unclear about their own legal rights. Grandparents could be eligible to apply for a parenting order. This is "an order made by the Family Court that says who is responsible for day-to-day care of a child, and when and how someone else important in the child's life can have contact with them".[74] Parenting orders usually involve disputes between a child's parents, but Ministry of Justice data[75] regarding the relationship profiles of applicants and respondents in "parenting order type applications" (2006 and 2007), show that 15 percent of applicants (for both years) were grandparents of the children.

Grandparents who have custody of grandchildren under the Care of Children Act (2004, No 90), have clearly defined legal rights. Grandparents in our focus groups who did not have formal care arrangements felt they "did not have a leg to stand on" (legally) if the parents wanted their children back. In the words of one, they had "no teeth" as a grandparent. One implication of this for one grandparent couple, helping to raise grandchildren, was the inability to access their grandchildren's medical records.

Cox (2007) notes that advocating for grandparent caregivers could mean helping them to navigate through bureaucracy to receive services or benefits:

> Given the many responsibilities of these grandparents, they may easily be worn out by insensitive and unwieldy demands that make pursuit of their rights even more difficult. (p. 565)

74 http://www.justice.govt.nz/family/pdf-pamphlets/courts005.pdf
75 http://www.justice.govt.nz/Pubs/reports/2009/family-court-statistics-2006-and-2007/Family%20Court%20Statistics%20in%20New%20Zealand%20in%202006%20and%202007_full%20reportl_PDF.pdf

A grandparent caregiver in our focus groups described such a situation:

…I spoke to somebody in Wellington and she said that I was dead. My payments stopped. I still got the … child benefit, but everything else just stopped. I couldn't get anybody to give me an answer, so I rang Wellington and the lady in Wellington said 'Well, actually you're dead!' I said, 'Do you often talk to people on the phone who're dead?!' You know it sounds funny and all that, but at the time it's frustrating. (Grandparent, focus group)

Other grandparents also described difficulties accessing appropriate support and information from government agencies (eg, around benefit eligibility). There was discussion about the constant turnover of social workers in one region, and grandparents' desire for easier contact with, and more co-operation from, government and other support agencies:

It takes two minutes to pick a phone up – they don't bother. They expect me to ring, chase them, fill their forms in and demand such and such a time. I ring them up for something and it's up to four months without a reply. [Facilitator: You just want them to pick up a phone?]

Yeah, that's all they need to do, it would take two minutes to say 'Hello … can't stop now, talk to you later.' Then at least you know somebody got your message. The way we are at the moment you speak to [voice mail] all the time and you really don't know if somebody else listens to it or not. (Grandparent, grandparents raising grandchildren focus group)

We had a meeting with the lady from CYFS, [our daughter's] case worker and she can't give us advice, 'cos she's not allowed to. There doesn't seem to be anybody you can turn to. All they do is give you brochures and booklets … there's nowhere where you can go and say, look, we're looking at doing this, who can help us? Because they'll say, we can give you advice, but we're not really supposed to. (Focus group grandfather living with and helping to raise grandchildren)

8.5 SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Cox (2007) describes the benefits of support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren, which include combating a sense of isolation, and educating grandparents about parenting issues as well as services. In New Zealand, the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren charitable trust has 48 support groups throughout the country and just over 4,100 individual members.

As well as supporting each other, group members lobby parliament, hold conferences, network and speak to many community organisations.

The aims of the trust[76] are to:

> provide support to grandparents who are primary caregivers

> provide opportunities for the grandchildren to meet others in the same situation

> raise awareness as to the role of the grandparents in the primary caregiving role

> undertake research to establish the depth of grandparents in the primary caregiver role in New Zealand and respond accordingly

> facilitate change in the legal and child custody systems.

76 http://www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz/

As noted earlier, focus group grandparents raising grandchildren talked about high levels of tension, stress and frustration as they tried to maintain their own time, space and relationships. Some Couch poll grandparents mentioned similar strains:

My husband and I separated due to the stress of raising my grandaughter. After counselling we are now back together and support each other. We have also had to find a bigger and a more child friendly house. We now have to make a date just to have time for just my husband and I. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Worrall (2009) describes the psychological and behavioural problems of the grandchildren in her sample. These included, for example, nightmares, attachment disorders, high anxiety and depression. Worrall's research suggests that the effect of stability and committed care can result in improvement in the children's physical and psychological health over time. In our focus groups, grandparents also described some of the problems experienced by the grandchildren they care for. A significant area of stress for grandparents raising their grandchildren related to the children's questions as they attempt to understand what has happened to their parents:

What really hurts [are] the 'Why's'… 'Why doesn't mummy want us, why didn't she want us?' [I say] 'I don't know, love.' I'm not going to sit there and tell her that her mother is a drug addict, I can't do that. [Another participant: You'll have to one day.]

Yeah, well she's only nine. 'Why doesn't my daddy want to see me?' Well, another loser. Sorry, but gang member, drug abuser… I got [my grandson] when he was 15 months old, his father is not running on all six [cylinders], drugs and stuff … still in jail… (Grandfather, grandparents raising grandchildren focus group)

In an effort to provide a break, alleviate some of the pressures faced by grandparents and give young people "a positive holiday experience", in 2009 the New Zealand Government announced a new initiative that provides 500 places in Residential Respite Camps. The camps will have a focus on children aged five to seven. Foster parents and extended whānau who are providing care for children will also be eligible to apply for a place. Te Puna Whaiora Children's Health Camps will initially run the camps, under contract to the Ministry of Social Development. The camps will be held throughout the country and will operate during the school holidays:

> Caregivers, families or grandparents who are caring for a young person as a result of a breakdown in the young person's family need to be able to have a break from what is a very difficult role. The programme reflects the Government's commitment to supporting caregivers and recognises their important role in nurturing the young person in their care. (Break-Away Package Fact Sheet, September 2009)[77]

Out of school services (OSS), are before-school, after-school and school-holiday programmes for school-aged children (aged five to 13 years), where the care of a child has been formally handed over from a parent or caregiver to an OSS provider. OSS provides support and relief for grandparents caring for grandchildren (particularly those in paid work), as well as enrichment activities and experiences for children. Grandparent carers participating in the Families Commission's (2007) consultation on OSS described unmet needs in this area (eg, the lack of OSS services in rural areas, as well as difficulty coping with the number of school holidays occurring each year).

The Families Commission set up a series of Parents' Panels throughout New Zealand to hear the voices of parents (and grandparents raising grandchildren) about issues affecting New Zealand families. Panel members are drawn from diverse backgrounds

77 https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/newsroom/media-releases/news/2009/break-away-information-stakeholders.doc

and meet as a group three times a year to discuss topical issues. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Parents' Panel met four times and many of the concerns they raised are mirrored elsewhere in this report. These include the financial stress that many are under and the ongoing '24/7' demands upon their time. As one Parents' Panel member explained:

Inch by inch, it's a cinch, yard by yard, it's hard. Making those ends meet to cover birthdays, Christmas, a family holiday, petrol money and spending money for those unexpected costs, school expenses, school uniforms, school camps, the list is endless, hence the need for an 'annual plan'. (Grandparent, Families Commission's Parents' Panel)

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Parents' Panel will provide an ongoing forum for grandparents raising grandchildren to express their thoughts and needs to the Families Commission. There will also be opportunities for the grandparents who take part to meet with others who share their situation.

8.6 SUMMARY

Grandparents raising grandchildren have clearly defined information and support needs. In particular, this research suggests priorities for information and support in the following areas:

- Information about their legal rights and support to navigate custody issues.
- Assistance with financial costs associated with raising grandchildren.
- Developing positive relationships with government agencies, particularly Child, Youth and Family, and Work and Income.
- Access to counselling, respite care and out-of-school services.
- Social and emotional support.
- Information about the education system and how to support their grandchildren's education.

9. GRANDPARENTS' INFORMATION AND SUPPORT NEEDS

Photo: Michael Kerslake

One of the project aims was to identify grandparents' unmet needs for support, information or advice. The need for recognition, acknowledgement and valuing of the grandparent role was often voiced in the focus group discussions, consistent with findings from international research.[78]

Grandparents across all focus groups strongly endorsed the focus group discussions as a way of sharing experiences and valuing their roles. One focus group participant suggested acknowledging grandparents' value by holding celebrations:

The only time I can think of my nana, for example, being celebrated is at her 70th birthday. Don't get me wrong … everyone knew my nana, she had huge mana in her community. And she may not have even wanted to be celebrated, but I think perhaps in these times when we don't have as much time available to us to acknowledge and value our grandparents, that some sort of celebration just for them needs to happen. (Participant, Māori focus group)

Another suggested an intergenerational day out, to benefit both younger and older family members:

As grandparents, we [could] have a day out with our mokos – we make it a day, so we are actually interacting and we can share ideas and kōrero at the same time while our mokos are playing. (Grandparent, Māori focus group)

Throughout this report, the needs of particular groups of grandparents were raised. The range of other information and support needs emerging from the focus groups, Couch poll and forum consultations are presented in this section. Further research would help to determine how widespread some of these needs are. The research team also acknowledge that there could be grandparents with specific support needs not identified within this report, and those who might need additional targeted information and support.

78 See, for example, Grandparents Plus (2009), *Rethinking Family Life: Exploring the role of grandparents and the wider family.*

9.1 ADDRESSING THEIR NEEDS

Findings from this research indicate that some of the pressures experienced by grandparents could be alleviated through the provision of tailored information and support. Grandparents need to be equipped with the awareness and knowledge to identify their own priorities, make sound choices and negotiate solutions that will work best for them and their family (eg, the extent that they contribute to caring for grandchildren).

Information and support for grandparents should be channelled to places where they can access it easily. This research suggests that grandparents are likely to look for support, information and advice from a range of sources, including the Internet, family and friends, community facilities, government and non-government organisations, printed material and through other networks such as church communities. Support directed through channels targeted towards older people will not reach all grandparents, as not all are 'older'.

This study highlighted grandparents' needs for information and support in the following areas:

Negotiating boundaries

> balancing time spent with grandchildren with grandparents' own needs, interests, work and other responsibilities

> negotiating and setting boundaries within the family (eg, around requests for childcare)

> recognising and responding to health and physical limitations associated with ageing, disability or illness which may affect relationships with grandchildren and other family members.

Ongoing personal development

> developing and maintaining community, social and cultural networks and interests (eg, networks with other grandparents, strategies to counter social or cultural isolation)

> strengthening technological skills and computer literacy (eg, developing confidence and competency for email or Skype[79] conversations to maintain contact with family members not living nearby, mastering texting)

> providing opportunities for grandparents to 'learn how to grandparent', particularly for those with no role models

> recognising and protecting against elder abuse and neglect.

Financial advice

> budgeting skills and support to help grandparents to manage their own finances (if needed) and to manage financial contributions to their families, as well as to acquire skills to share with family members

> strategies for managing the cost of travel, particularly for those grandparents with families living elsewhere in New Zealand or overseas.

79 Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet. Calls to other Skype users, and in some countries to free-of-charge numbers, are free, while calls to other landlines and mobile phones can be made for a fee. Additional features include instant messaging, file transfer and video conferencing.

Maintaining positive relationships

> responding to changing family dynamics and being involved and supportive in grandchildren's lives during times of transition such as family separation and re-partnership

> balancing time spent with grandchildren with time spent with partners and other family members

> managing and responding to grandchildren's behaviour (eg, having age-appropriate expectations)

> strengthening intergenerational relationships (eg, by developing awareness of generational changes in parenting styles and practices, child discipline attitudes and practices, current child-safety guidelines and regulations)

> learning how to support grandchildren's education; increased opportunities for grandparents to visit early childhood centres and schools[80]

> sustaining close relationships with grandchildren in the face of mobility/geographic distance (eg, through the use of technology)

> adapting to changes or variations in family structures, practices and traditions arising as a result of cross-cultural relationships.

9.1.1 Being in paid work

For those grandparents who are still active in the labour market, efforts to promote family-friendly work arrangements will make it easier for grandparents to balance their own paid work with time they want to spend with their grandchildren. It will also enable them to provide additional support to their adult children who are juggling care and work responsibilities. The support needs of grandparents in paid work include:

> awareness of their right to request flexible working arrangements

> workplace cultures that encourage flexible work arrangements so that caring responsibilities can be met.

9.1.2 Grandparents raising grandchildren

Increasing numbers of New Zealand grandparents are becoming the primary caregivers for children whose parents are unwilling or unable to provide care (often because the adult children have drug and/or alcohol problems). As described in a previous section of this report, the support needs for grandparents in this situation include:

> access to reliable information about legal rights, guardianship, day-to-day care and contact and benefit eligibility, particularly for grandparents who are raising grandchildren

> assistance with financial needs (including housing and accommodation, educational, medical and other costs associated with raising grandchildren)

> developing positive relationships with government agencies, particularly Child, Youth and Family, and Work and Income

80 Goal 8 of New Zealand's Positive Ageing Strategy is to "Promote intergenerational programmes in schools and communities". The Office for Senior Citizens, within the Ministry of Social Development, encourages schools to organise regular activities that bring young and old people together, especially during the month of October that is designated as 'Greats and Grands' month. This provides opportunities to thank older people for the contribution they make to schools or communities. Activities can include mentoring, buddy reading, fun sports events, concerts, sharing memories of schooldays, taking part in assemblies, school tours, debates, exchange skills days and similar events.

- access to counselling, regular respite care and to subsidised out-of-school care and recreation programmes
- social and emotional support – from other grandparents in the same situation, as well as more widespread understanding of the unique needs and circumstances of grandparent-led families (eg, amongst educators and employers)
- information about the education system (from early childhood onwards), including curriculum changes, NCEA and current approaches to supporting the development of literacy and numeracy skills
- access to services available to parents (as grandparents are in a parenting role)
- recognition of and protection against vulnerability to elder abuse and neglect.

9.1.3 Māori grandparents

Māori grandparents frequently have whānau responsibilities in addition to their grandparenting roles. They can also face unique challenges to maintaining traditional grandparent-mokopuna relationships, particularly if they are isolated from whānau support networks. The support needs for Māori grandparents include:

- recognition of the important role that grandparents play within an iwi context in teaching, role modelling and supporting younger whānau members
- awareness that Māori grandparents hold cultural knowledge and wisdom and the generation of opportunities for this to be transmitted (in the face of challenges such as urbanisation, emigration)
- recognition of both kaumātua and grandparenting roles, and support and acknowledgement for Māori who undertake multiple roles within iwi and whānau.

9.1.4 Migrant grandparents

Migrant grandparents can experience social, cultural and geographical isolation. This isolation can be compounded when their English language skills are not well developed. The support needs for migrant grandparents include:

- support to counteract isolation, such as developing and maintaining social and cultural networks and providing regular opportunities to develop and strengthen English language skills
- recognition of grandparents' responsibilities regarding the transmission of language, culture and values, and the maintenance of traditional roles and obligations
- learning 'how to grandparent' in the New Zealand context.

9.1.5 Separated/blended families

Grandparents in separated or blended families might need support to manage new and different family dynamics. Their support needs include:

- support with negotiating access to grandchildren and maintaining grandparent-grandchild relationships
- support with relating to 'new' family members, such as step-grandchildren and new partners

- information about managing post-separation relationships (eg, with adult children's ex-partners)
- negotiating expectations of grandparent-grandchildren relationships when grandparents themselves have re-partnered.

9.2 TELEPHONE SURVEY FINDINGS

Unprompted, most telephone survey grandparents were unable to identify information or support needs, although many expressed interest when asked to consider specific topics (as discussed later in this section). The following comments were offered by some of those who did not need any information or support:

No need for more information. I just love being there for them and I do not need to get information on that. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandmother with seven grandchildren)

We have learned it with our own kids, so nothing more to know. (70–74-year-old NZ European grandfather with two grandchildren)

Nothing – just as long as there is food on the table and everyone is healthy and happy. (45–49-year-old Māori grandmother with two grandchildren raising at least one of them)

The primary themes that emerged, when unprompted information needs were identified, included requests for information on the following topics:

- The best ways to spend quality time with grandchildren (four percent of respondents), including suitable activities for children:

  How to stimulate young children's minds, improve the quality of the time I spend with children. (40–44-year-old NZ European grandmother with two grandchildren)

  What are the activities available free of charge? Even group activities. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with four grandchildren)

- Information to help with understanding and managing grandchildren's behaviour (four percent of respondents):

  Understanding the mind of a small child. (65–69-year-old NZ European grandmother with four grandchildren)

  How to handle teenage girls. Things have changed a lot since I had kids. (65–69-year-old NZ European grandmother with eight grandchildren)

  I want to know more about how I can help my grandchildren. How should I control them in shops, parks and shopping malls? How am I to control their behaviour in public, and how to decline demands of lollies and ice-creams in shopping malls? How should I get them to behave and be more respectful? (Under 40-year-old Pacific grandfather with six grandchildren, living with but not raising at least one of them)

  Child development, how children learn, how they acquire language, managing behaviour. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandmother with one grandchild)

- Information on education and the school curriculum (three percent of respondents):

  Teachers are pretty accessible at school. Maybe grandparents should have a day where they can go and talk to teachers like parents do. (60–64-year-old NZ European grandfather with six grandchildren)

> Information on financial assistance available to grandparents, and grandparents' rights (three percent of respondents):

If I get custody of my grandchild, which is most likely to happen soon, I would like to know more on how to support ourselves and our family. (50–54-year-old New Zealand European grandmother with one grandchild, does not currently live with grandchild, telephone survey)

What are your rights and entitlements as a grandparent, such as income support? (50–54-year-old New Zealand European grandfather with three grandchildren raising at least one of them, telephone survey)

…We are very isolated, I would like the state to realise that we are taking on the parental role and would like more financial contributions. (65–69-year-old New Zealand European grandmother with four grandchildren raising at least one of them, telephone survey)

More rights as a grandparent. My daughter-in-law doesn't let her children come to my place and I am not allowed to see them. There should be more rights so that I can go to their schools and see how they are coping. (60–64-year-old New Zealand European grandmother with three grandchildren, living with but not raising at least one of them, telephone survey)

A follow-up question asked respondents to rate their degree of interest in information about a range of topics. Table 19 shows the percentage of respondents who said that they were either 'very' or 'fairly' interested in specific types of information. The information categories, with which respondents were prompted, were developed based on needs expressed by focus group, forum and Couch poll participants.

TABLE 19: INTEREST IN SPECIFIC INFORMATION (PROMPTED) – TOTAL INTERESTED (TELEPHONE SURVEY)

HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS? ARE YOU VERY INTERESTED, FAIRLY INTERESTED, NOT THAT INTERESTED OR NOT AT ALL INTERESTED IN INFORMATION ABOUT [THE FOLLOWING TOPICS]?

	ALL (N=1,000) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=834) %	MĀORI (N=162) %	PACIFIC (N=100) %
Activities and events that grandparents can share with their grandchildren	65	63	65	79
The school curriculum and what else is being taught in schools	61	60	64	78
What to expect of grandchildren at different ages and stages	55	54	54	76
Managing grandchildren's behaviour	48	47	56	73
How to have good relationships with grandchildren who do not live nearby or who you seldom see	46	47	49	59
Drug, alcohol or other addictions that can affect family relationships	44	45	49	59
How to keep in touch with grandchildren when their parents separate	34	33	49	66
How to balance your own time with the time spent with your grandchildren	31	29	46	60
How to respond to requests and demands from grandchildren for money and other gifts	27	26	37	60
How to turn down requests to look after grandchildren when it doesn't suit you	18	18	21	44

Base: All respondents

Further analysis of the telephone survey data showed that many of those who wanted information on one topic also wanted it on another topic. The data generally support the view that respondents can be divided into three groups:

> those who were conscious that they needed more information and suggested topics that they would like to find out without prompting (16 percent of respondents)

> those who had a less pressing need for information, but signalled interest in topics once prompted (67 percent of respondents)

> those who were not interested in information on grandparenting even after being prompted (the 17 percent of all respondents in the main survey who reported that they were not interested in any of the topics tested in the survey).

9.2.1 Potential sources

Telephone survey respondents were asked who they would like to be able to ask, or where they would like to be able to go, to get advice, support or information about grandparenting or grandchildren. Wide ranges of suggestions were offered, including individuals, organisations and media channels.

Possible sources of advice, support or information included family members (mentioned by 18 percent of respondents in the main survey), and other people, such as friends (14 percent of respondents) or experts:

People who had experience with grandchildren before. (70–74-year-old NZ European grandmother with four grandchildren, telephone survey)

The organisations identified included:

> community facilities (mentioned by 17 percent of respondents), including Citizens Advice Bureaux (six percent) and libraries (five percent)

> charities, advocacy groups and support groups (mentioned by eight percent of respondents), including Plunket (two percent)

> Churches and other religious organisations/sources (four percent of respondents):

  I would go to The Good Book – The Bible. (55–59-year-old Māori grandfather with three grandchildren, telephone survey)

The main media channel mentioned was the Internet (nine percent of respondents), which came in well ahead of an 0800 telephone service (two percent), books (one percent), magazines (one percent) and television programmes (one percent):

The internet in general. I like to be able to Google it. (55–59-year-old NZ European grandmother with five grandchildren, telephone survey)

Google and Yahoo – where I can view the pictures. (75+ grandfather with seven grandchildren, telephone survey)

Overall, just over one-third of respondents did not offer any suggestions when asked who they would like to be able to ask or where they would like to be able to go if they wanted advice, support or information. The verbatim response below reflects one reason for this. It is also possible that those who offered no suggestions did not want advice, support or information:

Well I didn't have any luck when I needed information about help with one of my children, so I don't really know if there is help available or where we can go for help. (65–69-year-old NZ European grandmother with five grandchildren, telephone survey)

Just over one-third of Māori and Pacific respondents said that they would like to be able to ask family members for advice, support or information, as illustrated in the following comment:

Kuia and koro in the community who know my moko. (60–64-year-old Māori grandfather with 11–15 grandchildren, telephone survey)

TABLE 20: WHERE TO GO FOR ADVICE

IF YOU WANTED ADVICE, SUPPORT OR INFORMATION ABOUT GRANDPARENTING OR GRANDCHILDREN, WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ABLE TO ASK OR WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ABLE TO GO?

	ALL (N=1,000) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=834) %	MĀORI (N=162) %	PACIFIC (N=100) %
Family members	18	18	34	39
Community facilities	17	18	19	16
Other people (eg, friends)	14	15	7	10
Internet	9	9	7	5
Charities, advocacy groups and support networks	8	8	12	13
Doctors' surgeries	4	4	7	8
Religious organisations	4	4	4	10
Media	3	4	2	3
Government agencies	3	3	4	7
0800 telephone line	2	2	3	1
No suggestions	38	36	28	14
Unsure	1	1	1	2

Base: All respondents; multiple response

9.2.2 Couch poll responses

Grandparents who responded to the Families Commission Couch poll made similar suggestions about where relevant information for grandparents could be provided, including existing websites (such as those managed by the Families Commission and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust), marae, Plunket, doctors' surgeries, community centres, libraries, churches, Citizens Advice Bureaux, SeniorNet, Age Concern, schools and early childhood services. Focus group respondents offered comparable suggestions.

The following quotes show some of the suggestions offered by *The Couch* respondents regarding how information for grandparents might be disseminated:

Pamphlets – because not everybody has a computer; articles in newspapers – local and national; inserts in papers; pamphlets at libraries, not only at government departments – not everybody has a street letterbox – we don't. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

I think it would be great to share this information with parents at schools, Kōhanga Reo and childcare centres. My son's school has a 'Grandparents Day' once per year, which I'd like to see increased. It gives the grandparents a real sense of belonging and being a part of their grandchild's life. Some grandparents speak about how much they missed of their own child's school life because of work commitments or working out of town etc. Make it a forum where this information and support can be shared in this environment. The grandchildren feel very proud when their grandparents come to their school for something really special that only a grandparent can receive. (Grandmother, Māori, Couch poll respondent)

I think a variety of media is a good choice. Television campaigns etc are good. Books on being an effective grandparent would be great, much like Ian Grant's *Raising Boys*... I like a good read and something I can revisit. Promoting the non-smacking idea with alternatives. Picking when a family is stressed and ideas of [how to] help: the how and when, rather than a blaming culture would be great. Respecting new ways of parenting which includes things like toileting [and] nutrition, as it's very easy to want to give advice on how I did it. When you see [parents'] views and why they are doing this, you can respect their decisions. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

Service and support providers should recognise the variety of ways in which grandparents prefer to receive information and assistance. Sources should take into account the cultural, social, psychological, financial (and other) needs of grandparents, recognising the diversity existing within this population. It is especially important to remain aware that not all grandparents are 'older', meaning that support and information for grandparents should be directed through channels beyond those targeted at older people.

9.3 ROLE-MODELLING

A theme that was evident throughout the focus group discussions, particularly among Māori, was that participants who experienced a strong nurturing relationship with their own grandparents when they were young, looked forward to the grandparenting role and felt a special relationship with their own grandchildren. For some focus group participants, memories of their own positive relationships with their grandparents were a vital influence. Some focus group participants mourned the loss of their own grandparents. Several grandparents expressed sadness at their inability to replicate the strong bonds they shared with their grandparents in their relationships with their grandchildren, particularly if their grandchildren did not live close by (or lived in another country):

I know with my grandmother, we lived with her – all the first cousins. She took the whole lot of us in and my grandmother's house was like a marae 24/7. My children have grown up not having their grandparents on both sides, mother's and father's side. All of them have experienced not having those grandparents around. …I have awesome memories. My grandmother was our rock. She passed away, she's been gone now for about 15 years, even longer. I hurt for my children today that have grown up without their grandparents. …I still grieve today over my mother and my grandmother – both of them are gone. The only time I feel like my grandmother is around is when whānau, like her daughters, my aunties, come from Australia and when they're at my whare, I feel like my aunties have brought the rest of my uncles, my grandfather, my grandmother – they are here with us today. I feel that spiritually. Other than that I miss them dearly. I miss them dearly for my kids and for myself. (Focus group grandmother, Māori)

I'm being greedy wanting the time to be able to grandparent as my grandmother grandparented me, all those years ago. (Focus group grandmother, New Zealand European)

A Grandparents Plus (2009) report suggests that perhaps the most significant point at which grandparents influence parents is when a baby is born. The report recommends explicitly targeting grandparents with advice and information, as a critical pathway for reaching parents. They suggest that national campaigns aimed at changing parental or family behaviour limit their impact and effectiveness if a strategy for reaching and influencing grandparents is not developed. Grandparents can play a pivotal role in supporting and encouraging parents, as well as grandchildren:

[It] makes my life a lot easier, makes me feel very secure always knowing they are there to help. Makes me feel very loved. I know when I have grandkids I want to give them what my grandparents have given me – they're my heroes. (Female, 'other ethnicity', Couch poll respondent)

I enjoy most of the time spent with most of the older members of our family. I love the interest they have in the children, knowledge and wisdom they share with us and the kids. Backing us up as parents, if they don't tell us we are doing well who will? You need all the help and encouragement you can get. (Mother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

There may be a societal assumption that grandparents know 'how to grandparent'. Yet grandparents who have not had exposure to role models through their own families, whānau or social networks, might not know what is expected of them:

I never had grandparents or never lived near relations and I didn't raise my family (four children) having any family near by, but I am living in the same town as all my grandchildren. So especially with my daughter's children finding [out] what is the role of a grandparent, how much time is a good amount of time, what does a healthy relationship look like? (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

I have never had a grandparent and I do not know anyone close to me who are grandparents/social contacts. (50–54-year-old Māori grandmother with seven grandchildren raising at least one of them, telephone survey)

Two of the participants in our Korean migrant focus group were 'expectant grandparents', who came along to listen to others and learn about the grandparent's role, in preparation for the upcoming birth of their own grandchild. A number of focus group participants expressed thanks to the research team for the opportunity to discuss grandparenting issues, to share their own experiences and learn from others. For some grandparents, such opportunities are very limited.

10. CONCLUSIONS

This report describes the findings from a multi-method study on the experiences of grandparents in New Zealand. It draws on both quantitative and qualitative data, supplemented by national and international research literature. Grandparents in New Zealand are a very diverse group that spans ages and cultures and this diversity must be reflected in policy decisions that may impact grandparents' lives.

Involvement with grandchildren runs across a continuum – ranging from grandparents who have no contact at all with their grandchildren (not always by choice) to grandparents who are raising grandchildren full-time. The relationships between grandparents and grandchildren generate significant benefits for both generations – and grandchildren's parents often benefit from grandparents' involvement in their lives as well. Increasingly, families with both parents in paid work need support from their extended families to balance their work and family life. Grandparents, especially grandmothers, often step into a caring role.

The research shows that for most grandparents in this study, the pleasures of grandparenting outweighed the pressures. Grandparents spoke of the pleasurable experiences of nurturing and observing grandchildren's development, sharing happy times and passing on skills, knowledge and wisdom to the next generation. Māori, Pacific and Korean grandparents also spoke about their responsibility and desire to share their cultural practices, protocols and beliefs and to teach grandchildren the language of their culture.

However, for some, grandparenting places considerable strain on their own time, energy and resources. Grandparents need to be aware of, and confident about, identifying their own priorities and developing and negotiating solutions and compromises that will work best for them and their family. Support from others might be needed to do so, particularly during times of transition and where conflict exists within the family. Despite existing pressures and obstacles, many grandparents described their resiliency and flexibility as they adapt and respond to changing family dynamics as well as to other changes that can lead to increased demands upon them.

Our research suggests that the grandparents most likely to feel under pressure are:

> grandparents who are raising their grandchildren (as the primary caregivers)

> grandparents juggling multiple demands on their time, including childcare

> Māori grandparents, who need support to ensure that they are able to share traditional wisdom and practices with their mokopuna in the face of increasing pressures on traditional ways of teaching roles and responsibilities, and the erosion of traditional whānau supports through urbanisation and emigration

> grandparents whose finances are stretched due to the financial contributions they are making to their grandchildren and their families

> migrant grandparents.

10.1 FINDINGS

The key findings from this research are listed below. Many of these will be of interest to policymakers, employers and others in the community working with and for grandparents:

> Grandparents' contributions to New Zealand families must be recognised and valued. Grandparents need a stronger voice in the development of policies and services which impact on them. Ways need to be identified to promote the benefits and positive experiences of grandparenthood and how to encourage and support grandparents to be actively involved in their grandchildren's lives.

> Policies and service provision need to respond to the diverse nature of grandparents' roles, family structures, lifestyles, relationships, culture and demographic characteristics.

> The provision of clear and easily accessible support and information for grandparents needs to be improved, tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. In particular, information is needed in the areas of personal development and boundary setting, financial and legal advice and relationship management. Grandparents also need to gain better awareness of what support and information are available for them.

> Grandparents who are still active in the labour market need continued support to balance family and work, and to be aware of their rights (if eligible) to flexible work practices. The provision of extended leave to meet caring responsibilities could be explored.

> Grandparents raising grandchildren have unique needs which are not all being adequately addressed. In particular, they require improved support (financial and respite) and more information on their legal and financial rights.

> Māori grandparents need support to ensure that they are able to share traditional wisdom and practices with their mokopuna in the face of modern barriers, such as the loss of cultural knowledge from the ongoing effects of historical processes including colonisation, urbanisation, emigration and the intrusion of technology.

> Migrant grandparents need support to counter social, cultural and geographic isolation.

> Grandparents in separated, blended and re-partnered families may need information and support to manage new family dynamics.

There is a recurring theme in the findings that indicates that some of the pressures experienced by grandparents could be alleviated through the provision of information and support tailored to their needs.

Information and support for grandparents should be channelled to places where they will be able to access it easily. This research suggests that grandparents are likely to look for support, information and advice from a range of sources, including the Internet, family and friends, community facilities, government and non-government organisations, printed material and through other networks such as church communities. Support directed through channels targeted towards older people will not reach all grandparents as not all are in the 'older' age group.

Overall, this study highlighted grandparents' needs for information and support in the following areas:

> negotiating boundaries

> personal development

> financial, legal and other advice

> maintaining positive (intergenerational) relationships.

The information and support in these areas should be tailored to the specific characteristics of grandparent groups. These groups include:

> grandparents who are juggling paid work and grandparenting responsibilities

> grandparents raising grandchildren

> other grandparents with childcare commitments

> Māori grandparents

> migrant grandparents

> grandparents in separated/blended/re-partnered families

> grandparents who are under financial pressure due to the contributions they are making to their grandchildren and their families.

11. THE WAY FORWARD

He mokopuna, he taonga – grandchildren are precious. (Grandmother, Māori focus group)

The Families Commission intends to advocate for grandparents so that they are well supported in balancing their grandparenting roles with other aspects of their lives.

The Commission will work with other agencies to promote better access to information, services and support for grandparents, as well as to increase grandparents' awareness of what is already available. The Commission will continue to seek opportunities to learn about grandparents' needs and issues, through our work programme and external networks. This will include working closely with the Commission's own Whānau Reference Group and Ethnic Reference Group, as well as other agencies working with and for grandparents.

Through the Families Commission's whānau ora strategy, the Commission is seeking to be instrumental in adding value to whānau voices on issues of relevance and importance to whānau Māori. Emphasis is given to the development of strong, resilient whānau able to manage through times of challenge and change and lead their own development. Within the whānau, Māori grandparents are repositories of cultural knowledge and wisdom; the kaumātua leadership role within iwi and whānau has compatible responsibilities with the grandparenting role and both roles should continue to be honoured and valued.

Looking forward, the Families Commission will work in partnership with others to explore the most appropriate ways to provide information for grandparents, covering the variety of topics and issues raised in the research. The focus will be on enabling grandparents to develop and negotiate solutions and compromises that will allow them to meet their own needs. At the same time, the information provided will assist grandparents with making choices about the extent and frequency of contributions made to grandchildren and their families.

Economic, practical and emotional support for family wellbeing primarily comes from within families, but communities, government and society also have important support roles. By identifying what is needed, not only by individual grandparents, but also by grandparents as a whole, collectively ways can be found to effectively support grandparents' wellbeing and resilience.

We conclude this report with the words of grandparents as they reflect upon being a grandparent in New Zealand today. Our hope is for all grandparents in New Zealand to experience the positive feelings these grandparents describe:

Grandparenting is for me a tremendous privilege and joy. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

The pleasures: it's the warmth and the hugs and the love and the wonderful times… the whole pleasure of nurturing the development of the next generation is just awesome. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, focus group)

Being grandparents is the most fascinating and rewarding experience of our lives. (Grandmother, New Zealand European, Couch poll respondent)

We are grateful for four beautiful mokopuna, our legacy in life is that they in turn give to their children and mokopuna the same knowledge, love and care that they have received. (Grandfather, Māori focus group)

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APPENDIX 1

OVERVIEW OF FOCUS GROUPS

FOCUS GROUP	NO OF PARTICIPANTS	WOMEN	MEN	ETHNICITY	LOCATION
Group 1	11	8	3	Māori	North Island city
Group 2	8	6	2	Mixed	South Island rural community
Group 3	7	5	2	Māori	North Island suburb
Group 4	14	10	4	Korean	South Island city
Group 5	14	11	3	Samoan	North Island city
Group 6	7	6	1	Cook Islands	North Island city
Group 7	8	6	2	Mixed	South Island provincial city
Group 8	8	7	1	Māori	North Island provincial city
Group 9	5	4	1	Mixed	North Island city
TOTAL	**82**	**63**	**19**		

NOTES:

a) The focus group participants included three women supporting their father/mother in their grandparent role; two expectant grandparents; and those who acted in a grandparent role.

b) There were three participants who could not attend focus groups, but wanted their stories to be heard. Two wrote a letter, and one consented to an individual interview. Their demographic data are not included in the table above, but their experiences are included in the main report.

Group 1: Urban Māori – older grandparents

Ten grandparents participated in this predominantly Māori focus group, including three grandfathers. Two participants attended to support their mother or father in their roles as a grandparent and great-grandparent – and one of these was herself a grandmother. The participants' ages ranged from the mid-40s to the late 70s. Among the grandparents there were multiple grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

This group particularly welcomed the opportunities offered by the focus group discussion and hoped to continue to meet regularly.

Group 2: Rural community – mixed ages; predominantly New Zealand European

A diverse group of eight grandparents participated in this focus group, including two grandfathers. Their ages ranged between 45 and 74 years. There were two sets of married couples, and three women who lived alone. Among the grandparents there were 33 grandchildren, from newborn to 18 years.

The group included two grandparents in paid work. Another grandparent living in the same community was unable to attend because of work commitments. This grandparent asked to meet individually with the focus group facilitator to share their experiences.

Group 3: Urban Māori – younger grandparents

Seven people attended this focus group held on a marae; five women and two men. One woman attended to support her father and a young man who attended was a community/youth worker at a local school. These grandparents were predominantly younger grandparents living in a low-decile neighbourhood. Most of these grandparents were living away from a traditional whānau setting. Their ages ranged from the early 30s to the mid 50s. Among the grandparents there were 27 grandchildren.

Group 4: Urban migrant – older grandparents

The participants in this focus group were Korean grandparents, and the meeting was conducted in the Korean language to enable participants to speak freely.[81]

Fourteen people attended, including three married couples. There were nine grandmothers and three grandfathers, as well as a married couple, who were 'expectant grandparents', who wanted to learn about grandparenting. The grandparents' ages were estimated to be between 70 and 80 years, and the expectant grandparents were in their 60s.

All participants, except two, were older migrants who came to New Zealand to be close to their children and grandchildren. They had been in New Zealand for an average of eight years. The expectant grandparents immigrated to this country as middle-aged adults.

Four grandparents in three households were raising grandchildren (the parents were either in their home country or in another country), four were living with grandchildren in three generational households and four grandparents lived separately from their children and grandchildren. Among the grandparents there were 28 grandchildren.[82]

Group 5: Urban Samoan – older grandparents

This focus group was conducted in Samoan.[83] Fourteen grandparents participated, all of whom were born and raised in Samoa, but have spent most of their life in New Zealand where English is their second language. The majority live in an extended family environment with their children and grandchildren, and almost all are not in paid employment, but are receiving the pension. The majority of the participants play an active role in the upbringing of their grandchildren.

Participants have 53 children, 113 grandchildren and one great-grandchild among them, some of whom are living overseas. Five of the grandparents are widowed.

The grandparents are members of a Pacific church, and belong to the same recreational group.

Group 6: Urban Cook Islands – older grandparents

This focus group meeting was conducted in English.[84] There were seven in the group, six women and one man.[85] One woman, who did not have any grandchildren, wanted to listen to what the others in the group had to say. The group had 57 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren among them. Many of these grandchildren were not living in New Zealand. The grandparents' ages ranged from mid-70s to mid-80s.

81 The facilitator recruited participants in an agreed process that complied with the Ethics Committee requirements. A research assistant, who was present in the meeting, transcribed the meeting notes under the facilitator's supervision. The facilitator also made a summary of the key points and translated these in discussion with a WEB Research team member, and a detailed write-up of the notes was produced from a series of meetings.
82 This number may be understated, as participants may not have included grandchildren of their daughters, or those in Korea, because of their cultural practices or transnational family situations.
83 Two Samoan facilitators recruited participants in an agreed process that complied with the Ethics Committee requirements. The facilitators produced a detailed write-up of the discussion, and verbatim passages were translated.
84 This may have reduced the level of participation among some of the participants.
85 One of the women and the man were not grandparents, but wished to participate in the group regardless.

The participants played an active role in the upbringing of their grandchildren who lived locally. One participant's grandchild had a disability and so the grandmother provided care for this child. One of the participants had her children and grandchildren living with her until they could find their own accommodation.

Many of the participants' grandchildren or great-grandchildren lived overseas.

Group 7: Grandparents raising grandchildren – mixed ages; predominantly New Zealand European

Eight grandparents who were raising grandchildren attended, two of whom were grandfathers. There was more than 40 years' age difference between the youngest and oldest grandparents. Between them the grandparents were caring for 14 grandchildren, some in a guardianship role, some had custody and others were trying to get custody rights. Their grandchildren's ages ranged from two to 28 years.

Grandparents in this focus group were drawn from a pre-existing group of grandparents raising grandchildren, who offer support for each other and receive guidance and help with court proceedings and other matters from those with previous experience.[86]

Group 8: Provincial Māori – older grandparents

This focus group of seven older grandmothers and one older grandfather – one between the ages of 60–64, five over 70 and one over 80 – were grandparents and great-grandparents. There were over 127 grandchildren among the group of participants.

We began and ended the hui in the traditional way with a karakia. The participants introduced themselves in Māori, but the focus group was conducted in English.

All were very active in maintaining oversight of the whānau, and were involved in kaupapa Māori activities and organisations and with their whānau. All knew each other and were keen to participate in discussions about grandparenting. A number had fluency in te reo Māori, although the focus group was conducted in English.

Group 9: Urban grandparents – mixed ages; predominantly New Zealand European

This group comprised five grandparents, including two couples, one of which was a lesbian couple and the other a couple who have grandchildren (and the children's mother) living with them. Another was a grandparent who co-parents a grandchild; the grandparent and the child's mother have purchased a home to enable them to all live together. Most of these grandparents were in paid employment.

The ages of this group ranged from mid-50s to mid-70s. One grandparent also cared for an elderly mother.

86 The co-ordinator of the group assisted the research team with recruitment.

APPENDIX 2

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

The following questions were used as a guide to facilitate discussion. Due to pressures of time and so that the facilitators could be responsive to other topics raised spontaneously within the groups, some of the questions were not discussed within all groups. The key questions discussed within all groups related to pleasures, pressures, lifestyle changes, balance and contributions to grandchildren's lives, advice, information and support needed and potential sources of such.

As each focus group began, participants were invited to introduce themselves and to state the number and ages of their grandchildren.

Current experiences

1. What are the main pleasures, and what are the main pressures, of being a grandparent?

2. In what ways do you contribute to the development of your grandchildren?[87] This could be physically, emotionally, spiritually, culturally and/or other ways.

3. What is uniquely (culturally-specific) in your relationship with your grandchildren and critical to their development and potential?

Lifestyle changes

4. a) Have you made any lifestyle changes so that you can spend more time with your grandchildren?

   b) If you have made changes, how have they affected you?

Balance

5. a) Do you think you have the right balance between the time you spend with your grandchildren and the time that you have for yourself (eg, for your other interests, paid work and so on)?

   b) Overall, is the amount of time that you spend with your grandchildren:

   – too much

   – about right

   – too little.

Childcare

6. a) If you provide care for your grandchildren, have you discussed with your grandchildren's parents how much time you are willing to spend providing care for your grandchildren?

   b) How easy was it to have this conversation?

87 Question adapted from the LiLAC study: Life and Living in Advanced Age cohort study, *Te Puawaitanga O Nga Tapuwae Kia ora Tonu*. (A Health Research Council of NZ-funded project, located in the School of Population Health, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, The University of Auckland.)

Advice, information and support needed

7. What sort of advice, information or support do you need as a grandparent? (For example, from the children's parents, your partner, your employer, your community, from government.) We are particularly interested in hearing about:

   a) anything that could help you to achieve or maintain the right balance between the time that you spend with your grandchildren and the time that you are able to spend on your own interests and activities, paid work and/or with your own friends

   b) skills, techniques or tools you might require to keep up with your grandchildren's education, interests and activities

   c) resources you need to support the relationship and development of your grandchildren.

8. How and where do you think this advice, information or support should be made available to grandparents who would like to receive it?

Compensation

9. Do you think that grandparents should receive any compensation for the care they provide their grandchildren? And if so, what?

Learning to be a grandparent

10. How and where did you learn to be a grandparent? (For example, how do your cultural beliefs and/or the relationship you had with your own grandparents influence your own grandparenting role?)

APPENDIX 3

TELEPHONE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Changing roles of grandparents – March 2009

NOTE: The complete questionnaire (including codes, full range of answer options and administrative directions) is presented as an appendix within the separate telephone survey report. "Refused" and "unsure" answers were accepted options to questions.

NOTE: Some question numbers do not appear (eg Q6) as they existed only in early drafts of the questionnaire and were subsequently deleted. Due to question routing, some questions are not in sequential order.

INTRO We are conducting a nationwide survey on behalf of the Families Commission looking at the role of grandparents in New Zealand today.

Your phone number was selected at random and your individual answers will remain completely confidential.
Is there a [XXX] in the household who is a grandparent?

G1 Are any of your grandchildren, including step-grandchildren, under the age of 18?

G2 Before we start, I'd like to let you know that you can choose not to answer any individual question in the survey, or to end the interview at any time, or to ask me to pause and call you again later to finish the interview. It will take approximately 25 minutes of your time. Would you like to participate in this survey?

INTERVIEWER: Enter sex of respondent (Male/Female)

F1 Firstly, we need to make sure that we speak to people of all different ages. What age group are you in?
Please stop me when I read out the appropriate age group.

☐ Under 35 ☐ 35–39 ☐ 40–44 ☐ 45–49
☐ 50–54 ☐ 55–59 ☐ 60–64 ☐ 65–69
☐ 70–74 ☐ 75 Plus

Q1 How many grandchildren do you have? _____

Q2 [If one grandchild] Is your grandchild:

☐ Under 5 years old ☐ 5 to 13 years old ☐ 14 to 17 years old ☐ [Refused/Unsure]

Q3 [If multiple grandchildren] How many of your grandchildren are:

☐ Under 5 years old ☐ 5 to 13 years old ☐ 14 to 17 years old ☐ 18 years old or older?
☐ [Refused/Unsure]

Q4 [If one grandchild] How often do you see your grandchild?

☐ Every day ☐ Several times a week ☐ Around once a week ☐ More than once a month
☐ Once a month ☐ Less than once a month but several times a year ☐ Less often
☐ Never

Q5 [If multiple grandchildren] How often do you see the grandchildren you see most often?

☐ More than once a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Less than once a month but several times a year
☐ Less often ☐ Never

Q7 Which of the following best describes your own work situation?

☐ I am in full-time paid work
☐ I am not retired and am in part-time paid work
☐ I am semi-retired but do some part-time paid work
☐ I am retired and do not do paid work
☐ I am not retired but I do not do paid work

IF Q7 = 'I am not retired and am in part-time paid work'
OR Q7 = 'I am semi-retired but do some part-time paid work' **ASK** Q8

Q8 Do you usually work:

☐ Fewer than 10 hours a week
☐ 10–20 hours a week
☐ 21–30 hours a week
☐ More than 30 hours a week

Q10 The following questions are about how close by your grandchildren live.
Please tell us which, if any, of these statements apply to you:

☐ I live with one or more of my grandchildren
☐ I live in the same town or city as one or more of my grandchildren, although I do not live with them
☐ None of my grandchildren live in the same town or city as me
☐ All of my grandchildren live in New Zealand
☐ Some of my grandchildren live overseas
☐ All of my grandchildren live overseas

IF Q10 = 'I live with one or more of my grandchildren' **ASK** Q11

Q11 What are the main reasons why you live with one or more of your grandchildren? Is it:

☐ Because your grandchild and their parent/s have moved into your home
☐ Because you have moved into your grandchild's parent/s' home
☐ Because you are living in a home that is owned jointly by you and your grandchild's parent/s
☐ Because you are raising these grandchild/ren full-time, as their parents are unable or unwilling to
☐ Other (specify)

IF Q11= 'Because you are raising these grandchild/ren full-time, as their parents are unable or unwilling to'
ASK Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16

Q13 How many of your grandchildren are you raising?

☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three or more

Q14 Have you been raising these grandchildren full-time for:

☐ Less than a year ☐ One to two years ☐ More than two years

Q15 How many of the grandchildren you are raising are:

Under 5 years old _____ 5 to 13 years old _____ 14 to 17 years old _____ 18 years old or older _____

Q16 What is the main reason why are you raising these grandchildren?
You can choose not to answer this question if you do not want to.

☐ Parent mentally ill
☐ Parental death
☐ Family violence in parental home
☐ Parental imprisonment
☐ So grandchild can attend school in grandparents' area
☐ Parent with drug/alcohol problems
☐ Parent ill health/disability
☐ Neglect
☐ Parent/s traveling/working/living overseas
☐ Parents have separated
☐ Cultural reasons – to pass on the language and/or culture to the next generation
☐ Other

ROUTE Q11 = 'Because you are raising these grandchild/ren full-time, as their parents are unable or unwilling to'
GO Q26 START – **REST** ASK ALL

Q17 Do you look after any of your grandchildren without their parents being present:

☐ 1. On a regular basis, say on a particular day each week
☐ 2. On an irregular, less predictable basis

Q18 In the last week, in total have you looked after your grandchildren for:

☐ Fewer than 10 hours ☐ 10–20 hours ☐ 21–30 hours
☐ 31–40 hours ☐ More than 40 hours ☐ Did not look after them

IF Q17(1)= 'Yes' **ASK** Q19, Q21

Q19 How many of your grandchildren do you look after on a regular basis?

☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three or more

Q21 How many of the grandchildren you look after on a regular basis are:

Under 5 years old _____ 5 to 13 years old _____ 14 to 17 years old _____ 18 years old or older _____

Q23 How easy is it for you to turn down requests to look after your grandchildren?
Is it very easy, fairly easy, not that easy or not easy at all?

☐ Very easy ☐ Fairly easy ☐ Not that easy ☐ Not easy at all ☐ Unsure

Q24 What sorts of things are your grandchildren's parents usually doing while you are looking after the grandchildren:

☐ Having time out/a break from the children (eg, going out for a meal, socialising, having a haircut)

☐ Paid work ☐ Studying ☐ Voluntary work ☐ Sports activities

☐ Grocery shopping ☐ Housework ☐ Farm work

☐ Receiving medical or other health-related care or therapy

☐ Looking after other children in the family ☐ Living in a prison or correctional facility

☐ In hospital ☐ Sleeping/relaxing ☐ Nothing ☐ Other (specify)

_____

_____

Q26 What would you say are the main pressures that you face as a grandparent?
[Prompt if necessary – what are the things about being a grandparent that make things in your life harder?]
[Open-ended question]

_____

_____

Q27x Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. If the statement does not apply to you, just say so.
[Order randomised]

	AGREE		DISAGREE		Does not apply
	strongly	somewhat	somewhat	strongly	
1. I have put my own work or career on hold to look after my grandchildren	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. I have often put my own needs and interests on hold to look after my grandchildren	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I have changed my lifestyle so I can spend more time with my grandchildren	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I am satisfied with the balance between the time spent with grandchildren and time spent on my own interests and activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. My family expects me to look after my grandchildren	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I have a lot of control over how much time I spend with my grandchildren	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I would like to change the amount of time I spend with my grandchildren	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The amount of time I spend with my grandchildren puts me under pressure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. My finances are stretched because of the financial contributions I make to my grandchildren and/or their family	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. My grandchildren's parents expect a lot of me, but I am not always able to cope	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Looking after my grandchildren is enjoyable and satisfying	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Looking after my grandchildren is often a strain	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I would love to see my grandchildren more often	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

IF Q27x(7) = 'Strongly agree' OR Q27x(7) = 'Somewhat agree' **ASK** Q32

Q32 You mentioned before that that you would like to change the amount of time you spend with your grandchildren. How would you like to change the amount of time that you spend with your grandchildren?

Would you like to:

☐ Spend more time in general with your grandchildren
☐ Spend less time in general with your grandchildren and free up time for your other interests
☐ Spend less time looking after grandchildren, in general
☐ Arrange to look after them on a regular, predictable basis
☐ [DO NOT READ/DO NOT USE]
☐ [DO NOT READ] None
☐ [DO NOT READ] Refused
☐ Other (specify) 8

IF Q27x(3) = 'Strongly agree' OR Q27x(3) = 'Somewhat agree' **ASK** Q30, Q31

Q30 You mentioned before that you had changed your lifestyle to spend more time with your grandchildren. In what ways did you change your lifestyle?

☐ Moved house within the same town to be closer to grandchildren
☐ Moved from another town to be closer to grandchildren
☐ Moved from another country to be closer to grandchildren
☐ Bought a larger house to accommodate grandchildren to live or to visit
☐ Rented a larger house to accommodate grandchildren
☐ Took on a larger mortgage
☐ Retired/gave up paid employment
☐ Decreased paid work hours
☐ Changed jobs
☐ Changed social/sport/leisure arrangements
☐ Changed voluntary work commitments
☐ Moved in with grandchildren and their parent/s
☐ Grandchildren and their parent/s moved in with me I started raising grandchildren
☐ None
☐ Refused
☐ Other (specify) 7

Q31x What effects do you think this lifestyle change has had on your life?

☐ Tiredness/decreased energy
☐ Physical health suffered
☐ Emotional health suffered (eg, following move from long-term home)
☐ Feel put upon
☐ Relationships within family deteriorated (eg, guilt about amount of time devoted to some grandchildren over others)
☐ Jealousy from other family members about time devoted to grandchildren
☐ Own friendships have suffered (eg, hard to make new friends; miss old friends)
☐ Less time for self
☐ Less time for hobbies/other interests/relaxing
☐ Less time for helping others/voluntary work
☐ Less time for other family members
☐ Less time at work
☐ Guilt
☐ Financial restraints
☐ Less disposable income
☐ Reduced ability to save
☐ Now careful about managing own time (to fit in things I want for myself)
☐ Part of the give and take of family life
☐ Happy, though would prefer to live elsewhere
☐ Changes were necessary, so made them work/accepted them
☐ Happiness; satisfaction; joy
☐ Happy to support parents (looking after grandchildren means parents can increase their income/lessen their stress)
☐ Keeps me young/active
☐ Keeps me learning/growing
☐ Have had time to get to know grandchildren better; build healthy relationships with them
☐ More time for own interests
☐ More family time
☐ Working less hours means more time and energy for grandchildren
☐ Not applicable
☐ Refuse
☐ Other (Specify)

IF Q7 = 'I am in full-time paid work'
OR Q7 = 'I am not retired and am in part-time paid work'
OR Q7 = 'I am semi-retired but do some part-time paid work'
ASK Q37

Q37 What, if anything, could your employer do to help support you better as a grandparent?
[Open-ended question]

Q34 To help you as a grandparent, what would you like to know more about?
[Prompt if necessary – what information or support would make a difference to you as a grandparent?]
[Open-ended question]

Q33 How interested are you in information on the following topics? Are you very interested, fairly interested, not that interested or not at all interested in information about:

	very	fairly	not that	not at all
1. How to balance your own time with the time spent with your grandchildren.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. How to turn down requests to look after grandchildren when it doesn't suit you	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Managing grandchildren's behaviour	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. What to expect of grandchildren at different ages and stages	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Drug, alcohol or other addictions that can affect family relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The school curriculum and what else is being taught in schools	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. How to keep in touch with grandchildren when their parents separate	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. How to have good relationships with grandchildren who do not live nearby or who you seldom see	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Activities and events that grandparents can share with their grandchildren	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. How to respond to requests and demands from grandchildren for money and other gifts	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q35x If you wanted advice, support or information about grandparenting or grandchildren, who would you like to be able to ask or where would you like to be able to go?

[PRECODES – NOT READ]

- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Websites (eg, Families Commission, GRG, Government sites)
- ☐ Community centres
- ☐ Churches
- ☐ Citizens Advice Bureaux
- ☐ Age Concern
- ☐ Television programmes
- ☐ Groups for grandparents
- ☐ Community law centre
- ☐ An 0800 telephone line
- ☐ Government agencies, such as Work and Income
- ☐ Courses/seminars for grandparents
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Other (Specify)
- ☐ Family members
- ☐ GPs/doctors' rooms
- ☐ Libraries
- ☐ Marae
- ☐ SeniorNet
- ☐ Through your grandchildren's early childhood centre or school
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Magazines; newspapers
- ☐ Plunket
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Free DVDs
- ☐ Workplace
- ☐ Refused

These last questions are for **statistical purposes only**, to make sure we have an accurate sample. Once again I would like to remind you that any information you give me is confidential.

F3 What is the approximate combined before tax income in your household?
Please stop me when I read out the appropriate income range.

- ☐ $20,000 or less
- ☐ $20,001–30,000
- ☐ $30,001–40,000
- ☐ $40,001–50,000
- ☐ $50,001–70,000
- ☐ $70,001–100,000
- ☐ More than $100,000
- ☐ Income was nil/or made a loss
- ☐ Refused

F4 What is your total PERSONAL income, including income support, before tax?
Please stop me when I read out the appropriate income range.
(42) SP

- ☐ Less than $15,000
- ☐ $15,001–25,000
- ☐ $25,001–30,000
- ☐ $30,001–40,000
- ☐ $40,001–50,000
- ☐ $50,001–70,000
- ☐ More than $70,000
- ☐ Income was nil/or made a loss

F6 Which of the following ethnic groups do you belong to? One or several groups may apply to you.

- ☐ NZ Māori
- ☐ NZ European
- ☐ British
- ☐ Other European
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Tongan
- ☐ Fijian
- ☐ Other Pacific Island
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Other Asian
- ☐ Other (Specify)

F20 Which *ONE* of these statements is true about your legal marital or civil union status?

☐ a) I have never been legally married or in a civil union
☐ b) I am divorced or my marriage has been dissolved
☐ c) I am a widow/widower/bereaved civil union partner
☐ d) I am permanently separated from my legal husband, wife or civil union partner
☐ e) I am legally married
☐ f) I am in a civil union
☐ g) I am in a defacto relationship

Occasionally our supervisors call to ensure I have done the interview.

May I have your first name only. And can I confirm that your phone number is [XXX].

FOCUS Can we contact you in the future to take part in other studies – such as telephone surveys or focus discussion groups?

That's the end of this survey.

I would like to thank you for taking part.

My name is [XXX] and if you have any queries about this survey you can ring my supervisor [XXX] on (XX)-XXX.

APPENDIX 4

DATA ANALYSES

Qualitative analysis of focus group data

Each of the focus groups was co-facilitated by a small team consisting of representatives from the Families Commission and WEB Research, accompanied by Māori, Pacific or Korean project advisors. The focus groups were run according to the Families Commission guide, *Methods & Standards for Focus Group Consultations* (2008).[88] Digital and hand-written recordings were made with participants' agreement. Participants also completed a brief questionnaire at the end of the focus group, providing demographic information as well as brief information about their responsibilities as a grandparent and any lifestyle changes undertaken.[89]

Each focus group team summarised the significant points, tensions and contradictions, and key themes for each focus group. These, together with verbatim scripts, were circulated among the wider team of researchers and facilitators, and discussed during several analytical workshops.

The research team's collective task during the initial workshop was to examine the information from the nine focus groups. Then, in a process of analytic-induction, triangulate this information across the focus groups, while drawing on previous studies reported in the literature, and on findings from the Families Commission's Couch poll. Analysis involved searching for patterns in the data associated with a range of demographic, sociological and other factors. Within-case analyses, cross-case comparisons and emergent findings were recorded throughout the workshop.

In writing the qualitative report, the research team drew on the data from:

> verbatim scripts of each focus group meeting

> participants' responses to the written questionnaire

> individual teams' notes of the significant points, tensions and contradictions that characterised the focus group discussion

> other commentary and analysis from the individual teams

> themes from the group analysis in the analytical workshop.

A qualitative report was subsequently developed by WEB Research, components of which were integrated into this final report.

Quantitative analysis of telephone survey data

T-tests were used to establish whether the differences between demographic groups were statistically significant. Multivariate regression analysis was not conducted, meaning that some apparent relationships between variables could have been caused by other factors (eg, the fact that Māori and Pacific respondents were younger on average may be related to socio-economic status and/or education levels). Particularly for the Māori and Pacific booster surveys, the samples would not really have been large enough to support definitive multivariate regression analysis.

88 Amended from Families Australia. (2007). *Methods and Standards for Focus Group Consultations.* Position Paper.
89 Some participants struggled to complete answers to all the questions posed, particularly relating to household composition.

The following conventions are used in the telephone survey report:

> The terms 'more likely' and 'less likely' should be taken as meaning that the difference is statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

> The term 'apparent relationship' is used when the data indicate that there is likely to be a relationship between two variables (eg, between the age of the grandparent and the age of their grandchildren) but multivariate regression analysis has not been conducted to verify whether or not there are other factors involved.

Refer to the full telephone survey report for further details about how quantitative analyses were undertaken and limitations of the survey.

APPENDIX 5

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES FOR GRANDPARENTS

Tips for Grandparents and Other Family/Whānau When There's Been a Separation Involving Children. (Ministry of Justice, New Zealand)

> http://www.justice.govt.nz/family/pdf-pamphlets/Courts178%20-%20FS9-%20Tips%20for%20grandparents%20and%20other%20family%20where%20theres%20been%20a%20separation%20involving%20children.pdf

The Changing Face of Grandparenting (Positive Ageing Series, Age Concern New Zealand Inc, September 2005) Includes sections on the following topics: suggestions for parents and grandparents, intergenerational bonds, cultural differences, grandparenting from a distance, changes to the family network, grandparents raising grandchildren.

> http://www.ageconcern.org.nz/files/GrandparentingFacts-web.pdf

Help for Kinship Carers: A Guide for People Who Are Raising Someone Else's Child *(booklet current as at 1/04/09)* This booklet (prepared by Work and Income; Child, Youth and Family; Inland Revenue; Study Link; Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust) describes the different types of financial support kinship carers may be able to get. It is described as a general guide, as details may change and what carers are eligible for depends on their, and their child's, situation.

> http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/documents/help-for-kinship-carers-alla0030.pdf

The New Zealand Carers' Strategy and Five-year Action Plan The Carers' Strategy is supported by a Five-year Action Plan to begin addressing some of the issues that impact on the thousands of New Zealanders who assist friends and family members who need help with everyday living because of ill health, disability or old age.

> http://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/work-programmes/policy-development/carers-strategy/

A Guide for Carers: He Aratohu mā ngā Kaitiaki (2009) The guide includes information on the government-funded services and supports available for carers, such as financial help, respite care, help at home, needs assessment, sources of equipment and modifications, and information about health and disability rights.

> http://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/what-we-can-do/community/carers/carers-a4-booklet-v8.pdf

Congratulations – You're a Grandparent A pamphlet outlining current parenting practices (eg, re breastfeeding) and providing practical suggestions for how grandparents can help new mothers (Johnson & Johnson Professional and Educational Services)

> http://www.itsmybody.co.nz/images/ProductCatalog/m330008_pandc_grandparents.pdf

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: A Handbook for Grandparents and Other Kin Caregivers *Ma Nga Kaumātua Hei Tautoko* Te Tipurangi Ake O Nga Mokopuna. (Third edition, 2007) Prepared for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust, New Zealand, by Jill Worrall.

> http://www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz/supporting/booklet.pdf

Prader-Willi Syndrome Association (NZ) Guidelines for grandparents whose grandchild has a disability (in this case, Prader-Willi Syndrome).

> http://pws.org.nz/Just-for-Grandparents

Negotiating and setting boundaries in families with grandparent-provided childcare This website outlines how boundaries might be negotiated and set – eg, expectations of where and how toys are to be kept; how much notice grandparents will require of changes to arrangements (eg, due to school holidays, or shift work); who will contribute towards payment for transport costs and admission fees; how grandparents' attitudes to discipline, health and safety and acceptable foods align with parental preferences.

> http://www.saga.co.uk/homeandlifestyle/relationships/family/grandparents-looking-after-grandchildren.asp

Support for grandparents who have lost a grandchild through Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: Alliance of Grandparents, A Support in Tragedy (AGAST)

> http://sids.org.nz/site/content/information/grandparents_alliance_of_grandparents_a_support_in_tragedy/

Grandparenting (Parenting Easy Guide, 12; Government of South Australia) **Guidelines for, and expectations of, grandparents** (including sections on distance grandparenting, separation and step-grandparenting, grandparenting when the parents are teenagers, reminders for parents, reminders for grandparents).

> http://www.parenting.sa.gov.au/pegs/peg12.pdf

Guideline for grandparents of disabled children developed by Contact a Family, a charitable trust in the UK

> http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/grandparents.pdf

Age Concern website, New Zealand

> www.ageconcern.org.nz

This link includes a series of questions for older people to consider if they are contemplating a move and/or living in a multigenerational household.

> http://www.ageconcern.org.nz/my-home/home-choices/making-your-move

Grey Power Grey Power is a lobby organisation promoting the welfare and wellbeing of all those citizens in the 50 plus age group.

> http://www.greypower.co.nz/

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army has provided accommodation and care for senior people in the community for over 70 years. The Salvation Army provides residential care, chaplaincy, independent living units and community-based care.

> http://www.salvationarmy.org.nz/here-to-help/seniors/

APPENDIX 6

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS (FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS) AMENDMENT ACT 2007

In New Zealand, the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 gives employees with caring responsibilities (including grandparents, if eligible) the right to request flexible work arrangements. The following information is sourced from the Department of Labour's website.

> http://www.dol.govt.nz/worklife/flexible/act.asp

The Act provides certain employees with the right to request a variation to their hours of work, days of work or place of work.

To be eligible for the 'right to request' an employee must have the care of any person and have been employed by their employer for six months prior to making the request. When making the request, the employee must explain how the variation will help the employee provide better care for the person concerned.

The Act requires employers to consider the request for flexible working arrangements and provides the only grounds upon which they can refuse a request. The Act provides a process for how requests are to be made and responded to and also provides a process for resolving disagreements relating to a request for flexible working arrangements which may arise from time to time.

A review of the Act will be completed in 2010.

APPENDIX 7

WHY GRANDPARENTS LIVE WITH GRANDCHILDREN – TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

TABLE 18: MAIN REASONS WHY GRANDPARENTS LIVE WITH ONE OR MORE OF THEIR GRANDCHILDREN (TELEPHONE SURVEY)

Q11. WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS WHY YOU LIVE WITH ONE OR MORE OF YOUR GRANDCHILDREN? IS IT...

	ALL (N=67) %	NZ EUROPEAN (N=42)	MĀORI (N=40)	PACIFIC (N=42)
Because your grandchildren and their parents have moved into your home	34 (N=23)	N=15	N=16	N=16
Because you are raising these grandchildren full-time, as their parents are unable or unwilling to	25 (N=17)	N=8	N=18	N=12
Because you have moved into your grandchild's parents' home	16 (N=11)	N=5	N=4	N=9
Because you are living in a home that is owned jointly by you and your grandchild's parents	6 (N=4)	N=4	–	N=2
Temporary arrangement	4 (N=3)	N=3	N=1	N=1
Parents are working/unmarried mother working full-time	3 (N=2)	N=2	–	N=2
Sold my house to my son	3 (N=2)	N=1	N=1	–
Works with me so lives with me	1 (N=1)	–	N=1	–
Grandson works in same town where grandparents live/parents elsewhere	1 (N=1)	–	–	–
Child does not have a father	1 (N=1)	–	–	N=1
Out of work	1 (N=1)	N=1	–	–
A unit built for them on my property	1 (N=1)	N=1	–	–
Unsure	3 (N=2)	N=2	N=1	–

Base: Those who live with one or more of their grandchildren

NOTE: The number of mentions will be equal to or greater than the number of respondents due to the question allowing multiple responses

APPENDIX 8

WHY GRANDPARENTS RAISE GRANDCHILDREN – TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS

TABLE 19: MAIN REASON FOR RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Q16. WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON WHY YOU ARE RAISING THESE GRANDCHILDREN? YOU CAN CHOOSE NOT TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO.

	ALL (N=17)	NZ EUROPEAN (N=8)	MĀORI (N=18)	PACIFIC (N=12)
Parent with drug/alcohol problems	N=5	N=4	N=3	–
Parents have separated	N=3	–	N=4	N=5
Neglect	N=2	N=2	N=3	N=1
Parent/s travelling/working/living overseas	N=2	–	N=3	N=2
Parent illness/mental illness/disability	N=1	N=1	N=2	–
Cultural reasons – to pass on the language and/or culture to the next generation	N=1	–	N=2	N=1
Parents are too young to look after their children	N=1	–	N=1	N=1
They have employment near where I live and closer to go to work	–	–	N=1	–
Have lost two already	–	–	–	N=1
Mother unable to cope with too many children	–	–	–	N=1
Financial burden to parent(s)	–	–	–	N=1
Refused	N=5	N=3	N=3	N=1

Base: Those who were raising their grandchild/ren full-time as the parents are unable or unwilling to

NOTE: The number of mentions will be equal to or greater than the number of respondents due to the question allowing multiple responses

APPENDIX 9

GOVERNMENT ALLOWANCES FOR ELIGIBLE GRANDPARENTS

There are three parallel systems of support for people caring for children:

> payments through the tax and benefit system

> unsupported Child Benefit/Orphan's Benefit

> payments and services offered by CYF to the caregivers of children subject to orders under the CYF Act 1989 No 24 (as at 29 June 2009) and Care of Children Act 2004 No 90 (as at 18 May 2009).

Work and Income (WINZ), Child Youth and Family (CYF) and Inland Revenue (IRD) are the agencies offering the following support.

Child Support

IRD administers the Child Support scheme that operates under the Child Support Act 1991. This legislation aims to ensure that parents take financial responsibility for their children when marriages and relationships end. Financial contributions from paying parents help to offset the cost of benefits, like the Domestic Purposes Benefit, which support custodians and children.

The scheme is designed to collect money from parents not living with their children to help financially support them when:

> a couple who have children split up

> two people have children and aren't living together.

How Child Support works

The person caring for the child generally applies for Child Support. This person is called the custodian. Custodians can sometimes be people other than parents – like grandparents or a member of the whānau, or CYFS – if they have the care of the child. In these cases both parents might pay Child Support.

A standard formula is used to calculate how much Child Support must be paid by the paying parent. A paying parent is the parent who does not care for the child on an ongoing basis. This formula works out the paying parent's taxable income, takes away a set living allowance (the amount of which depends on their living arrangements – such as if they have a partner and how many children live with them) – and multiplies the result by a percentage based on the number of children the paying parent pays Child Support for. The annual amount is divided into monthly payments and the paying parent is advised how much they need to pay. In turn, the custodian is advised how much they will receive. Inland Revenue Child Support collects the payments from the paying parent and passes the payments on to the custodian to assist with the care of the child. The payment will be passed to the Government if the custodian is receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit.

Custodians (grandparents) can apply if they have care of the child. Both parents can pay Child Support if grandparents or CYF or whānau have care of the child. To qualify for Child Support, the child has to be under the age of 19 years, a New Zealand citizen, not married or in a defacto relationship, and financially dependent (ie, not working more than 30 hours per week on average, or receiving a benefit or student allowance). The

paying parent must pay until their child turns 19 and will stop if the child starts living with them full-time, works 30 hours per week or more, receives a benefit or student allowance or lives in a defacto relationship or marries.

From 1 April 2009 Government announced an increase in the Orphan's Benefit and the Unsupported Child's Benefit to match the Foster Care Allowance.[90] For many grandparents who care for their grandchildren/mokopuna this increase in financial assistance was welcomed.

Orphan's Benefit

The Orphan's Benefit can help support a child when their parents have died or can't be found, or when they can't look after their child because they have a long-term illness or incapacity.

Unsupported Child's Benefit

The Unsupported Child's Benefit can help support a child when their parents can't support them because of a family breakdown. WINZ can grant financial assistance as long as the child being looked after is aged under 18 years, single and financially dependent.

The carer must be 18 years or older, and be the main caregiver of the child, expect to care for the child for 12 months or more and not be the child's natural, adoptive or stepparent. Carers can be eligible for in-work tax credits if they work the required hours. Carers will also need to apply to IRD for Child Support and may need to attend a family meeting with the child's parents and extended family.[91] This confirms that there was a family breakdown and that the carer will care for the child for the next 12 months or more.

If the child has an income over a certain amount their benefit is reduced.[92] Any monies the child earns in the school holidays or after school isn't counted as income, but could affect any in-work tax credits received.

The carer could also be eligible for in-work tax credit which can be paid for children for whom the Unsupported Child's Benefit or Orphan's Benefit are received, provided the carer works the required hours.[93]

Further, the Arthur Hall Fletcher Trust (administered by the District Public Trustee) can also provide payments for the assistance and advancement of orphaned girls in New Zealand.[94]

When the basic qualification for the Orphan's Benefit is met, the case manager must advise the caregiver that this Trust exists. The client can contact the District Public Trustee, Christchurch for information regarding the types of assistance available under the Trust. Payments from the Trust are treated as income for Orphan's Benefit purposes.

Childcare Subsidy

The Childcare Subsidy is for pre-school children aged under five years (or under six years if the Child Disability Allowance is received) attending an early childhood service for three or more hours per week. The carer can receive up to nine hours of childcare a week, and in some cases up to 50 hours per week if they are working, on an approved training course, seriously ill, disabled or caring for a child for which the Child Disability Allowance is received.

90 See the end of this appendix.
91 A family meeting is **not** required where a Family Group Conference conducted by CYF has decided to place the child with the caregiver, or the parents are overseas on a long-term basis, **or** the parents are in prison.
92 Income limit is between $3,159 and $4,105.92 a year before tax (based on the child's age).
93 Visit www.ird.govt.nz
94 http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/manuals-and-procedures/income_support/main_benefits/orphans_benefit_and_unsupported_childs_benefit/orphans_benefit_and_unsupported_childs_benefit-21.htm

Children aged three and four attending teacher-led early childhood education services (kindergartens, centre-based and home-based) offering Twenty Hours Early Childhood Education can receive up to six hours per day, 20 hours per week of free early childhood education.

OSCAR Subsidy

The OSCAR[95] Subsidy is for children aged five to 13 (or up to 18 years if they receive the Child Disability Allowance). It helps towards the costs of before and after school care of up to 20 hours a week, and school holiday programmes of up to 50 hours a week. To get this subsidy the carer must be working, studying, training or doing a work-related activity through WINZ or have – or a member of their family have – ill health or a disability.

Accommodation Supplement

The Accommodation Supplement is a non-taxable supplement that provides help with rent, board or cost of owning a home. A person does not have to be receiving a benefit to qualify for the Accommodation Supplement.

Whether a carer can get the Accommodation Supplement depends on how much rent, board or mortgage they pay, their personal circumstances such as income and cash assets, where they live and the number of people in the household. A carer won't qualify for the Accommodation Supplement if their mortgage is with the Housing Corporation or they rent from Housing New Zealand.

Working for Families Tax Credits

If a carer receives a Foster Care Allowance, Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit for one or more children, and this is the only benefit received from WINZ, they could be entitled to in-work tax credit if they are working a minimum number of hours each week. They are not entitled to any other Working for Families Tax Credits for these children.

Disability Allowance

The Disability Allowance[96] is for those people who have a disability and require help with ongoing medical care and everyday tasks. A child under the age of 18 years, who is financially dependent on a carer, is eligible for a Disability Allowance. The Disability Allowance can help pay for such things as travel, special foods and rental equipment.

If a carer is getting New Zealand Superannuation, a Veteran's Pension or not on a benefit they and their partner's income must be under a certain limit. The Child Disability Allowance[97] is a non-taxable allowance available to the main caregiver in recognition of the extra care that the child or young person with a serious disability requires. The child must need constant care and attention for at least 12 months because of their disability, be under the age of 18 years and have a physical, sensory, psychiatric or intellectual disability. Once the child turns 16 years of age they could be entitled to apply for the Invalid's Benefit.

Carers can not get a Disability Allowance or Child Disability Allowance if they receive Board Payments from CYF for the child.

95 OSCAR: Out of School Care And Recreation.
96 Disability Allowance is $55.88 max a week – as at 1 April 2009.
97 Child Disability Allowance is $42.11, a set amount, and does not depend on income or costs – as at 1 April 2009.

Community Services Card

The Community Services Card provides subsidised prescription charges and reduced rates for doctors. If a carer is eligible for a SuperGold Card, the back of the card will indicate if they are also eligible for a Community Services Card – two cards will not be needed.

Child, Youth and Family's Foster Care Allowance

Foster carers are eligible for financial assistance from the government, through Child, Youth and Family (CYF) to care for a child or young person who is in the custody of the Chief Executive. A CYF foster carer could be:

> caring for a child or young person aged anywhere from birth up to 17 years old

> caring for a family member, who may be a niece, nephew or grandchild

> welcoming a child they don't know into their family

> looking after a child for a short time, until they return to their own family

> welcoming a child into their family for life

CYF provides financial help to meet the day to day care of a foster child, as outlined in the table below. A care allowance is paid fortnightly, which covers board, personal items and pocket money for the child. This allowance varies according to the child's age.

CYF also provides a quarterly clothing allowance, and an allowance for Christmas and birthday presents. Health and education costs are met and, depending on the child's care plan, financial assistance towards recreational items may be provided.

FOSTER CARE ALLOWANCE AND CLOTHING RATES AS AT 1 APRIL, 2009

AGE OF CHILD/ YOUNG PERSON	WEEKLY RATE	WEEKLY POCKET MONEY	BIRTHDAY AND CHRISTMAS ALLOWANCE (HALF THE WEEKLY BOARD RATE)	CLOTHING QUARTERLY RATE
0–4 years	$132.32	$1.90	$66.17	$231.49
5–9 years	$153.55	$5.80	$76.78	$262.33
10–13 years	$169.45	$8.70	$84.73	$323.95
14+ years	$185.25	$13.40	$92.63	$388.87
Family home caregivers	$172.74	Rates as above (paid in addition to board rates)	$86.37	Rates as above

USEFUL WEBSITES

> http://www.winz.govt.nz/documents/orphans-and-unsupported-childs-benefits.rtf

> http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/background

> http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/documents/help-for-kinship-carers-alla0030.pdf

> http://beehive.govt.nz/release/benefits+student+allowances+nz+super+and+war+pensions+increase

> http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/custodians/questions/

> http://www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz/

> http://www.cyf.govt.nz/documents/about-us/publications/care-matters/care-matters-issue20-apr09.pdf

> http://www.cyf.govt.nz/info-for-caregivers/becoming-a-caregiver/what-help-will-i-get-as-a-foster-carer.html

> http://www.cyf.govt.nz/info-for-caregivers/why-your-care-matters/

> http://www.ird.govt.nz/childsupport/custodians/questions/

Families Commission research reports

1/05 *Review of New Zealand Longitudinal Studies*, May 2005.

2/05 *Review of Parenting Programmes*, June 2005.

3/05 *Beyond Zero Tolerance: Key issues and future directions for family violence work in New Zealand*, August 2005.

4/05 *Focus on Families: Reinforcing the importance of family*, October 2005.

5/05 *Methodologies for Analysing the Impact of Public Policy on Families: A conceptual review*, October 2005.

1/06 *What Makes Your Family Tick?*, March 2006.

2/06 *Review of the Empirical Literature Assessing the Impacts of Government Policies on Family Form*, April 2006.

1/07 *When School's Out: Conversations with parents, carers and children about out of school services*, February 2007.

2/07 *Moving On: Changes in a year in family living arrangements*, February 2007.

3/07 *It's About Time: Towards a parental leave policy that gives New Zealand families real choice*, August 2007.

1/08 *Elder Abuse and Neglect: Exploration of risk and protective factors*, January 2008.

2/08 *Putting the Kids First: Caring for children after separation*, April 2008.

3/08 *The Kiwi Nest: 60 years of change in New Zealand families*, June 2008.

4/08 *Give and Take: Families' perceptions and experiences of flexible work in New Zealand*, September 2008.

5/08 *Reaching Out: Who New Zealanders turn to for relationship support*, September 2008.

6/08 *Juggling Acts: How parents working non-standard hours arrange care for their pre-school children*, September 2008.

7/08 *New Kiwis, Diverse Families: Migrant and former refugee families talk about their early childhood care and education needs*, December 2008.

8/08 *Beyond Reasonable Debt: A background report on the indebtedness of New Zealand families*, December 2008.

1/09 *Family-centred Communities: The planning process*, February 2009.

2/09 *Finding Time: Parents long working hours and the impact on family life*, May 2009.

3/09 *Beyond Reasonable Debt: The extent to which financial behaviour can explain over-indebtedness amongst New Zealand families*, August 2009.

4/09 *Family Violence Statistics Report*, August 2009.

5/09 *Supporting Kiwi Dads: Role and needs of New Zealand fathers*, December 2009.

6/09 *Escaping the Debt Trap: Experiences of New Zealand families accessing budgeting services*, December 2009.

Reports are available on the Commission's website or contact the Commission to request copies:

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