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**Source:** Baldock, E., & Petit, C. (2006). *Grandparents raising grandchildren because of alcohol and other drugs*. Curtin, ACT: Canberra Mothercraft Society.

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Aim	Method	Findings and recommendations	NCPC comment
The overall aim of the project was to increase the visibility of grandparents who raise their grandchildren because of parental substance abuse.	The study explored the issue of grandparents raising grandchildren due to parental substance abuse using an action research methodology.	<p>The report concluded that the project was successful in achieving all of the project objectives and provided a range of recommendations that arose out of the research. The recommendations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• listening to the voices of grandparents raising grandchildren affected by parental substance abuse;</li><li>• establishing a cross-sectoral reference group to inform future policy and service provision for these families;</li><li>• providing coordinated early intervention and prevention education and counselling for grandparent families at risk of impact of alcohol and drugs;</li><li>• ameliorating the direct financial burden for grandparents through greater governmental financial assistance;</li><li>• conducting further research into the needs of grandparent families, especially Indigenous families;</li><li>• coordinating services that include targeted prevention, early intervention and recreation opportunities for children;</li><li>• strengthening family resilience through mediation and support services, and parenting and life skills education programs; and</li><li>• recognising and building on the strengths of grandparents raising grandchildren.</li></ul>	The project is an important step towards improving the services and supports for grandparents raising grandchildren. However, a limitation of the study was that the method was not adequately described, making it difficult to assess the quality of the research.

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**Source:** Council on the Ageing National Seniors. (2003). *Grandparents raising grandchildren*. Melbourne: Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Retrieved 25 May 2007, from [http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/parenting-grandparents\\_raising\\_grandchildren.htm](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/parenting-grandparents_raising_grandchildren.htm)

Aim	Method	Findings and Recommendations	NCPC comment
<p>To speak with grandparents who raise their grandchildren regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their existing support mechanisms;</li> <li>• what additional support they may require;</li> <li>• the financial and legal issues they may be facing; and</li> <li>• any concerns they may have about the wellbeing of their grandchildren.</li> </ul>	<p>In February 2003 the Federal Minister for Children and Youth Affairs asked Council of the Ageing (COTA) National Seniors to speak with grandparents who raise their grandchildren.</p> <p>The research used a qualitative methodology, which involved group interviews and workshops.</p> <p>499 grandparents raising 548 grandchildren, with 308 grandparent-headed families were included. 63% were couples, with 68% of grandparents 55 years of age or older, and just over half raising two or more grandchildren. 53% of grandchildren were under 10 years of age.</p> <p>22 workshops and forums conducted across 5 states (Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia) were run by experienced facilitators. Grandparents were sought through advertising of the project in newspapers and community newsletters. Grandparents unable to attend workshops were invited to complete a written response.</p>	<p>Grandparents were disappointed and felt let down by both state and Commonwealth governments regarding financial and legal issues. Grandparents were raising the grandchild/ren due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Family Court parenting orders;</li> <li>• Children’s Court care and protection order; or</li> <li>• an informal arrangement, which may or may not have had the agreement of the parents.</li> </ul> <p>Grandparent workshops in each state indicated the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• governments need to acknowledge and recognise grandparents raising children as a group requiring support;</li> <li>• grandparents need parity with foster carers concerning payments and support services;</li> <li>• government needs to promote information and access to benefits and support services;</li> <li>• grandparents need access to legal aid; and</li> <li>• government needs to provide respite care.</li> </ul> <p>Grandparents want more recognition of their rights and needs, and greater awareness of their situation from staff in child protection agencies, Centrelink and other government departments.</p> <p>The report offers a comprehensive listing of 21 recommendations for the state and Commonwealth governments based on key findings from this research.</p>	<p>The study benefited from its large sample size from across five states of Australia. It provides a detailed report, with comprehensive recommendations and a call for action to state and Commonwealth governments.</p> <p>Limitations:</p> <p>It lacks a detailed description regarding the recruitment of participants, and also lacks a detailed description of the manner in which the group discussions in each of the workshops were recorded and how the method of analyses were chosen for reporting details.</p>

**Source:** Higgins, D. J., Bromfield, L. M., & Richardson, N. (2005). *Enhancing out-of-home care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people*. Melbourne: National Child Protection Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Aim	Method	Findings and recommendations	NCPC comment
<p>To investigate the barriers and promising strategies for the recruitment, assessment, training, support and retention of Indigenous carers and non-Indigenous carers of Indigenous children; and to explore the barriers and promising strategies for providing culturally appropriate services to Indigenous children in care.</p>	<p>Data were collected from multiple sources including:</p> <p>Interviews with professional stakeholders in every state and territory of Australia (<math>n = 80</math>) from relevant organisations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• statutory care and protection departments;</li> <li>• Indigenous child care agencies; and</li> <li>• non-Indigenous out-of-home care agencies.</li> </ul> <p>Focus groups in two states (WA &amp; Qld) with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous carers;</li> <li>• non-Indigenous carers of Indigenous children and young people; and</li> <li>• Indigenous children and young people in care.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Overarching themes:</i> Differentiating kinship and foster care was not useful for Indigenous Australians: most carers are kith or kin to children and many are caring for multiple children and have dual roles of kinship and foster carer. Recruitment, assessment, training and support are intertwined. Discussion of the issues separately is an artificial distinction.</p> <p><i>Recruitment:</i> There are an insufficient number of Indigenous carers to meet demand. Some groups of children are particularly difficult to recruit carers for (children with a disability, involved in juvenile justice, requiring short-term care, or who have no kin). Material disadvantage and the mismatch between traditional child-rearing practices and the out-of-home care system represent barriers to recruitment. The commitment to community among Indigenous people is a strength for recruitment. Past government policies and practices represent both a barrier and strength for recruiting Indigenous carers.</p> <p><i>Assessment:</i> Assessment techniques and requirements prevent Indigenous people from becoming carers as they use an inappropriate communication style, fail to take into account culturally sensitive issues, fail to account for high rates of numeracy and literacy problems, are culturally inappropriate for some requirements, and fail to account for high rates of criminal records.</p> <p><i>Training:</i> When carers are adequately prepared they feel supported. In particular, carers wanted training about how to work with the department. Non-Indigenous carers of Indigenous children wanted training in Indigenous culture, and Indigenous carers (especially those who were part of the Stolen Generations) may also need cultural training.</p> <p><i>Support:</i> Carers reported that the best way to support them was to provide services to meet the needs of children. In addition, carers talked about the need for adequate and timely financial support, respectful relationships with the department, and practical and emotional support.</p> <p><i>Retention:</i> Once Indigenous people start caring, few drop out. However, carers are an ageing demographic and are having to stop for health reasons. Carers may also be temporarily unavailable for cultural reasons.</p>	<p>This was an exploratory study, and the wide scope, along with the number of sub-groups sampled, means that the findings can not be generalised. However, this was the first Australian study examining issues specific to Indigenous carers and, as such, represents an important first step in identifying issues requiring further research.</p>

**Source:** Mason, J., Falloon, J., Gibbons, L., Spense, N., & Scott, E. (2002). *Understanding kinship care*. Haymarket, NSW: Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies and University of Western Sydney.

Aim	Method	Findings and recommendations	NCPC Comment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To quantify the extent of formal kinship care in New South Wales and the reasons for the apparent increase.</li> <li>To identify and analyse the legislation and departmental guidelines relevant to kinship care.</li> <li>To explore the views about and experiences of kinship care with children and young people, their carers, birth parents and supervising workers.</li> </ul>	<p>The study employed a multi-faceted research design using both qualitative and quantitative data to investigate formal kinship care placements. “Top-down” perspectives on kinship care were sourced from policy in official documents and legislation, and from official collections of out-of-home care statistics. A “bottom-up” perspective on the execution of kinship care policy in practice was sought through interviews with child protection practitioners and service recipients.</p> <p>The study participants were child protection practitioners, kinship carers, young people in kinship care and parents of children in kinship care in New South Wales.</p> <p>The study used descriptive data from the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) child protection, and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare national statutory child protection report. Themes were identified from qualitative interviews with child protection practitioners, kinship carers, young people in care and natural parents of children in kinship care.</p>	<p>In this study, it was found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>kinship carers included non-related people known to the child;</li> <li>kinship care was perceived as beneficial by policy-makers, child protection workers, kinship carers, and children;</li> <li>kinship care was economically efficient and carers were easy to recruit compared to foster carers;</li> <li>kinship care is the preferred placement for Indigenous children;</li> <li>NSW had the highest rate of kinship care of any Australian state or territory;</li> <li>kinship care was the most common form of out-of-home care in NSW;</li> <li>Indigenous children were more likely to be placed in kinship care than any other type of care;</li> <li>kinship carers, child protection workers and children were all found to have initiated kinship care placements; and</li> <li>kinship carers reported feeling emotionally and financially unsupported.</li> </ul>	<p>There was little detail provided on the study methodology, particularly in relation to the participants who took part in the qualitative interviews, and the procedure for undertaking these interviews and conducting the qualitative analysis, making it difficult to determine the strengths and limitations of this study. This limits the capacity to critique the credibility of this research or whether the study findings can be generalised.</p> <p>Kinship care is the predominant form of out-of-home care in NSW and is increasingly popular in other Australian states and territories. The dominant belief is that kinship care is superior to other forms of care in terms of child wellbeing, but there is insufficient financial and emotional support provided to kinship carers.</p> <p>There were no other studies investigating kinship care in Australia at the time this study was completed. This, combined with the breadth of information collected, make this a landmark exploratory study of kinship care in Australia.</p>