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THE CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY AND FAMILIES AUSTRALIA CELEBRATE SENIORS WEEK IN THE ACT

At the beginning of Seniors Week in the ACT (10-19 March) the Child Support Agency (CSA) and Families Australia are celebrating the important role grandparents play in supporting their children and grandchildren through family separation.

Following separation, grandparents may have an adult child return home and may provide financial and emotional support to their own children and grandchildren.

CSA provides a series of five booklets called the 'Me and My' series which are targeted at separated parents but may also be useful to grandparents.

These booklets are a valuable resource grandparents can use, to help their own children deal with separation.

"They may also be of assistance to grandparents who have been denied access to their grandchildren following separation and divorce," NSW/ ACT State Manager Mina Podbereski said.

"Grandparents can also call the Family relationships Advice Line on **1800 050 321** or go to www.familyrelationships.gov.au

"Grandparents may also find themselves taking on the role of parent following separation. Figures from the Council on the Ageing suggest around 1 per cent of children aged between 0 and 17 are living with their grandparents," Ms Podbereski said.

Families Australia CEO Brian Babington says that Seniors Week is a great opportunity for all generations to join with older people and celebrate the role of grandparents as parents and carers.

"Grandparents who spend time with their grandchildren are contributing to the future and the community, passing on important values and also learning about what matters to younger generations," Mr Babington said.

Ms Podbereski said that some parents are unable to care for their children because of difficult circumstances such as substance abuse, death, disability or a mental illness and therefore may not be able to pay child support.

"Where parents are in a position to be able to pay child support it is important that grandparents are aware of their right to claim it," Ms Podbereski said.

"While the circumstances in which grandparents can receive child support differ from State to State, it is important that grandparents investigate this avenue of support.

Further assistance is available from numerous support and community groups through the CSA's Community Services Directory, available on the CSA website at www.csa.gov.au or by calling **131 272**.

*ACT Seniors Week 10-19 March <http://www.cota-act.org.au/contents/contents.htm>

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