



CARING CONNECTIONS: Information & Support for Kinship Carers

“Caring Connections” is a program suitable for all kinship carers. It gives an opportunity for carers to share their common experiences and learn together with others in similar situations. Topics discussed will be relevant to the daily experiences & challenges of caring. Participants are invited to attend the full 5 session program, but can choose to attend individual sessions of interest. There is **no charge** to attend.

CARING CONNECTIONS workshops available in 2016 will offer:

Information and Understanding about...

- ✦ how trauma & disruption can affect children, and the ongoing effects this may have on their behaviour & development
- ✦ grief and loss experiences & how they can affect children and carers

Effective Strategies for the care of children and young people...

- ✦ that are practical & will support you to respond to a variety of behaviours & challenges

Ideas & Activities that...

- ✦ build on your family and child's strengths
- ✦ support positive, life-long relationships

OPPORTUNITIES TO -

- ✦ meet and talk with other kinship carers in a confidential group. Share your experiences - as much or as little as you wish - in an atmosphere of support & respect

Kinship Carers who have been part of Caring Connections groups share their views:

Julie, a kinship carer for a long time says: “I wish this course had been available when I was first caring for my grandchildren. It has changed the way I understand the effect of their [early experiences] on them and what their needs were...it is an ongoing challenge. It would be so much better [if carers could come] earlier on”

Marie, a carer for just a short while says: “I am bonding so much better with my grandson...learning and sharing...all the information with my family. My grandson and I are communicating so much better...my understanding has really changed. We see a big, difference, you'll never be sorry if you go to something like this.”
[* names changed for privacy reasons]

BACKGROUND – Kinship carers include any relative, grandparent or family friend who has taken on the care of children unable to live with their own family. Commitment to the family and the well-being of these children is a strong value for kinship carers. However, a kinship caring role often comes with little time to prepare for taking on day-to-day care of children & less opportunity to consider the impact this major change may bring. Carers find that making time for themselves to sustain their own **well-being** and capacity can be a challenge.

Children & young people who need kinship care may have experienced trauma, separation, family change and crisis, affecting their development and wellbeing. The experience of coming into kinship care is a life change that can give children stability within their caring network. At the same time, children and young people commonly experience feelings of grief & abandonment [loss of a sense of family & home, school, friends, possessions, pets]. Children may display challenging behaviours & outbursts of strong emotions that their carers find difficult to understand and deal with.

“Caring Connections” will be offered in selected areas across Victoria during 2016 for any Kinship carer wishing to attend. Lunch is included.

2016 Dates **Term 1: Dandenong** **Term 2: Bendigo**

For more **information or to register** your interest in attending:

Email: kinship.program@anglicarevic.org.au

Freecall: 1800 809 722

There is **NO cost** to attend this program thanks to Victorian Government funding support.