

Grandparents saving families millions on child care ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Grandparents are saving parents almost \$90 million a year on child care in New South Wales, according to a report released today by the Council on the Ageing.

The report found between 10 and 20 per cent of people aged over 65 are providing unpaid care for their grandchildren.

The council's Ian Day says grandparents are typically providing about 12 hours of care each week.

"The average time per week is about 12.7 hours and therefore they're probably saving their children in the order of \$1.8 million a week or almost \$90 million a year in childcare costs," he said.

But he says the trend is not across all socio-economic groups.

"The incidence of grandparents looking after their grandchildren seems to be isolated to some of the wealthier suburbs," he said.

Audio: Grandparents increasing role as carers (AM)

"So you could almost guess that the grandparents are helping their own children to stay in the general area by looking after the grandchildren while their children go back to work to pay the mortgage."

Some grandparents say they feel exploited by their busy adult children, but simply cannot say no.

"If we talk to grandparents they will always say, 'look, my children need it, my grandchildren need it, I will be there, come hell or high water'," Mr Day said.

"They are giving up their time freely and happily.

"As an aside they may very well say to us 'but geez, it'd be nice sometimes if somebody said thank you'."

Lakshmi Murthy and her husband are happily and comfortably retired and look after their two granddaughters five days a week.

"Time goes really, really fast," Ms Murthy said.

"I take her to the local library here. She plays with other children and all that, we come home and then we have lunch and then a sleep.

"And then we go and pick up the other girl from school, all of us."

Ms Murthy said she had never thought about saying no.

"No, I always thought I have to stay and help them," she said.

-reprinted from ABC News

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