



association for the wellbeing
of children in healthcare

AWCH Ward Grandparent Scheme



Helping You to Help Kids

Revised 2018

AWCH is a non-government organisation funded by NSW Ministry of Health



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ABN 33 119 036 261
Bldg 40B, Gladesville Hospital
Cnr Victoria & Punt Roads
GLADESVILLE NSW 2111
Tel: 02 9817 2439
E: wardparents@awch.com.au
W: www.awch.org.au

The Association for the Wellbeing of Children in Healthcare (AWCH) is a national, non-profit organisation of parents, professionals and community members who work together to ensure the emotional and social needs of children, adolescents and their families are recognised and met within hospitals and the health care system in Australia.

We believe in:

- access to quality healthcare for all children and young people
- valuing the opinions of children, young people and their families in the delivery of healthcare
- families playing a vital role supporting children and young people receiving healthcare
- fostering partnerships between parents/carers and health care providers
- the provision of culturally sensitive healthcare services
- appropriate information and resources being readily accessible

AWCH works to ensure a holistic family-oriented approach to the care of children, acknowledging that families are the main support and strength for children and young people when they are sick or have a chronic illness or condition.



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BACKGROUND

The AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme was established in 1986 at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, Camperdown, NSW (now known as The Children's Hospital at Westmead). It is currently a highly regarded service in all major NSW children's hospitals and is increasingly being implemented in NSW metropolitan and rural hospitals.

Children who are hospitalised can often feel scared or alone if for any reason a parent is unable to be with them. The AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme redresses this situation by providing much-needed physical and emotional support to children during their hospitalisation.

Contact between the Ward Grandparent and the child's family prior to meeting the child is encouraged to establish cooperation between all those involved in the child's care.

Each year, collectively, the Ward Grandparents devote over 5000 hours to supporting children and their families.

AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparents have a dual role:

- to provide regular contact and support to children in hospital
- to provide respite for parents/carers where and when necessary

Key principles:

Support

A Ward Grandparent may be assigned to only one child and family at any given time, creating a "special" relationship which continues for the duration of the hospital stay.

Where this is not practical or possible, the Ward Grandparent will be assigned to a particular ward or clinic, which allows for the development of a mutually beneficial relationship with ward staff.

Communication

Parental permission must be gained for a Ward Grandparent to be made available and a meeting between the parent and Ward Grandparent is encouraged prior to contact with the child.

Relevant information about the child's condition, treatment and possible length of stay should be given to the Ward Grandparent either by the Social Worker, Nurse Unit Manager or Volunteer Coordinator.

Ward grandparents should not read medical notes or comment on a child's medical condition to the parents, with other parents/visitors on the ward or other volunteers.



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Well-being focused

Depending on the needs of the hospital and child, Ward Grandparents' duties can include feeding, calming, playing, talking and singing to the child or taking the child on walks around the healthcare facility. Ward Grandparents work under the direction of health staff regarding the specific needs of the child or special instructions in handling the child.

The Ward Grandparent can be called on to provide developmentally appropriate play or stimulation activities as directed by the child's therapists or healthcare staff.

Things to keep in mind:

Ward grandparents do not:

- ✚ give medications or perform nursing duties
- ✚ hold a syringe used for tube feeding
- ✚ feed the child with anything other than food or drink prescribed by nursing staff or therapists
- ✚ visit the child when s/he has an infection which may be contagious

Ward grandparents should feel free to take breaks between children, have holidays etc, but it is important that the relevant Ward Grandparent Co-ordinator is advised of dates when unavailable for assignment.



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PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Upon commencement of the AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme at a hospital/health facility, it is suggested that a paediatric Social Worker, Nurse Unit Manager or Volunteer Coordinator act as the Hospital Coordinator for Scheme.

Prior to the introduction of the AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme to a hospital/health facility, the AWCH Ward Grandparent Coordinator provides an outline of the Scheme to relevant staff through a hospital in-service education session.

Establishing the Scheme

The Hospital/health facility interested in implementing the scheme will need to organise a publicity drive for ward grandparents in the local media in consultation with AWCH, who is nominated as the organisation to contact for enquiries.

AWCH responded to interested individuals and assesses their availability/suitability for the scheme.

AWCH forwards an information pack to relevant applicants.

Completed application forms are managed by AWCH who will then forward these to the relevant Hospital Coordinator.



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Hospital Coordinator Role

The hospital coordinator can be the Paediatric Social Worker, Nurse Unit Manager for the relevant ward or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Duties will include:

Receive and process application forms according to the hospital/health facility's policies.

- Interview the potential Ward Grandparent
- Conduct a referee check
- Arrange and verify the applicant's Working With Children Check
- Ensure the new Ward Grandparent is covered by the hospital volunteers' insurance
- Arrange attendance at relevant child protection courses
- Arrange photo ID

Organise orientation for new ward grandparents. It is desirable that orientation include the following:

- An overview of AWCH and its activities
- Education about the specific needs of hospitalised children
- Introduction to the key members of the multi-disciplinary team
- Relevant hospital policies/protocols including Work Health and Safety

Establish a system with Nurse Unit Managers to identify and notify when a ward grandparent is required.

Maintain an availability list of Ward Grandparents.

Discuss with parents the possibility of a Ward Grandparent being involved in the care of their child.

Ensure that the Ward Grandparent and parents have contact before introducing the Ward Grandparent to the child.

Be available for support, advice and information while the Ward Grandparent is in contact with the child.

Ensure that the Ward Grandparent keeps a daily diary of contacts which should include hours and days for statistical purposes. This record should be kept in the hospital coordinator's department file and will be made available during the Scheme's reviews.



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Provide annual statistics to AWCH of Ward Grandparent hours, days and number of children supported. These statistics are presented to NSW Department of Health by June 30 each year for annual funding accountabilities.

Permit, with parents' approval, the Ward Grandparent taking a photo of the child/with the child.

Inform the Ward Grandparent of the child's hospital discharge.

When the Ward Grandparent's contact with the child ends, offer an opportunity to debrief and reflect on the experience.

Convene regular meetings with the Ward Grandparent/s to provide opportunities for processing experiences and debriefing. These meetings facilitate the development of peer support and group identity.

Ensure AWCH travel claim forms are distributed to Ward Grandparents and countersigned before forwarding to AWCH for processing.

Maintain regular contact with the Ward Grandparent/s .



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WARD GRANDPARENT ROLE EXPECTATIONS

AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparents are encouraged to become members of AWCH at the time of their initial application (See AWCH Membership form in Appendix).

It is required that Ward Grandparents have a clear understanding of the commitment required to visit the hospitalised child as per the specific needs of the hospital.

Ward Grandparents should feel free to decline working in a specific ward or with a particular age group, if uncomfortable or unable to cope with the situation.

It is expected that if parents or other family members arrive to visit the child unexpectedly, the Ward Grandparent will leave, unless expressly asked to stay by parents/carers.

Ward Grandparents may travel outside the hospital/health facility with children when they are attending tests and procedures on a day only basis, but should always be accompanied by medical or nursing staff. The hospital must ensure that the volunteers' insurance covers the Ward Grandparents on such occasions.

As a general rule, a Ward Grandparent should attend only one hospital. If a child is to be admitted to another hospital and the Ward Grandparent is transferred with the child, Hospital Coordinators are required to liaise with each other and arrange volunteer status in the new hospital.

On occasion, two Ward Grandparents may "share" the care of a child in order to provide full-week cover for a long-term, unaccompanied child. Where this occurs, the two Ward Grandparents concerned may alter times and days with each other if necessary, but should inform ward staff. No other arrangements should be made between Ward Grandparents, however, without the consent of the child's Social Worker and/or Volunteer Coordinator.

Under no circumstances should a child be allowed leave the hospital or health facility grounds to go home with a Ward Grandparent during hospitalisation or when the child is on a gate pass.

The relationship of the Ward Grandparent with the child should not extend beyond the hospital stay. However, it is very important for the Ward Grandparent to be given the opportunity to say "goodbye" to the child and, if possible, the parents.

The ward grandparent should only make contact with the child after separation if initiated by the parents/carers. If the child makes contact, the ward grandparent may respond, taking care to include the parents in the response. The ward grandparent should discuss ongoing contact with the Hospital Coordinator.



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The Ward Grandparent should complete a new availability form when the child is discharged and indicate to the Coordinator whether s/he is available to work with another child, or would like a break.

In the event of a child being re-admitted to the hospital/health facility, the same Ward Grandparent may be given the option of supporting that child again, if not involved in the care of a different child, or if agreeing to care for both, if the period of overlap is brief.

Travel reimbursement is provided by AWCH. Ward Grandparents are encouraged to claim travel costs to avoid financial hardship (See Appendix 1: AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme Travel Expenses Claim Form).

Ward Grandparents will be asked to follow hospital orientation procedures prior to starting. This includes criminal record, working with children and reference checks, child protection training and other parts of orientation as deemed appropriate for volunteers by the hospital.

In the event of a personal emergency, the Ward Grandparent will notify the Hospital Coordinator as soon as possible and let them know of the change of availability.



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THE ROLE OF AWCH

Liaise with the hospital/health facility regarding the Ward Grandparent Scheme publicity drive. This could be for the initial establishment of the Scheme at a hospital/health facility and/or when the hospital/health facility is ready to expand the number of participants.

Provide initial contact in response to advertising by answering telephone enquiries about how the Scheme works and the commitment required.

Forward information and registration form (See Appendix 2: AWCH Ward Grandparent Scheme Registration) to respondents. Applicants should be encouraged to make a realistic assessment of their personal commitments to ensure that they will be able to set aside the time required.

Collate and photocopy application forms (for AWCH records) and forward originals to the Hospital Coordinator for processing.

Provide secondary support to Ward Grandparents who may wish to talk about a concern to someone outside the hospital environment. AWCH may be able to assist in resolving any communication difficulties that may arise with hospital staff.

Promote the AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme to hospital/health facilities and community groups.

Maintain a current list of Ward Grandparents, and update in June each year for the generation of annual membership.

Process the reimbursement of travel costs to ward grandparents and maintain appropriate records.

Acknowledge the Ward Grandparents' contribution by providing an annual training day and an annual Thank You lunch.



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Roads, GLADESVILLE NSW 2111

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Appendix 2

AWCH Ward Grandparent Scheme Registration

Thank you for your interest in becoming an AWCH Ward Grandparent. Please complete and return this form, so that we can commence the recruitment process.



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Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Age: 30-44yrs 45-60yrs Over 60yrs

Hospital of Interest *Please tick or number your preference 1 to 3 (1 being your first choice)*

- Allowah Presbyterian Children's Hospital, Dundas
- Gosford Hospital
- Liverpool Hospital
- Port Macquarie Base Hospital
- St George Hospital, Kogarah
- Sydney Children's Hospital Network Randwick
- The Sutherland Hospital
- John Hunter Children's Hospital, Newcastle
- Manning Base Hospital, Taree
- Royal North Shore Hospital, North Sydney
- Shoalhaven Hospital, Nowra
- Sydney Children's Hospital Network Westmead
- Other _____

Who should we contact in an emergency? Name: _____

Telephone number/s _____ Relationship to you: _____

Please nominate 2 referees *Please ensure to inform your referees that we will telephone them for a reference*

1. Name: _____ Telephone: _____

2. Name: _____ Telephone:



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- Do you have experience with children? Yes No
- Would you be happy to work with a child with a disability? Yes No
- Do you speak a language in addition to English? *(if so, please specify)* Yes No
- Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes No
- Have you done voluntary work before? Yes No
- What days are you available to visit a child in hospital?
 Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri
- Occasionally a child may require a Ward Grandparent for a longer period of time, for example 1 week. Would you be available in these circumstances? Yes No

Please attach any additional information you would like to give.

NB: It is a requirement that all staff/volunteers dealing with children undergo a criminal record check, conducted by the relevant authorities in your state.

I hereby wish to apply to become a Ward Grandparent, and agree to the necessary checks being done.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

What happens next?

Please return your application to: AWCH Ward Grandparent Scheme Coordinator
 AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme
 Building 40B, Corner Victoria & Punt Roads
 GLADESVILLE NSW 2111
 or email to: awch@awch.com.au
 or fax to: 02 9879 4346

Once your registration has been processed you will be contacted by the hospital to arrange an interview time.

Meanwhile, should you have any queries, please feel free to contact Elizabeth Harnett, Executive Director or Anne Cutler, AWCH WGP Program Coordinator on 02 9817 2439.

Thank you for your interest in the AWCH Hospital Ward Grandparent Scheme.

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AWCH Membership

Helping You To Help Kids



Your membership benefits include:

- ✓ AWCH Newsletters
 - ✓ Access to AWCH resources such as the Library, conference proceedings, publications and products
 - ✓ Professional networking
- Opportunities to contribute to health policy and planning for children and young people

By becoming a member today you are helping us continue our important work!

Please complete and return to the address below

Your Details

Name: _____

Organisation Name: _____

Organisation Address: _____

Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Fax Number: _____ Mobile Number: _____

Home Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Free membership for AWCH Ward Grandparents

I would also like to be involved in AWCH by:

Commenting on documents

Representing AWCH at meetings and forums

Assisting with projects

Other

AWCH is non-government organisation funded by NSW Department of Health

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