

Searching for Records of a Parent or Grandparent

If you know the name of the home, check the relevant Find & Connect page.

If you're not sure about the name of the Home, identifying which institution your parent or grandparent was in can take a bit of detective work. Many people start with only small pieces of information, a bit like a jigsaw puzzle.

Understanding of the [records practices in the state where the home was based](#) will help direct your search.

After that, collate everything you already know, such as:

- Where the home was located? (eg: State, City, Suburb)
- When your parent or grandparent there was there
- If the home was religious or charitable
- Did it take boys, girls or both?
- The age of the children there

If you can, ask your parent or grandparent these questions. If not, other family members may know or remember helpful details.

Wards of the State

If your parent or grandparent was made a [ward of the state](#), there may be government-held records about them.

If you are not sure, the homes they attended may assist. For example, if they were placed in a government-run institution, or passed through a government [reception centre](#), then it's likely they were a ward of the state. In each state or territory, there is a government department whose job it is to respond to requests for access to the [records of state wards](#).

Multiple Placements

There may be records about a person's time in care in multiple locations, held by multiple organisations. If your relative was placed in non-government homes, these organisations might have kept records additional to ward records. You will need to make separate applications for records held by different organisations.

Foster Care

If your parent or grandparent was in foster care, it's likely that your relative spent at least some time in a children's home or institution while awaiting placement, or between placements. If your parent or grandparent was a ward of state, government records may include details of foster care placements.

Former Child Migrants

If you know that your parent or grandparent came to Australia as a child migrant, that will help you [narrow down your search of homes](#).

Read about Records from the Home(s)

Each home or institution page contains a historical background, information on records, and how to access them. This information is not exhaustive and you may find the organisation has more records than listed here. Equally, you may find that the organisation has very minimal records, or that it has stored its records in another place, such as a library or archive. Further research into [Important Records](#) may provide more information.

Records about children in care are controlled by legislation. Your rights to access information will depend on factors such as your relationship to the person and whether the person is still living, as well as the policy of the organisation that holds the records.

Proof of Identity

Different organisations will have different access policies and procedures. In all cases, when applying for records about a relative, you will need to provide some documentation proving your identity (e.g. driver's license, birth certificate, health care card) and your relationship to the person who was in care (for example, a birth certificate). Some organisations will require either proof of the person's death, or if they are still living, the person's permission for you to access their records.

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/finding-family/searching-for-records-of-a-parent-or-grandparent/>