

Accessing records from The Infants' Home

About The Infants' Home

The Infants' Home provides award winning integrated early childhood education, family day care, early intervention and clinical services to thousands of children (aged from birth to school age) and their families. Thirty per cent of our onsite services are targeted to support children and families living with vulnerabilities or who have additional needs. Since 1874 The Infants' Home has been a dynamic and innovative organisation, championing the rights of children, women and families, protecting those at risk, and guiding families as they build their strength, skills and confidence to create a more positive future for themselves. Today The Infants' Home comprises five integrated childcare centres on site in Ashfield, Family Day Care which services the greater Sydney region, as well as a range of family support services.

About our records

The Infants' Home operated as a residential facility, continuously, from 1874 to the mid-1970s; our historical records comprise a vast resource of thousands of individual and collective records of children and mothers who spent time in the facility. Our historical records (1874–2002) are stored at the State Library NSW and are inaccessible to the public for privacy reasons. The Infants' Home provides a free records search service for past attendees.

Records about people who spent time at The Infants' Home are traditionally not confined to 'individual' files.

Documented information about a person is most often spread across interconnected sets of records, and a person's 'file' comprises extracts brought together from a number of different records.

The vast majority of records kept are admission and discharge registers containing information about a child, their family, how they came into care, and hopefully information about their experiences in care.

Other records include:

- Matron's report
- Annual reports
- Committee meeting minutes
- Financial records such as receipts for maintenance payments or reimbursements.

We are in the process of digitising and indexing our records, however most are the original paper-based records.

What is the process to request records?

Please complete the e-form on our website or email history@theinfantshome.org.au

Postal requests can also be made via mail to

Records Search

17 Henry Street Ashfield

NSW, 2131

Once received we will send you a letter via email and/or post confirming your request and asking for a signed declaration of the request and verified proof of identity. Once the necessary documents have been received and approved by The Infants' Home, we will undertake a search of our records and will forward updates by post and/or via email.

What's involved in the search?

Our staff will search our records; where records are accessible not via digital format we will search through the paper-based records at the State Library of NSW. Please allow up to twelve weeks for the search to be completed as the process can be time-intensive.



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What can I expect upon a successfully completed record search?

If we are successful in finding your records we will contact you with copies of your records. We will also provide you with a cover letter which details the context of where the records have been sourced. For example *MLMSS 2983 – Volume 25 – Minutes 1918-1919*. If we are unsuccessful in finding any records we will inform you of this and we will provide you with information for possible alternative avenues of research.

Where can I access support?

We understand that care leavers may experience distress or discomfort when reviewing their records of their time in care. There are services available where a support worker can be present with you when you read your records to offer you support and assistance during this time.

Wattle Place

Wattle Place (operated by Relationships Australia) is the NSW Support Service for Forgotten Australians. Centrally located at Harris Park in Western Sydney, close to rail and bus transport links, Wattle Place provides counselling and a range of other support services for people over the age of 25 who were in out-of-home care in NSW between the 1920s and 1990s, regardless of where they now live. Wattle Place can provide you with advice and support on accessing records about your time in out-of-home care. They can read your records with you and help you interpret them.

Wattle Place | 67 High Street, Harris Park, NSW, 2150 | wattleplace@ransw.org.au | (02) 9687 3636

Care Leavers Australia Network (CLAN)

CLAN is a support and advocacy group for people (and their families) who were brought up in homes away from their family—in Australian Orphanages, Children's Homes or in Foster Care. They may be able to help you obtain your ward file or get information about your home. You can advertise for free in their newsletter to help locate lost family members or to help contact people from your home.

CLAN | www.clan.org.au | 1800 008 774 or 0425 204 747

For more information

Please contact The Infants' Home at (02) 9799 4844 or history@theinfantshome.org.au

