

## Request by grandfather for address of grandchildren

<b>Legislation</b>	Official Information Act 1982, 9(2)(a)
<b>Agency</b>	Department of Social Welfare
<b>Ombudsman</b>	Sir Brian Elwood
<b>Case number(s)</b>	W35527
<b>Date</b>	February 1997

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*Request by grandfather for address of grandchildren—children in custody of father—address known to requester’s daughters—without more information about the family relationships, disclosure of the address under the OIA would infringe the children’s privacy—good reason to withhold under s 9(2)(a).*

In this case, the requester, through his local Member of Parliament, asked the Children and Young Persons Service for the address of his grandchildren. The children were in the custody of their father following the death of their mother, the requester’s daughter. The request had been declined under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA in order to protect the grandchildren’s privacy.

In the course of the investigation it became apparent that two of the requester’s other daughters knew where the children lived and had regular contact with them. It therefore appeared unusual that the requester should have to resort to the OIA to obtain the address. In the circumstances, it was put to him that his concerns might be met by his arranging to visit his grandchildren when they were staying with one of his daughters.

The requester did not respond to this suggestion, and, after consultation with the Privacy Commissioner, it was concluded that, in the absence of more information about the family relationships, disclosure of the address under the Act would infringe the children’s privacy and, in terms of section 9(1) of the OIA, the need to protect their privacy was not outweighed by any countervailing public interest favouring disclosure.

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