

Grand H.E.L.P.

Health, Education, Legal, and Parenting Information for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Colorado State University

Extension

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Department of Human Development and Family Studies

Stresses, Smiles and Struggles

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I once heard a grandparent declare, "There is nothing better, and perhaps nothing worse, than raising my grandchild." Which may be an understandable summary, given the many joys as well as challenges grandparents raising their grandchildren face.

From the initial events causing a grandparent to step into the parental role, to the long days of parenting activities, and the even longer times of worrying, the majority of grandparents have an enormous amount of stress. That is, although raising grandchildren comes with many rewards and heart-warming moments, there are often difficulties unique to this role. Many grandparents raising grandchildren face ongoing stressors around the basic physical, emotional, and financial adjustments they must make. Grandparents may experience changes in their lifestyle, including loss of freedom and control, disruption of friendships with age-mates, conflict with their offspring who are unwilling or unable to raise their own children, as well as emotional stress such as shame, anger, self-doubt, disappointment, and fear. When compared to that of non-custodial grandparents, grandparents who are raising their grandchildren often express lower feelings of life satisfaction

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Upcoming Monthly Topics on the Resource Website

June

National Safety Month:
Learn tips to help keep the house
safe for grandchildren

July

National UV Safety Month:
Tips to keep your grandchild's skin
safe

August

National Parks Month:
Learn about low-cost outdoor
activities to do with your grandchild.

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The most popular article this year was *Elder Abuse and Grandparent Caregivers*. Make sure to check it out at www.ext.colostate.edu/grg

“...remember that you are an important role model for your grandchildren in regards to how one takes care of themselves as well as others.”

and higher levels of anxiety and depression. Grandparents who are raising their grandchildren often find their personal resources stretched to the limit, and sometimes the stress can become overwhelming. So, here are a couple of ideas to keep in mind:

- You are not losing your mind. Remind yourself that parenting is never easy, and some days will be better than others. All of the feelings (both good and bad) you are experiencing are normal and to be expected.
- No one is perfect, and certainly not when it comes to raising children. So keep a “big picture” perspective, and remember that you can only do your best. Start each day with a new born hope and commitment to try your hardest—but recognize there is only so much that anyone can do.
- Be as kind and loving to yourself as you are to everyone else in your life. It can be difficult to do this when everyone else depends on you. However, no matter what, remember that you are an important role model for your grandchildren in regards to how one takes care of themselves as well as others. This will help you, while you are teaching them about good self-care.



Grand H.E.L.P. is a supplementary newsletter to the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Resource Website. Each season features articles on important topics for grandparents:

Summer: **Health**

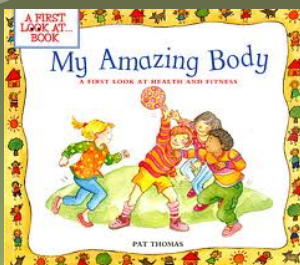
Fall: **Education**

Winter: **Legal**

Spring: **Parenting**

Call (970) 491-6281 to find a Colorado State University Extension office near you!

Book Corner



My Amazing Body by Pat Thomas teaches children about how health, exercise and nutrition affect our bodies. Try reading this book with your grandchild to learn about how important it is to eat healthy and get plenty of exercise. This book also helps children understand that everyone gets sick, but our bodies have the amazing ability to protect us and restore our health.

Raising your Children's Children by Martha Evans Sparks is a quick read for grandparents who have recently began caring full time for their grandchildren. Addressing a wide variety of topics like court proceedings, lawyer bills, and emotional needs of grandchild, this book can provide helpful information on how to get through the initial challenges that arise when grandparents step in as primary caregivers.

