

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

Fostering your Grandchild's Positive Social and Emotional Development

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Social and emotional “soft skills” are crucial to school readiness, school success, mental health, relationships, work, and life. So, what can you do to foster your grandchild's positive social and emotional development?

First, let your grandchildren know that you are there for them. Many of your grandchildren have experienced separation from or loss of family members, often coupled with difficult family relationships. They may be especially needy of reassurance that they can count on you. It is important to provide children this sense of security, warmth, affection, and safety.

It is also important to *validate* your grandchildren's emotions and model well-regulated behavior. Even young babies react to your emotional expressions. Your emotional reactions teach them what is scary, fun, sad, and so on. Your intense emotional reactions can be unsettling to your grandchildren at any age. So, it is important for you to regulate your own emotions. Think about your grandchild's behavior in a way that doesn't “push your buttons”. Realize

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Upcoming Monthly Topics on the Resource Website

April

Read about helping your grandchildren understand and accept changing families in our society.

May

How to help children learn how to manage money responsibly

June

In honor of National Safety month, learn tips on how to make sure your house is fire safe.

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To read about a Northern Colorado grandfamily and their story,
visit the featured story on the GRG website
www.ext.colostate.edu/grg

“Notice when your grandchildren do things right and describe to them what you think was well done.”

that when babies and preschoolers “are difficult”, it is usually because they are reacting emotionally, have learned to get attention this way, and/or don't know the effect they are having on others. They are not trying to upset you! You can “coach” them on better ways to tell you that they need something. Your use of emotion words teaches them how to label their feelings, and your coaching helps them regulate and respond appropriately to their emotions. Both you and they can take deep breaths to calm down before acting. Point out to them, calmly and in concrete ways, how their behavior affects others. Notice when they do things right and describe to them what you think was done well.

School-aged children may need coaching on making and keeping friends and dealing with interpersonal difficulties. Like preschoolers, they benefit most from concrete, specific examples, suggestions, and role-modeling. Adolescents' “emotional brain” is mature, but their “planful, regulating brain” is still developing. This can lead to impulsive, risky behavior. It is important to monitor and set limits on their behavior, letting them know that you hear and value their opinions, but explaining what they need to do and why. All of your grandchildren need your help and support!



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**

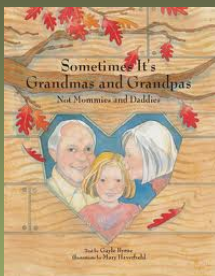
Fall: **Education**

Winter: **Legal**

Spring: **Parenting**

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

Book Corner



Sometimes It's Grandmas and Grandpas is a children's book that beautifully tells the story of children that are being raised by grandparents. The author of this book, Gayle Byrne, is a librarian and a grandma raising her grandchild. This book can be a great learning and transition book for grandchildren that are just beginning their journey with grandparents.

In this book, Sylvie de Toledo and Deborah Brown give great tips and stories about coping with the stresses and learning to set boundaries when grandparents raise grandchildren. ***Grandparents as Parents, Second Edition***, is a self-titled survival guide for raising a second family. This book will be helpful for maintaining self-care techniques, navigating the government systems, and learning about technology.

