

## Giving Through Grandparenting

**G**randparents can play a crucial part in the lives of their grandchildren, fulfilling a number of needs. In fact, studies show children who have strong bonds with their grandparents often have fewer behavioral problems, better social skills, and a greater sense of overall stability than those without those special connections. With increasing numbers of households impacted by economic hardship, job loss, divorce, and full-time working parents, these connections are more important than ever.

Grandparents give to their grandchildren in so many ways. Following are just a few of the ways they can enrich the lives of their grandchildren and the lives of the entire family as well.

### GIFTS OF TIME AND ACCEPTANCE

Grandparents often report a whole new level of enjoyment with their grandchildren without the direct, day-to-day worries related to raising them. They often have more quality time to spend due to retirement or flexible schedules, as well as more freedom to become a friend or mentor – especially as their grandchildren get older.

It is also often said that the role of grandparents is to provide a level of unconditional love – meaning they have the luxury of worrying less about grades, manners, discipline, and so on – and can interact with them non-judgmentally – even indulging them at times.

### GIFTS OF WISDOM AND INSIGHT

Having already navigated the journey of parenthood, grandparents have more perspective on the dilemmas and growing pains of growing up. They can provide a listening ear for grandchildren, often around issues

or feelings they are hesitant to discuss with their parents for fear of being judged. Grandparents can sometimes provide feedback or advice their grandchildren may more readily

accept because they recognize that voice of wisdom and it can feel less threatening.



### GIFTS OF MEMORIES AND FAMILY STORIES

Grandparents hold family history in their heads and hearts. They can tell stories that help grandchildren feel a sense of stability and continuity. Children feel comforted and secure when they sense they are part of a family that's survived through good times and bad. These stories can also help them see their parents in new ways, reminding them Mom and Dad were once children with trials and tribulations as well!

Time spent with grandparents, whether they live around the block or in another city or state, can provide so many positive and fun childhood memories. These memories, valuable in their own right, also help to carry the family history forward for future generations to enjoy.

### GETTING HELP

For help with personal or workplace issues, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These confidential services are available to employees and their eligible household members 24/7.

