



Grandparents

Nurturing That Special Bond

Grandparents can offer children unconditional love and a special relationship. Sometimes, grandparents can teach your children things that you never could. To have grandparents in your children's lives sometimes takes work on both sides and lots of communication. Most conflicts with grandparents can be lessened when they feel appreciated and they see that, even though your values and theirs may be different, you do try to pass on some of the values and attitudes they taught you. Whether they're far away or down the block, nurturing the bond between your children and your parents is the gift of a lifetime.

Setting Boundaries

You're the parents and you're entitled to make the rules for your children. Making the rules is easy, but communicating them to grandparents may be a little harder.

- Try to take a firm but gentle approach.
- If grandparents are stopping by too often without warning, you can ask them to phone first.
- If grandparents give too many gifts too often, you can ask them not to. Perhaps suggest that these wonderful things be saved for an upcoming birthday or holiday.
- If grandparents are baby-sitting, what happens if you don't agree with their rules or lack of rules? It might be in your best interest, and your child's, to consider changing baby-sitting arrangements.
- Grandparents may try to give you gifts with strings attached. If you don't like the strings, don't accept the gift.



Grandparents' Feelings

There are always two sides to every conflict. It's easy to take advantage of grandparents or to expect too much. But it's important to remember to respect grandparents' feelings.

- They may not always want to be the free on-call baby-sitter.
- Not all grandparents can afford to or see the need to buy a gift for every occasion.

Keeping in Touch From Far Away

If Grandma and Grandpa are too far away for regular visits, here are suggestions for keeping in touch.

- **Send pictures often. They don't get to see the day-to-day changes. Pictures and videotapes are a good substitute. Don't forget to label and date them.**
- **Talk on the phone as often as you can afford to. This is a great way to keep grandparents up-to-date and, eventually, to hear their grandchild's voice.**
- **As your baby gets older and starts creating works of "art," send a few to Grandma and Grandpa.**
- **Visit as often as you can. Spending time together is the best way to strengthen ties between grandparents and grandchildren.**
- **Write an occasional letter or postcard to fill grandparents in on family happenings.**
- **Tape a talking letter on audio cassette, adding some of baby's gurgling and coos.**
- **Use e-mail to write often and even send pictures.**