How grandparents’ lives are impacted!

Social: Many grandparent-caregivers lack social support and end up in social isolation which can lead to feelings of loneliness and invisibility. The lack of support is shown to then put grandparents at a higher risk for low self-esteem and depression (Hayslip and Kaminski, 2005).

Cultural: About 40 percent or above of Black, Pacific Islander, and American Indian and Alaska Native grandparent-caregivers report being responsible for their grandchildren for 5 years or more, whereas only about 33 percent each for White, Hispanic and Asian grandparent-caregivers. Asian and Hispanic grandparents oftentimes live in multigenerational homes and do not bear the sole responsibility of caregiving (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The black community has a long history of caring for family members, which allows for greater acceptance of the surrogate parent role (Goodman & Silverstein, 2002), which might explain the elevated number.

Family: Family can be a great support system. However, your adult children may resent you for the time you spend with only one set of grandchildren and you may feel guilt about that. There can also be a power struggle with the parent too, all of which can affect the grandchild (Grandparenting Today, 2010).

Financial: About 19% of grandparent-caregivers live below the poverty level and many live on fixed incomes or still must maintain their place in the workforce. Current economic times can make this extra challenging.

There are a variety of reasons grandparents end up in the parenting role again, but regardless the reason, we want to present as many facts and useful information to help and support you and ease you back into parenthood. It is not a mystery that your lives will be impacted in many ways and here are some of those impacts.

EMOTIONAL AFFECTS: Grandparents experience a whirlwind of emotions including anger, shame, depression, marital stress, loss of freedom, loss of grandparenting role, stress; depression has been found to correlate with increased emotional/behavioral/academic issues in grandchildren.

THINKING AFFECTS: Many grandparents blame themselves and hold feelings of self-doubt in their parenting skills because they are caring for their children’s children.

PHYSICAL AFFECTS: Almost 80% of grandparents report having at least one health issue with one-third reporting their health worsened and reported feeling more tired since becoming the primary caregiver.
YOU DESERVE SUPPORT
HERE’S WHERE TO GET IT!

WHO CAN HELP?

AARP
www.aarp.org/relationships/grandparenting

Grandparenting Today
www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/relationships/factsheets.cfm

Grandparent Again
www.grandparentagain.com

Grandfamilies State Law & Policy Resource Center
www.grandfamilies.org

USA.gov
http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Grandparents.shtml

Stephanie Bruce,
School Counselor
910.527.4125

CURRENT TECHNIQUES/STRATEGIES TO HELP GRANDPARENTS ADJUST

Direct services such as group counseling, coping and parenting skill training and support groups for grandparent-caregivers (and their grandchildren) prove to be beneficial. Indirect services like volunteering in the child’s classroom, getting to know teachers and guest speaking gets the grandparent involved in the child’s education (Pinson-Millburn et al., 1996). A social support theory can be useful based on studies that show a strong social support can help buffer stress (Edwards, 2006).

SO MAY WE SUGGEST ...

Join a support group. You’re not alone in this, just look at the statistics. Find your peers and lean on each other (and of course us too).

Other Stats

Grandparents

Grandchildren living in household 6.1 million
Still in Labor Force 1.4 million
Currently Married 1.7 million
Primary caregiver >5 yrs. 918,000
Living below poverty level 477,000
Living with a disability 730,000

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2008)

NUMBERS

Grandparents living in the U.S.
56 million

Grandparents as primary caregiver
2.5 million

Number of Grandchildren in N.C. living with grandparent 1 in 12

(U.S. Census Bureau, 2008)
Resources


“Everyone needs to have access both to grandparents and grandchildren in order to be a full human being.”
— Margaret Mead

“Grandparents are the footsteps to the future generations.”
— author unknown