



Insightful Nana Articles

Revealing 7 Secrets To Successful Grand Parenting

While some grandparents are fighting for grandparent's rights, others are actively involved in their grandchildren's lives. Grandparents can be a vital part of a grandchild's support system in teaching moral, social and spiritual values...working side by side with parents.

Sometimes, grandparents are the only stable element in a child's life as evidenced by the increasing number of grandparents who are actually raising their grandchildren for one reason or another.

Here are 7 tips that will help you to be a successful grandparent.

1. Spend Time With Your Grandchildren.

Inviting one grandchild at a time for an activity gives you precious one-on-one time. Your activities could range from cooking a meal together, working in the garden, shopping, playing games, and having a sleep-over.

Taking a grandchild out for a meal and doing a little shopping has always been a hit with my grands. It gives me the opportunity to visit with the child and find out what his individual interests are. One grandson calls me and asks, "Nana, can I come and spend the night? I need a break!" Of course, I'm delighted that he chooses my home for his

respite.

Sleep-overs are just the best. Sometimes they come one at a time but, more often than not, their cousins of similar age join them. We have a jolly good time, eating, watching movies, and playing games. Often we do simple crafts together.

Choose activities that are unique to you, your budget and circumstances but, spend time with your grandkids. You can be a support to their parents and a positive influence on them in this unstable world.

2. Listen to your Grandkids

Often times, grandparents become the sounding board for their grandkids. Kids love to share information about school and their friends to a listening ear. These conversations will help you to know each individual child better and understand his hopes and dreams.

Other times, they may come to you with concerns. Make it a point to listen without judgment and criticism so the child feels free to express his heart. An over abundance of advice from you can slow the flow or stop the conversation. Perhaps, a subtle approach later would be wiser than giving too much advice at the time. As the old adage says... "Timing is everything."

3. Teach Skills and Share Hobbies.

Often, parents don't have the time or energy to teach their child a particular skill; an extra "leg up" from you is a blessing. You can support your grandkids, and their parents,

by teaching or reinforcing everyday skills.

I know a fourth grader who was having trouble with simple fractions. His grandma had him over and they baked a cake together. The practical applications of measuring the ingredients helped reinforce the concept of fractions.

A grandpa took his sixteen-year-old granddaughter under his wing, taught her how to check the oil and other fluids under the hood of her car.

My grandma had a garden. I helped her pick peas, shell them and prepare them for the freezer. I not only learned a skill but it gave my grandmother the opportunity to tell me about her life while we were working together. The stories are still vivid in my mind.

Don't assume your grandkids know how to accomplish simple tasks. Teaching them simple skills will build their self-esteem as well as give you another opportunity to bond with them.

4. Read To Your Grandkids

Children love a good story. Sitting down and snuggling up together with an age appropriate book can create an important bond.

My "Grandma Library" is a special collection. These books can't be used unless we sit down and read them together. When I suggest we read a book, the children run to select their favorites from a special bookshelf. It's humorous that they often choose the same book over and over again, and that's fine with me. The most important consideration is, that we read together and enjoy each other's company.

Several years ago, a couple of my older grandsons went with me to the library and, we pick up the classic chapter book, "The Boxcar Children," by Gertrude Chandler. It was a nice summer afternoon and, we sat on the tailgate of my car and I began to read. When darkness fell upon us, we had to suspend our story until a later time. We had been reading the book for over four hours. The boys still talk about that afternoon.

5. Build and Share Traditions

Traditions can bind a family together giving children a sense of belonging. Traditions create memories that are often passed from one generation to another.

One grandmother takes each grandchild shopping and to lunch before the new school year begins. On Halloween, another grandma has chili and donuts before the kids go out door-to-door to collect their treats. The logs in the fireplace are lit, marking the beginning of the fall season. What traditions do you have in your family?

One granddaughter and three grandsons come to my home for a sleep-over Thanksgiving eve. They wash down the tables and bring up the extra chairs from the basement. The good dishes and flatware from the china cupboard are used to set a formal table. I keep thinking they'll loose interest in this tradition but so far they haven't and, one of my grandsons is twelve.

Create traditions in your family that your grandkids will remember and will want to take with them into the future when they have their own children.

6. Share Your History

There's nothing like a good story from the past. Sharing stories from your past will give your grandkids a sense of who you are and, your stories will take on special importance because they're true. Your history will become an heirloom in their hearts. It will give your grand kids a sense of identity to learn about their ancestors.

My grandmother came from very poor circumstances. Through her stories, I learned to appreciate her courage and determination in rising above her poverty level to become a successful businesswoman. My grandfather not only shared memories about himself, but stories about his mom and dad.

Write your history down as well as tell your stories verbally. Your history is a gift to each generation that will preserve it and pass it along.

7. Absent Grandchildren

Not all grandparents have the privilege of living near their grandchildren. You can still keep in contact with your grandkids and be a positive influence in their lives.

One grandma is a pen pal with her granddaughter. Their letters are hand written and often contain little trinkets and memorabilia from their day-to-day lives. One grandpa sets aside Sunday evenings to visit with his grandson by phone.

Another grandma set up a family forum site that allows her to communicate with her children and grandchildren. They share the family news as well as post photos frequently.

Since cell phones often include long distance costs at no extra charge, it's easy to talk to a grandchild frequently.

Some of today's computers have built in cameras that allow grandparents to visit with their children and grandchildren long distance and still see their sweet faces.

Summery: You have your own style of grand parenting and every tip will not work for every grandparent. Evaluate your circumstances and decide what will work for you and your grandkids best. You can show your love in many ways. Be creative and choose ways that suit you best. The important thing is, take an active part in your grandkids lives. You can make a tremendous difference.

Kathryn Griffiths, Insightful Nana, is the Nana to 15 grandchildren. More articles like this can be found on her web site: Insightfulnana.com Kathryn is the author of an incredible book written to help parents [raise fantastic kids.](#)

