

Bright Futures: Family Matters

"Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do. Grandparents sort of sprinkle stardust over the lives of little children." Alex Haley

GRANDPARENTS

Grandparents are a very important piece of the family puzzle. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Grandparents Study in 2002, most grandparents (68%) said they see a grandchild every one or two weeks. Another 24% said they see a grandchild once a month to once every 2 months. Two major obstacles preventing them from seeing grandchildren are living too far away (45%) and their grandchildren's busy schedules (22%). They identified the role of family historian and spoiling their grandchildren as key grandparents' roles. Respondents are likely to speak to grandchildren about day-to-day issues such as school (84%), morals and values (78%), planning future visits (72%) and daily activities (72%).

Grandparents were asked to judge how important they are to their grandchildren. More than half (58%) said they play a very important role in the lives of their grandchildren. Thirty percent reported that they feel they play a somewhat important role.

Grandparents have participated in the following activities in the last six months with their grandchildren:

- ☀ 86% had them over for dinner
- ☀ 84% go out to dinner
- ☀ 76% watch TV
- ☀ 75% read to them or with them
- ☀ 75% go shopping



Information adapted from
The Grandparents Study 2002:

http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/general/gp_2002.pdf

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

According to 2000 Census Data, 2.4 million grandparents are the primary caregivers to approximately 4.5 million children under the age of 18. This often happens because of a sudden event involving the natural parents. Nearly 30% of all grandchildren being brought up by grandparents are under the age of four.

Between 1990 and 2000, the number of US children in grandparent-headed households increased by 30%. Most grandparents are between 55 and 64, and almost 25% are over 65. For grandparents, the full-time care of their grandchildren is sometimes a surprise; and almost always a return to responsibilities that they had thought were finished. Some grandparents are in their thirties or forties, but many are old enough to collect Social Security, and their plans do not usually include raising children again.

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Grandparents raising grandchildren with special needs face similar challenges as other grandparents raising grandchildren, but they also tackle additional issues, such as finding accessible housing, obtaining needed health care and receiving legal support. Additionally, since school policies are usually geared toward local families, grandchildren may not be eligible for transportation to other school districts.

Guiding children through life can also be emotionally draining. Grandparents may be at a loss when it comes to dealing with the mental health issues that trouble their grandchildren. Caregivers must be strong enough to set firm limits, but they also need to be tender enough to offer plenty of praise and encouragement.

Information from this section adapted from:

<http://chhs.gsu.edu/nationalcenter/welcome.html>,

<http://www.aarp.org/life/grandparents/helpraising/Articles/a2004-09-01-grandparents-behavior.html>

For more information, see the links below...

☀ <http://www.aarp.org/life/grandparents/>

☀ <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/>

☀ http://www.aoa.gov/prof/aoaprog/caregiver/careprof/pr ogguidance/background/program_issues/Fin-Heller.pdf

Family Voices is a national grassroots network of families and friends speaking on behalf of children with special health needs. Our children are also part of the wider world of children. With a Partners in Information and Communication (PIC) Cooperative Agreement from the MCH Bureau - DHHS, Family Voices works to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health. *Bright Futures: Family Matters* is a digest of articles and news clips to share with families, family organizations, and our professional partners. Check out our Family Voices web sites at: www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org and www.familyvoices.org

Partners...

National Black Family Promotion Coalition (NBFPC) addresses issues impacting the Black family through culturally important health promotion and public information. The Coalition brings parents, caregivers and professionals in education, health, human services and technology together to discuss issues important to the well being of Black families and other families of color. The NBFPC is sponsored by Today's Child Communications, a multi-media communications firm that provides assistance to families and the organizations that serve them.

Today's Child Communications, Inc.
1133 Broadway, Suite 901
New York, NY 10010
212-462-4716
www.todays-child.com



Family Resource Corner

☀ KidsHealth provides doctor-approved health information about children from before birth through adolescence. KidsHealth has separate areas for [kids](#), [teens](#), and [parents](#) - each with its own design, age-appropriate content, and tone. KidsHealth is sponsored by the Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media. **SPANISH**

www.kidshealth.org

☀ The New York University Child Study Center offers science-based, research-driven psychiatric care to children and adolescents with learning, behavior and emotional disorders. It includes an articles section with over 200 current articles, and publications section that includes newsletters and manuals developed by the faculty of the Child Study Center. **SPANISH**

<http://www.aboutourkids.org/>

☀ The National Center of Medical Home Initiatives for Children with Special Needs, sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) provides support to physicians, families, and other medical and non-medical providers who care for children with special needs so that they have access to a medical home. Provides resources, state information and tools for families and youth. **SPANISH**

<http://www.medicalhomeinfo.org/>

SPANISH - Website also provides information in Spanish

What's new in research?

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The 2005 *Dietary Guidelines*, recently released by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides advice for everyone two years and older about how good dietary habits can improve health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. This is the basis of federal food and nutrition education programs and supports the nutrition and physical fitness recommendations of President Bush's *HealthierUS* Initiative. Eating a healthy balance of nutritious foods is still a central point in the *Dietary Guidelines*, but there is now a greater emphasis on calorie control and physical activity.

For more information, please visit:

www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines **SPANISH**



Tidbits for the Month

April is National Autism Awareness Month!

National Autism Awareness Month, which was first established in 1972, provides an opportunity for the Autism Society of America to educate the public about this developmental disorder. This year's theme, *Rev It Up For Autism*, represents an awareness or fundraising event focused on an activity surrounding movement, such as a car race, bike/cycling event, go-kart race, run/walk or dance.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.autism-society.org>



The Family Voices Bright Futures

Family Pocket Guide in Spanish is ready to order!

All of the useful information packed into the English version will be available for our Spanish-speaking friends and includes additional Spanish resources. Please visit

www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org for more information!

Share your news with others!

We're always looking for news and activities about family organization and programs to post. Share exciting events and activities about your organization that will be interesting to others. Email Kati Cawley at kcawley@fcsn.org or fax at (617) 572-2094 with your tidbits or to subscribe.

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