



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Partnership of Wisconsin

GRANDPARENTS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO CHILDREN'S SCHOOL SUCCESS

Madison - Whether they live next door, in the next town or thousands of miles away, grandparents can play an important role in children's educations.

Mary Brintnall-Peterson, a University of Wisconsin-Extension specialist on aging, said a recent national survey of school principals and grandparents found 99 percent of all principals believe grandparents are important to a child's success in school. The study, sponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals and World Book Educational Products, found five key ways in which grandparents help children do well in school.

Strategies grandparents can use include:

- Ask children about events in their lives and at school. Keep in touch with school activities. Rather than ask how school is going, be specific. Ask children what book they are reading, what their favorite part of the school day is, or what they are studying in a certain subject. Talk to your adult children about ways you can help your grandchild in school. If children are studying a certain time period, share experiences from your own life in that period or what you learned in school about that time. Write notes to your grandchildren, even if you live nearby, passing along a favorite joke or asking a specific question. Ask children's opinions about current events or issues the kids are studying in class.
- Praise children, not for their accomplishments but for their effort. Tell your grandchildren why you are praising them if they put special effort into a project or pursued more information about a topic that interested them. Avoid comparisons between siblings or between your adult children and your grandchildren. Look beyond sports to praise your grandkids on a variety of things -- how they played fairly, for following rules or listening carefully. Write a special note or invite your grandchildren on a special outing in recognition of their effort.
- Participate in your grandchildren's school. If you live far away, try to plan a visit during a special school activity sometime during the year. If you can't attend a special event, come to school with your grandchild. Meet the teacher, and even ask if you can be a guest speaker or read a book to the class. You might want to share a hobby with the class or be a regular volunteer at your grandchild's school.
- Learn, both by yourself and with your grandchildren. Grandparents can be wonderful role models for children by demonstrating how to be lifelong learners. Read with your grandchild, visit the library together, cook together, take a class on a topic that interests you. Explain to grandchildren how to learn from mistakes and how to continue learning, even after leaving school.
- Encourage your grandchildren in their future plans and goals. Let your grandkids know you believe in them and the importance of trying. Demonstrate how to be confident and relaxed.

If you as a grandparent are raising your grandchildren, it is also important to know the schools and teachers. Get involved in your grandchildren's homework, read together, make school work a priority and stay in contact with the school.

Provided by Mary Brintnall-Peterson. For more information or questions, contact Mary at (608) 262-8083 or mary.brintnall-peterson@ces.uwex.edu
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