Kinship Connection

April 2011

The Changing Roles of Caregivers: Grandparents

By: Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, Inc.

Raising children is a difficult task, and there's a reason that people are typically in their 20s and 30s when they have kids. Raising grandchildren, (or in other cases nieces, nephews, cousins, and even younger siblings) is an even more challenging undertaking.

A growing number of grandparents who have given years of love, money, time and energy to their first family, find themselves giving those same things to their children's children.

Grandparents returning to the role of primary caregivers find themselves recreating their relationship with their children who cannot raise their own offspring. Conflicting emotions of love and resentment are compounded by grandparents' new role as the primary caregiver. How do you, as a grandparent, balance support for your adult child with raising the offspring of that same child?

Here are some ideas you might find useful and some resources for helping you make those adjustments. That a grandchild is a precious gift, and you also have your own gifts to help you with your new role in their lives.

What can you do to make the adjustment the easiest for you, your spouse, and the child who just entered your home?

Reflect on your past parenting. Think about what you did that made you a good parent. What would you have done differently? How can you apply what you have learned to the way you want to raise this child? You might also want to:

- Write down your feelings. Then, discuss these memories and ideas with your spouse, and trusted relatives and friends. It helps to make plans for your new role as grandparent.
- Consider parenting courses. The support and parenting ideas may help you raise this new, young member of your household with more ease and grace, and help you get connected with others.
- Check out books and DVDs from our resource center (Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, Inc.) or the public library about grandparenting and good parenting ideas.
- Join grandparent support groups (http://grandsplace.org/gp4/wi.html) and foster parent support groups (http://wifostercareandadoption.org/snav/56/page.htm).

Many grandparents walk the tightrope of raising grandchildren whose parents come into the lives of their children only to leave again. How are you going to handle that?

- Keep a record of all communication, visits and contacts with your adult child. This informs the social workers about what is happening, and can be important in legal proceedings.
- Talk to your child if possible. Work out visitations, financial matters, and how his or her boundaries have changed in regard to their child.
- Discuss what your child needs to do to become a better parent and get her life in order. Written contracts with stated goals and expectations give you a basis to talk and to refer to when needed.
- Get to know your legal and decision making powers. Lay them on the table with your child. In most family situations like this, it will help to get an attorney or legal advice to define your rights and those of your child who is relinquishing parenting to you.
- Work with your county social workers. They can help you know your rights, find ways to communicate with your adult child, and give you the piece of mind that comes with knowing how to handle the child who comes into and out of the life of your grandchild.

How can I deal with the grief and anger that I feel and all that is happening?

These feelings are pretty universal when adult children cannot or do not parent their own children. But knowledge empowers people to deal with hard situations and move toward some peace and acceptance. Grieve and let your grandchild grieve the situation. You might also want to:

- Talk to a therapist. Therapy has helped many people find satisfying ways to deal with these difficult entangled relationships.
- Read about grief and develop ways of dealing with it in order to find peace and acceptance in your situation.
- And again, one of the most helpful things you can do may be to join grandparent and caregiver support groups.

How do I handle the financial responsibilities?

Find out about community resources. Go to the University of Wisconsin Extension website at http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/wisconsin.cfm. Badger Care Plus, WIC, Food Share Wisconsin, and Energy Plus are a few of the many resources you may be able to access. This site will tell you where to start.

Tell your employer as soon as you can about your new role raising your grandchild. Find out about insurance changes, and options for scheduling and child care that may be available to you.

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Relative Caregivers Support/Education Group

Help Us Help You!
Bring ideas to provide topics for discussions that will be informational as well as beneficial to you and your families.

Second Wednesday of each month
April 13th, 2011
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Refreshments will be available

Parents Place
1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI
262-549-5575

Free Childcare Available - Call Parents Place to reserve your spot!

Please RSVP To Janis or Libby
Janis Ramos 262-896-8069
Libby Sinclair 262-548-7277

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I have to deal with the courts now. What should I do?
The court works best when you are involved as much as possible. Go to all the proceedings, even if someone tells you that you don't need to be there. Other things to consider:

- Get legal help. If you can't afford it, contact legal aid services for help. (http://badgerlaw.net/Home/PublicWeb/LAW) A lawyer can advise you about what documents you need, guide you through the steps and help you implement good plans.
- Speak up at court or submit a letter (to all parties) for the court proceedings. Be objective. Facts, not emotions, will serve you best in court.
- Save all of your notes and documents in special files or boxes.

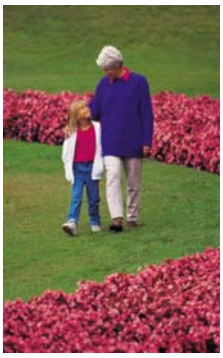
I have not been in a school in a long time. What should I do?
If your grandchild cannot stay in the same school, register your grandchild for school as soon as possible. Explain to the school staff your grandchild now lives with you. Other things that will likely be helpful include:

- Attending conferences, open houses, and school events that involve your grandchild.
- Getting involved. Introduce yourself, and tell staff who your grandchild is. You won't be alone. There will be other caretakers there in your same situation. Join the parents organization or a booster club. Statistics show that kids whose families are involved in school do better.
- Maintaining contact with teachers. Don't wait for them to seek you out. Feel free to call or email them or offer to volunteer in the classroom, if you're able to.
- Sharing some of the family situation, if you're comfortable doing so. This often helps teachers understand your child better.

My grandchild is so unhappy and struggling with all that has happened. What can I do?
It's common for kids to show a lot of anger, sadness, depression and inability to deal with life in a process like this. Every person, child or adult, reacts differently and has to work things out in his or her own way. You can help by:

- Letting them know that you are also sad.
- Not belittling the missing parent.
- Taking your grandchild to a therapist. Most therapists will want to include you at times with your grandchild in therapy so that you can learn more about what you are doing that works and to know what you can change to help your family function with peace.

Since time began, grandparents, relatives and other concerned adults have raised children when their parents were not able to do so themselves. These precious children have blessed many lives. Bill Clinton, Barack Obama, Colin Powell and countless others have spent years of their childhood being cared for by grandparents who gave them what they needed to succeed in the world. May your gift of love and sacrifice be honored for that precious child you are now raising.



Install Carbon Monoxide Alarms
In Every Home
On Every Level
Near Sleeping Areas

Wisconsin's new carbon monoxide (CO) will help ensure safe homes with the presence of CO alarms.
But FIRE and CARBON MONOXIDE PREVENTION starts with education about this new law.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- All single family and two-unit homes - new and existing - must install a CO alarm on every floor level, near sleeping areas.
- New construction must be hard-wired with a battery back-up.
- Existing homes may install any type of CO alarms; battery, plug-in, or combination smoke/CO devices.
- A carbon monoxide detector required under this section shall bear an Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., listing mark.
- The law takes effect February 1, 2011.
- Alarms should be installed in accordance with directions from manufacturer.

EXCEPTIONS

- CO alarms are only required in new and existing homes that have any fuel burning appliance, which includes: stoves, ovens, grills, clothes dryers, furnaces, boilers, water heaters, fireplaces and heaters OR an attached garage.
- Alarms do not need to be installed in the attic, garage or storage area of homes.

MAINTENANCE

- Test alarms monthly.
- Replace alarms according to manufacturer instructions.
- Check batteries and replace twice a year.
- Alarms should never be disconnected or unplugged.
- Batteries should never be removed for other uses.

This information is based on Wisconsin Act 158 and Wisconsin Department of Commerce Rules

Independence First and Wisconsin FACETS Host Two Youth Leadership Summits

Independence First and Wisconsin FACETS will once again be hosting two Youth Leadership Summits for high school students (and recent graduates) with disabilities. The application can be obtained from Alie Kriofske Mainella at Independence First - 414-226-8112.

The Summit is being held:

- June 20 - 24th, 2011
- July 11 - 15th, 2011

Participants will learn about how to talk about their disabilities, self-advocacy, healthy relationships, independent living, conflict resolution and more! Each student who attends will be given bus tickets if needed, lunch and breakfast every day and a stipend for attending.

Please contact Alie Kriofske Mainella at 414-226-8112 with any questions. Applications are due May 6th, 2011.

Reminder…
If any of your information including your address, phone number, cell phone number, or e-mail address has changed, please call or e-mail:
Linda Finn at lfinn@waukeshacounty.gov, (262)548-7254
Deb Fosberg at dfosberg@waukeshacounty.gov, (262)548-7256
Libby Sinclair at esinclair@waukeshacounty.gov, (262) 548-7277
Janis Ramos at jramos@waukeshacounty.gov, (262) 896-8069

Local Workshops and Training

Parents United

What: Parents United is a non-profit consortium of 15 Waukesha County special education departments that have united to provide an educational community opportunity. Timely and informative information is provided in a neutral forum for parents and professionals who work with children. The lectures and presentations offered each school year provide essential links, knowledge, and networking to the entire community for the ultimate benefit of students.

When/Topic:

- Thursday, April 7th, 2011; 9:00 - 11:30 a.m./ADHD Interventions for Home and School
- Thursday, May 5th, 2011; 9:00 - 11:30 a.m./Anxiety & School Performance in Children and Adolescents

Where: Raddison Hotel, Highway 164 in Pewaukee, Wisconsin
Cost: Free. Pre-registration is very much appreciated.
Contact: Edie Scott at 262-965-2001 or ediescott50@yahoo.com for more information or to RSVP to one of the sessions listed above.

Parents Place

262-549-5575
www.ppacinc.org

Prices for some classes may apply. Call 262-549-5575 to register.
Free pre-registered childcare is available while attending most classes.
Space is limited.

Anger in Relationships
Tuesdays, April 5 - 26
6:00 - 7:30 PM

Co-creative Discipline: Teaching Children to Cooperate
Thursdays, April 7 & 21
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Calming the Explosive Volcano
Mondays, April 4 - 25
6:00 - 7:30 PM

USDA Memo
The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

We wanted to share the following USDA memo with you. It is posted on the DPI School Nutrition website at http://dpi.wi.gov/fns/cnrsnp.html. DPI staff anticipate additional information from the USDA in the next few months. Once that happens, they will post any additional materials/guidance on the webpage as well.

"The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (the Act), Public Law 111-296, provides categorical eligibility for free meals to foster children. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance on the implementation of this provision in the Child Nutrition Programs.

Section 102 of the Act amends Section 9(b)(12)(A) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) to provide categorical eligibility for free meals, without further application, to any foster child whose care and placement is the responsibility of the State or who is placed by a court with a caretaker household. In addition, the Act amends Section 9(b)(5) of the NSLA to allow certification of a foster child for free meals, without application, if the local educational agency or other child nutrition program institution obtains documentation from an appropriate State or local agency indicating the status of the child as a foster child whose care and placement is the responsibility of the State or that the foster child has been placed with a caretaker household by a court. These provisions are effective October 1, 2010.

We strongly encourage school food authorities and other child nutrition institutions to establish formal mechanisms with State and local foster agencies to receive information directly from these agencies to facilitate certification for free meals for foster children.

It is important to note that these provisions only apply to foster children formally placed by a State child welfare agency or a court. They do not apply to informal arrangements that may exist outside of State or court based systems.

Changes to Application Process
This change to allow categorical eligibility for free meals for foster children necessitates changes in the way free and reduced price applications are handled. Previously, a separate application for free and reduced price meals was submitted for a foster child who was considered a household of one.

Now, the foster child is categorically eligible and may be certified without an application. Households with foster and non-foster children may choose to include the foster child as a household member, as well as any personal income earned by the foster child, on the same household application that includes their non-foster children. This will streamline the application process and may help the foster family's non-foster children qualify for free or reduced price meals based on household size and income.

In processing the application, the local educational agency (LEA) or other child nutrition program institution would certify the foster child for free meals, and then make an eligibility determination for the remainder of the household based on the household's income (including personal income eared by the foster child) or other categorical eligibility information reported on the application. As before, foster payments received by the family from the placing agency are not considered income and do not need to be reported. Please note that the presence of a foster child in the household does not convey eligibility for free meals to all children in the household in the same manner as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservation (FDPIR) participation does.

LEAs and other child nutrition program institutions should implement this change as soon as possible for any new foster children identified by foster agencies or who submit applications for the remainder of this school year. All household applications and supporting materials must be updated to reflect these changes no later than the beginning of School Year 2011-2012. FNS will provide updated prototype applications and supporting materials for all Child Nutrition Programs in the near future.

Finally, we are working with our partners at the Department of Health and Human Services to notify State child welfare agencies of this provision. We encourage State Child Nutrition Directors to reach out to their State Health and Human Services colleagues to develop or strengthen communication that will ease the implementation of this provision locally. States can request contact information for State child welfare officials by contacting the appropriate Health and Human Services regional staff through http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/oro/regions/regional_contacts.html."

The Children's Book Nook

April 2nd is International Children's Book Day and April is a great month to start our new section for the Kinship Connection - The Children's Book Nook.

What Is International Children's Book Day? According to About.com, the International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is an annual event, which is held on/around April 2, the birth date of Hans Christian Andersen. It is sponsored by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). According to the IBBY Web site, "International Children's Book Day (ICBD) is celebrated to inspire a love of reading and to call attention to children's books." Each year one of the 70 National Sections of the IBBY around the world serves as the international sponsor of ICBD. It selects the theme and oversees the development of promotional materials for ICBD. The 2011 international sponsor is Estonia and the theme is "The Book Remembers."

Currently at the Waukesha Public Library, the following children's books are available about heroes:

- Girls Who Rocked the World, Parts 1 & 2 by Amelie Welden & Michelle Roehm McCann, grades 4 - 8.
- All for the Better: A Story of El Barrio by Nicholasa Mohr, grades 2 - 5
- The Children's Book of Heroes by William J. Bennett, any age
- Giant Steps to Change the World by Spike & Tonya Lee, ages 6 - 9.

Calendar of Important Dates/Events

April 13, 2011 ..... Relative Caregivers Support/ Education Group
April 24, 2011 ..... Easter
April 29, 2011 ..... Arbor Day

Flu Shots Available while supplies last
at Public Health Division
615 W. Moreland Boulevard, Waukesha
262-896-8430 (Call for Availability)
Monday through Friday..... 8:15 AM to 4:00 PM
$7.00..... 6 months to 18 years old
$15.00..... 19+ years old
Public Health accepts cash, check, MasterCard and Visa.
Flu shots are covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

Fun Family Activity: Coffee Filter Flowers

www.crafts.kaboose.com

What you'll need:

- Basket coffee filters
- Water color paints
- Water
- Paintbrush
- Scissors
- Green chenille stems (1 per flower)

How to make it:

1. Flatten coffee filter onto work surface (place some scratch paper or newspaper underneath).
2. Paint coffee filter with watercolor paint. Thin the paint more in some areas to make the color lighter. Use whatever combination of colors you like, we used two colors per flower. Let the filters dry completely.
3. Cut about 2" off the end of a chenille stem and set both pieces aside.
4. There are several different ways to make your flowers. You can fringe the ends in thin strips (leaving the center whole) to make the flower that resembles a pom pom. You can cut thicker strips, about 1" wide each, to make the petaled flower or don't cut the filter at all to make the rose.
5. Insert the large piece of green chenille into the center of the coffee filter about 1.5" in. Hold onto the small end and turn the flower upside down so that the long end of the chenille is sticking up.
6. Grasp the center of the coffee filter and gather it around the small end of the chenille.
7. Twist the smaller piece of chenille around the gathered filter to secure the flower in place. Turn the flower back over and fluff the petals as needed.

Tips:

- No two coffee filters will look the same. Thin watercolors to make lighter shades and use thicker amounts for bolder shades.
- You can speed dry the coffee filters by laying them in a sunny window or blow drying them.
- Make your own designs by experimenting with different cuts and shapes.

Tortellini Soup

Ingredients:
1 pound ground beef
3 1/2 cups water
1 can (28 ounces) Hunt's Original Diced Tomatoes, undrained
1 can (10 1/2 ounces) condensed French onion soup, undiluted
1 package (9 ounces) frozen cut green beans
1 package (9 ounces) refrigerated cheese tortellini
1 medium zucchini, chopped
1 teaspoon dried basil

Directions:
In a large saucepan, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink; drain. Add the remaining ingredients; bring to a boil. Cook, uncovered, for 7 - 9 minutes or until tortellini is tender.
Alongside Tortellini soup, serve refrigerated crescent rolls. Before baking, sprinkle the dough with Parmesan cheese.

Yield: 6 - 8 servings. From Taste of Home Website

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."
~Leo F. Buscaglia

Resources

Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Helpline
The state of Wisconsin has created a comprehensive guide for relative caregivers.
Toll free at (866) 843-9810 or at: http://wisconsincaregiver.org/

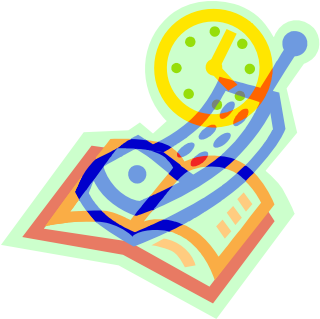
The University of Wisconsin Extension
The UW-Extension has a comprehensive list of resources for relative caregivers.
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/wisconsin.cfm

Wisconsin Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Network
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/support/index.cfm

Wisconsin DCF Kinship Care Program
This gives an overview of the state kinship care program and provides contact information for kinship care coordinators in each county.
http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/children/

AARP
AARP Grandfacts: A State Fact Sheet for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children.
http://www.grandfactsheets.org/doc/Wisconsin%20New%20TEmplate%2008.pdf

AARP Wisconsin's Legal Guide for Grandparents & Other Relatives Raising Children 2008, 2nd Ed.
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/flp/grandparent/files/aarp_legal_guide.pdf



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Very Special Thanks to Maureen Erb for designing and producing our newsletter.

WAUKESHA COUNTY KINSHIP CONNECTION