



## **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Partnership of Wisconsin**

### **Suggestions for Working With Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

- **Complexity.** Understand the complexity of this relationship. This is a very complex relationship. This relationship is going to be hard. It would be hard even in the best of situations.
- **Communication.** Open communication between grandparent and grandchild, parent and child, grandparent and parent is essential. But, in particular, between grandparent and grandchild. Be honest with the child—but make sure it is at their level. Talk simply. Much like talking about sex—answer the question they are asking, but at the level that the child is asking.
- **Conversations.** Be mindful of conversations the child may be overhearing and how you speak of the parent. It is okay to be honest about your feelings, but remember that the child has feelings too.
- **Child Development.** Focus on the developmental needs of the child and understanding their behaviors. Remember that children’s behaviors are their way of communicating, and that their behaviors may be reflecting their inner state. Decisions on how to discipline need to be made within this context.
- **Chaos.** As much as possible, maintain routine and order.
- **Cuts across all situations.** No matter what the reason is for the separation between parent and child, this will be a difficult situation. The child’s behavior is not necessarily a reflection on how they were parented before coming to live with grandparents....in part, their behavior is due to the disruption in the attachment relationship.
- **Cross-Generational.** There will be unique issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren because of their relationship with their adult children. And, visa-versa. This situation may force or may create the opportunity to reflect on past parenting. This may be hard.

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