

TIPS FOR GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is a special one. A growing number of grandparents are parenting a second family. Few plan on raising a second family full-time. Facing this demand can be a physical, emotional, social, legal, and financial struggle. It can also be a rewarding experience.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, over 50,000 grandparents in Maryland are raising their grandchildren and meeting their basic needs. These numbers are increasing. Many grandparents continue to hope that their adult children will be able to resume the “parent” role one day. The reality may be that the grandparent is the only stable parent figure for a grandchild. This could be a temporary or a permanent situation for the family. The parent may move in and out of the child’s life, but the full responsibility for rearing and nurturing the child may well rest with the grandparent.

There is a wealth of knowledge available for grandparents. Knowing where to go for resources can be a challenge. The Internet is an excellent resource. If a computer is not available at home, the public library staff will provide help with using the Internet from the library computer. Local crisis hotlines also maintain listings of resources in the area.

Securing School Success

Take an active role in your grandchild’s education:

- Get to know the teacher. Introduce yourself early in the year and inform the teacher of any special needs or circumstances which impact the child.
- Take advantage of services offered at the school; for example, tutoring, counseling, and after-school programs.
- Get information on school lunches from the National School Lunch Program and the Baltimore County Public Schools’ Web site by clicking on “Students,” then “Menu Calendar” under “What’s for Lunch?”

Community Services

Consider some of the services available:

- Legal
 - Legal Aid – 29 West Susquehanna Avenue, Towson – 410-296-6705
- Financial
 - Baltimore County Department of Social Services – 410-853-3000
 - Social Security Administration – 1-800-772-1213
- Medical
 - Baltimore County Department of Health – 410-887-3740

Support Groups

- AARP Grandparent Information Center, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, 202-434-2296
- Grandparents Supporting Grandparents, sponsored by Baltimore County Department of Social Services, 410-853-3888
- Family Crisis Center of Baltimore Hotline, 410-828-6390

Books of Interest

- *To Grandma's House We...Stay: When You Have to Stop Spoiling Your Grandchildren and Start Raising Them*, Sally Houtman, Studio Four Productions, 2003, ISBN 1882349059
- *Grandparents as Parents: A Survival Guide for Raising a Second Family*, Sylvia deToledo and Deborah Elder-Brown, Guilford Publications, Inc., July 1995, ISBN 1572300116
- *Let's Talk About Living with a Grandparent*, Susan Kent, Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., January 2003, ISBN 0823954218
- To order the following booklets on grandparenting, send your name and full postal mailing address, the title, and stock numbers in an e-mail to member@aarp.org or write to: AARP Fulfillment, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049:
 - Grandparenting Joys and Challenges (English), Stock #D17779
 - Grandparenting Joys and Challenges (Spanish), Stock #D17803
 - Grandparents: *The School Connection*, Stock #D17307

Web Sites

Baltimore County Public Schools – www.bcps.org

This Web site provides extensive information about Baltimore County Public Schools. For Parent Support Services, click the “Parents” tab, then click “Parent Support Services.”

AARP – www.aarp.org

AARP is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making life better for people 50 and over. It provides information and resources for grandparents raising grandchildren.

Baltimore County Public Library – www.bcplonline.org

The Baltimore County Public Library provides resources such as books, community information, and Web sites.

Parenting Priorities – www.teachersandfamilies.com/open/parent/parenting.html

Parenting Priorities provides listing of authoritative parenting resources that meet your needs and those of the child.