



PEN Notes: Fact Sheet #17

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Grandparenting

Whether we share a home with, or live hundreds of miles away from our grandchildren, we can make a difference in how well they do in school and in life.

More and more grandparents are an everyday part of their grandchildren's lives. Some provide daily care for grandchildren while parents are at work. Others share a home with children and grandchildren. And, increasingly, grandparents are being asked to take on other parenting chores--raising their grandchildren. If you see your grandchildren every day, it's even more important for you to be involved with their education.

Grandchildren are the "Apple of their Grandparents' eyes." Here are five key ways to help our grandchildren do their best in school:



- A. Ask** grandchildren questions
- P. Praise** in the right way
- P. Participate** by getting involved and showing support
- L. Learn** how to help grandchildren love learning
- E. Encourage** ideas to show support for their efforts

A. Ask:

Ask grandchildren interesting questions about school to show them you're interested in their success in education:

1. Be specific—"What book are you reading? Tell me about it."
2. Keep up to date on report cards, art projects, geography reports, etc.
3. Ask how you can be the most helpful to parents.
4. Visit about books, movies, or TV shows with children.
5. Problem solve with grandchildren, so they can become problem solvers and make decisions and suggestions on their own.
6. Ask children to offer their opinions and suggestions.
7. Ask if there are any school subjects troubling them and how you can help.
8. Invite them to write messages to you often, even if you live next door.

P. Praise:

Praising grandchildren when they do well will raise their self-esteem and help them succeed.

- ✓ Praise works best when it's about something specific, i.e., science fair project.
- ✓ Praise grandchildren for what they do, not for how they compare to others.
- ✓ Praise young children, but only when they *deserve* the praise—otherwise the praise is meaningless.

- ✓ Praise children for being well-behaved and for having and a strong work ethic.
- ✓ Praise them for playing fair, sharing, being a good loser, and respecting others.
- ✓ Praise and reward them occasionally with a surprise (treats, special invites, etc.)
- ✓ Let them overhear you saying good things about them.

P. Participate:

Attend grandchildren's school events and show them that education is important.

- Attend open house, plays, music programs and school fairs when possible.
- Share your talents, hobbies, life with the class; bring props when possible.
- Attend grandparents' day if their school has such a day.
- Take grandchildren to museums, concerts, plays, historic sites, etc.
- Broaden their interests by teaching and exposing them to various experiences.
- Volunteer at their schools to make children more successful.
- Read, read, read to them until they can read to you.

L. Learn:

Help keep learning alive by introducing them to new ideas, things, people and experiences.

- Urge grandchildren to challenge themselves.
- Learn different children's learning styles and help each child in the best way.
- Make learning relevant by showing grandchildren that what they learn in school applies to life. For example: "I wouldn't be able to write books if I hadn't learned to read in school."
- When doing something that uses math, science, reading or English, mention it.
- When doubling recipes or building things that call for instructions, get their help.
- When possible, ask an older grandchild to help with taxes or checkbooks.
- Give the gift of learning by selecting gifts that encourage learning.
- Give children tools needed for learning: supplies, library card, reference materials.
- Expand children's horizons in areas of interest: videos, books, travel, etc.
- Explain that mistakes are part of learning; share examples of when you made mistakes.

E. Encourage:

Grandchildren need to know you have faith in them and everything they do.

- Talk to them about their plans for the future and the role education plays.
- Show them ways they can do things whenever they say "I can't".
- Spend time together in ways other than watching TV.
- Give gifts of books or magazine subscriptions that will help them think things through.
- Show your confidence in them before a big test, performance, or project.



Source: National Association of Elementary School Principals and World Book Educational Products *The Apple of Your Eye*

For much more detailed information and lists of resources in Wyoming, see our handbook "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren: A Guide for Wyoming Grandparents Raising Their Grandchildren". For a copy, go to www.wpen.net/publications.html

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