



GRANDPARENTS PARENTING

Parenting today's 21st Century children can be especially challenging for grandparents parenting the second time around. It can be said truthfully, that they are of another world. In this brief newsletter, Indiana Parenting Institute offers some helpful considerations in responding to the complexities of grand parenting in the 21st Century.

Parenting today

In parenting the second time around, you will find that today's children

- seem to be growing up more quickly
- are part of the rapidly changing technological age
- are exposed to more sex, violence and drugs in the media
- have access to the internet with its seemingly limitless content.

But the child (or children) coming to live with you may have experienced some degree of trauma due to being separated from their parents and because of neglect and/or abuse. To understand your grandchild's behavior, it helps to understand what he or she is going through. In the turmoil of the shattered family, children are the most affected and the least prepared to understand or talk about it. Your grandchild comes to your with a host of traumatic emotions that includes:

- Grief and abandonment
- Guilt
- Anger
- Fear, anxiety and insecurity

Help children cope with trauma

- reassure them, give them positive reinforcement and praise
- tell them they are not responsible for their parents' absence
- provide a loving, safe environment with a consistent and predictable daily routine
- make sure they sleep in the same bed each night and that their clothes and toys are stored in the same bedroom each day
- have regular meal times
- make sure they keep regular school hours.

How children may behave

- Excessive clinging
- Babyish or immature behavior
- Sleeping difficulties
- Bedwetting
- Refusal to eat
- Manipulative behavior

Positive Parenting Strategies

- Set a clear daily routine
- Offer positive choices
- State rules in the positive: 'I want you to...'
- Set limits and stick to them
- Present a united front
- Separate feelings and actions
- Try to stay calm
- Avoid overcompensating
- Reward good behavior
- Avoid physical punishment
- Make your consequences logical and appropriate
- Make consequences immediate
- Reinforce cause and effect
- Teach responsibility
- Follow through
- Act on the most important issues

Despite the challenges you may face, your role as carer of this child (or children) is extremely important. We encourage you to, unashamedly, take advantage of and reach out to available grand parent support services to ensure that you have access to all of the resources needed to help you and your grandchild (or children) succeed.

Parent Support Services

Birth²Eighteen[®]

Healthy Parenting Training Program

Counseling ■ Support Groups
Parenting Classes ■ ParentChat Line
Health and Human Services Resources

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