

Do Grandparents Even Matter?

Studies show that the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is not only good for the well-being of the grandparent, it's good for children's development.

This isn't terribly surprising. Grandparents serve a number of important roles. They:

- * Provide the grandchild with another opinion about who they are. That is, if the parents of the grandchild are critical or rejecting or simply too overwhelmed to give positive input to the grandchild, the grandparent can give them a different experience of themselves in relation to others
- * Grandparents can keep an eye on problematic or dysfunctional family behavior, and in some cases, intervene on behalf of the grandchild. Obviously, I qualify it by saying in some cases because many parents are disinterested in the grandparents' input or block contact with the grandchildren. But, when allowed, the grandparent can serve as a corrective to the dysfunctional aspects of the parents.
- * Grandparents may have a greater investment in perpetuating the family lineage and therefore serve as a rich resource of identity, history, and stories of family members.
- * Finally, grandparents can provide a different role model of behavior for the child to identify with.