EMPOWERING GRANDPARENTS
A guide for grandparents raising grandchildren

The Kid Count Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation notes that 9% of youth will live with extended family for at least 3 consecutive months at some point before age 18. The Council on Aging of Greater Nashville has spent months discerning some of the needs and challenges faced by grandparents as they confront the responsibilities of raising grandchildren in today’s society.

FUNDDED BY GENEROUS GRANT FROM WEST END HOME FOUNDATION

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Many grandparents give full-time care for their grandchildren; others have daily or weekly responsibility for after-school care. Some carry out their responsibilities in multi-generational situations where grandparents live with parents and children. Often they must quickly step-up when a parent dies, is incarcerated, is diagnosed with physical or emotional illness or is found to be abusing drugs. Immediately after assuming responsibility they are confronted with legal issues, the child’s medical issues, a child dealing with emotional and or learning problems, drug abuse in the family, etc. Such situations can be overwhelming, leaving grandparents feeling isolated and not knowing where to find information. Help is needed!

The goal of this booklet is to empower grandparents by providing them the knowledge and resources to meet the challenges and responsibilities in ‘parenting grandchildren.’ You are giving your grandchild the gift of stability and a loving family that is already familiar to them.

THANKS TO THE FAITHFUL COMMITTEE MEMBERS LISTED BELOW.
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++This book is not intended to replace professional counsel. Please seek professional guidance as needed.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOR ASSISTING WITH THIS BOOKLET

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GETTING STARTED

As you begin the journey of raising your grandchildren, you may wonder where to start. There are several documents and pieces of information that you need immediately.

1. FIND THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:
   • Grandchild’s social security card
   • Name of school—including name of teacher and guidance counselor
   • Name of pediatrician
   • Death Certificate (if parent has died)
   • Marriage or divorce decrees for the parents
   • Consent forms signed by parents for medical care and school issues
   • Citizenship papers for you or your grandchildren (if applicable)
   • Insurance cards
   • Any medications the child may be taking
   • Immunization records
   • Any legal documents or court records related to the parent and/or child
   • Any baptismal or religious documents, if applicable

2. SEEK A POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR A MINOR CHILD.
   You will need a Durable Power of Attorney for a minor child in order to seek medical care or make any legal decisions. See the Legal & Financial Matters Section for more information.

3. NOTIFY THE SCHOOL OF CHANGES IN LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CHILD.
   Arrange a meeting with the teacher.

4. CONTACT LOCAL RELATIVE CAREGIVER PROGRAM FOR INFORMATION REGARDING PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO YOU.
   • Davidson County – Family and Children’s Service at (615) 320-0591
   • Mid-Cumberland Counties – New Vision, Inc. at (615) 445-8711
   • South Central—The Center for Family Development at (931) 684-4676

5. CONTACT CHILD’S PEDIATRICIAN ABOUT ANY HEALTH CONCERNS.
   The office will also be able to inform you of immunizations, medications and allergies.

6. IF WORKING, ASK IF YOU QUALIFY FOR THE FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA).

7. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS THIS SITUATION WITH YOUR SPOUSE BEFORE MAKING A COMMITMENT.
   Raising a grandchild will affect his/her lifestyle and finances. You both need to be “on the same page.”

8. ANOTHER IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO CONSIDER IS WHAT TO TELL THE GRANDCHILD AS WELL AS OTHERS ABOUT WHY YOU ARE THE CAREGIVER.
   Being up front and honest is generally best even for small children. The most important thing is to reassure the child that he or she is loved and will be taken care of.

9. ADDITIONALLY, OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS MUST BE AWARE AND UNDERSTAND THE CURRENT SITUATION.
   Their relationships will be affected by this change.
LEGAL AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

Caring for grandchildren on a permanent basis can mean significant financial and lifestyle changes for the grandparents. As you begin this journey, things to consider include:

• Do I need to return to work? How will this impact my Social Security benefits?
• Do I have enough money to care for myself and my grandchild(ren) long term?
• Are children allowed where I live?
• Will my employer allow me to make adjustments to my work schedule?
• Is my grandchild insured? If not, where can I get help?
• Should I seek custody? Are the child(ren)’s parents taking any caregiving or financial role?
• If the child has been in an abusive situation, am I able to get the counseling he/she needs?
• Do I have the documentation needed to make legal, financial, school and medical decisions for my grandchild?

Seeking a Power of Attorney for the child should be the first step grandparents take. There is a law in Tennessee called the **Power of Attorney for Care of a Minor Child Act**. This is important because the requirements for this special type of power of attorney are different, and an ordinary power of attorney will not work in this situation. Power of attorney will allow you to receive information from agencies that interact with the grandchild and gives the grandparent the right to seek medical treatment. A power of attorney will allow you to make decisions regarding the welfare of the child. After this step, you can work on temporary or permanent custody, if desired. Rules vary from state to state. You will need to verify both your state of residence as well as the state a child previously resided in, if different. Legal counsel will be needed to obtain a power of attorney.

Types of custody agreements available to grandparents vary but can include the following:

1. **INFORMAL KINSHIP CARE** – an informal agreement that does not involve the courts. Under this agreement, grandparents have no legal rights and the birth parents can remove the child at any time. It is advantageous to put in writing what the grandparents and the parents agree to do or not do regarding physical care, financial support and length of time grandchild will be in your care.

2. **FORMAL KINSHIP CARE** – a formal legal arrangement that involves working with the courts and possibly government agencies. It spells out all rights and responsibilities. Formal kinship care arrangements make it easier to get support and medical services or enroll the child in special programs and school. In a kinship care arrangement, the grandparent may be eligible to receive funds to assist with the care of the child through a grant administered by a local agency. In Tennessee, this is a Families First Child Only grant from the Department of Human Services.

   a. **Kinship Foster Care** – you provide daily care of your grandchild but the state is legally in charge of the child. You may receive financial compensation to assist with the care of the child.

   b. **Legal guardianship and custody** – You get the legal rights and responsibilities for your grandchild but the birth parents retain certain rights such as visitation. Visitation schedules with parents can be set by the courts. In addition, the parents may be responsible to pay child support to you.

   c. **Adoption** – The legal rights of the parents are terminated permanently. You become the child’s legal parent. This usually involves the birth parents agreeing to give up their rights or to be declared unfit by the court.
Legal assistance is needed for some of the above listed arrangements. Seeking your own legal counsel with a lawyer specializing in family law will provide you with the most complete information. Most local Bar Associations can provide a list of attorneys specializing in this type of situation. Your local Legal Aid Society or non-profit law firm may also be able to assist you if your financial resources are limited. Reviewing all your options prior to any decisions will benefit the child and the grandparents.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

Raising grandchildren can be a very expensive endeavor. Financial assistance for the child and financial assistance for the grandparent may be different in nature and come from different sources. Your financial status may change with additional dependents on the same income, so grandparents raising a grandchild may now qualify for financial programs that they formerly were ineligible for.

INSURANCE
Check to see if you can add the child to your employer-sponsored plan if you are still working. If not, Medicaid/TennCare is also an option. States have a program called Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to help families who do not qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance. For more information call TennCare toll free at 1-855-259-0701.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS
The minor child is entitled to survivor benefits if the parents are deceased or disabled. If the child is disabled, benefits may be available under the Supplemental Security Income Benefit. If the grandparent chooses to return to work, Social Security benefits could be impacted. Contact the Social Security Administration office for guidance. The local office numbers for Social Security are listed at the end of this section.

TAX CREDITS
A grandparent raising a grandchild may be eligible for tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child and Dependent Care Credit. Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 or www.irs.gov or an accountant for additional information. The EITC is a benefit for working people who have low to moderate income based on the number of dependents. It reduces the amount of tax owed. The Child and Dependent Care Credit may also reduce taxes owed if you paid someone to care for your grandchild while you worked.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)
This program consists of grants based on family income. The Tennessee Department of Human Services administers these grants and can provide eligibility and application information. Local office numbers are listed at the end of this section.

RETURNING TO WORK
Raising your grandchild may require you to go back to work. Before returning to work you should consider how this could affect any retirement benefits you receive. Additionally, returning to work may require daycare placement for your grandchild. The cost of this care should also be considered. Please see the Newborn to Age 5 section for information on daycare options. If you are considering returning to work, the resources at the end of this chapter may be helpful.

If you are already working outside the home, talk with your employer about your new responsibilities and what benefits you may now be entitled to.
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

An important part of raising children is planning for their future without your presence. This is especially true for older grandparents who may not be physically able to care for the grandchild in the future. Provisions for housing, medical decisions and education must be considered. Who will take over primary care for the children if you become disabled or die? Where will they live? What financial resources will be available to them? An attorney can help you explore options while protecting your ability to provide for your own care and housing.

RESOURCES

LEGAL AID SOCIETY ................................................................. (615) 244-6610 or 1-800-238-1443
NASHVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION .......................................................... (615) 242-9272
Dial-a-lawyer provides free legal advice by telephone with volunteer lawyers on the first Tuesday of the month.
NASHVILLE BAR ASSOCIATION .......................................................... (615) 242-6546
Lawyer Referral Service
SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION ..................................................... 1-800-772-1213
Clarksville office ................................................................. 1-877-531-4695
Gallatin office ................................................................. 1-866-964-7392
Madison office ................................................................. 1-866-964-6302
Murfreesboro office ......................................................... 1-866-593-3112
Nashville office ................................................................. 1-866-964-6302
TN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES ........................................... 1-888-863-6178
Cheatham County .............................................................. (615) 792-5628
Davidson County .............................................................. (615) 532-4000
Dickson County .............................................................. (615) 740-2251
Houston County .............................................................. (931) 289-4105
Humphreys County .......................................................... (931) 296-4227
Montgomery County ......................................................... (931) 648-5500
Robertson County ............................................................ (615) 382-2402
Rutherford County ........................................................... (615) 848-5153
Stewart County ................................................................. (931) 232-5304
Sumner County ................................................................. (615) 451-5814
Trousdale County .............................................................. (615) 374-3513
Williamson County ............................................................ (615) 790-5500
Wilson County ................................................................. (615) 443-2746
TENNESSEE ALLIANCE FOR LEGAL SERVICES.......................................................... 1-888-395-9297
Resource for general legal information and referrals to lawyers.

ONLINE TN JUSTICE......................................................................................... www.onlinetnjustice.org
A free website to ask a lawyer for help with a legal issue.

Returning to Work Resources

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON AGING................................................................... (615) 360-9797
Program for 55+ returning to workforce

TN DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.............................................................................(615) 741-1031
Offer labor market information, internet access, workshops and job placement.
Services are free. Visit www.tn.gov/labor-wfd to find the location in your county.
As Your Grandchild Grows

Newborns to Age 5

Assuming the care of a newborn can be overwhelming and wonderful at the same time. Care for a newborn has evolved in many ways over the last few years. Practices from the past are now changed. This section will list the most current critical information in caring for an infant. This can be important for grandparents who regularly “babysit” as well as those with full-time responsibilities.

Feeding

Nutrition for a newborn is critical for continued development.

• Many varieties of formula are available for feeding. Formula is sold in powder, liquid and liquid concentrations. Refer to the instructions on the can for mixing directions. For example, liquid concentrate will need water added. However, there is also true “ready to feed” liquid formula that can be very convenient. A pediatrician will give insight into which formula to use and how much your grandbaby needs.

• Solids are not started until the baby has complete head control and is able to sit up with limited assistance.

• Also note the importance of avoiding high allergen foods like eggs, nuts etc. before the first birthday. You should also avoid the use of honey until then.

• Bottles of water are no longer given to newborns. Too much water can lead to water intoxication due to the baby not being able to process the water. At 6 months of age, an infant can drink up to 6 oz of water per day.

• Juices are typically introduced via sippy cup around 6 months of age. It is recommended that you dilute juice with 1 oz of juice to 1 oz of water.

Sleeping ABC (Alone, Back, Crib)

• Newborns and babies should sleep in their own crib—not on a sofa or in bed with you. The mattress should be firm without adding padding.

• Use only a fitted sheet on the crib. The sheet should not cover the baby’s head.

• Newborns and infants are no longer encouraged to sleep on their stomachs. Babies should be placed flat on their backs.

• Bumper pads and pillows are deemed dangerous due to the smothering risk and should not be used.

• A small light blanket swaddled around baby is one option for covering. A one-piece sleeper is also good. There are now zippered sleep sacks which are a great alternative as there is no risk of the baby pulling the blanket over his/her face.

• Keep small, soft items, such as stuffed animals, out of the crib. These are choking hazards. Nothing should be in the crib but the baby sleeping on his back.

• Be cautious to avoid overheating the baby, especially while the child is sleeping. The ideal room temperature is between 68-72 degrees. Having a small fan to circulate air in the room has been known to decrease the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), otherwise known as crib death.

• Another risk factor for SIDS (crib death) is exposure to second or third-hand smoke. Third hand smoke exposure occurs when the child is exposed to chemicals in a caregiver’s hair or on their skin or clothing. Many people believe they can smoke in the same home but in a different room from the baby. The chemicals circulate through the home’s air ducts and reside on furniture and carpet. It is best for caregivers to smoke outside the home, wash hands and remove tops/jackets to minimize exposure to the child.
**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

The first years of a child’s life are critical to future development. A healthy start will aid a lifetime of good health. Your first task may be to learn about the previous medical care that the child has received or should have received but did not.

**IMMUNIZATIONS**

These shots are critical for a healthy baby. In addition, many school districts and day care facilities will not accept children who have not been immunized. Pediatrician offices as well as your local health department provide immunizations. A schedule of immunizations can be found in the *Changes in Children’s Health* section.

**CAR SEATS**

Tennessee law (as of 2014) has strict guidelines about securing children in the car. The entire list is below. Your pediatrician can also offer advice on car seat selection and proper installation.

- Babies less than 1 year of age and less than 20 lbs. need to be in a rear-facing infant car seat in the back seat of the car.
- Children between 1-3 years of age and weighing more than 20 lbs. should be facing forward in the back seat only.
- Children 4-8 years of age and also children over 40 lbs. may go to a booster seat in back. Children ages 4-8 years old and less than 5 feet tall will have to be in a belt-positioning booster seat.
- It is required that children 9-12 years old must use seat-belt system in the back seat.
- Children 13-18 years old and 5 feet tall can use the seat-belt system anywhere in car.

**KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE**

Toddlers can reach so many things; things that were safe for an adult living alone may not be safe in a household that now includes a young child. Medicine and cleaning supplies are just two examples. Listed below are a few tips for safety in the home.

- Put safety locks on all cabinets. These can be bought at any toy or discount store.
- Outlet plugs should be covered up with caps.
- Cords, especially long cords from window blinds, can also be a hazard. Make sure they are out of reach.
- Balloons should not be used around children under 5.
- Helmets should be worn when riding bicycles, motorized toys, or any other toys with movement.
- The US Government often issues recalls on children’s toys. These are available online at [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov).

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**PEdiATRiCiAn**

A strong relationship with the baby’s pediatrician is helpful for the successful upbringing of a healthy baby. When selecting a pediatrician one may ask the following questions:

- What is his/her availability on nights and weekends? Many doctors now have night and weekend appointments for sick babies.
- Does the doctor understand and empathize with my situation?
- Do any of my friends recommend this pediatrician based on their children/grandchildren’s care?

The Nashville Academy of Medicine can provide referrals to local doctors. They can be reached at (615) 712-6236.
• Firearms must be locked in a secure place and unloaded. Ammunition should be stored separately from the firearms in another location.

• Water safety is also a big concern. Make sure the temperature of your water heater is set to 120 degrees or less. Never leave the child alone with any source of water. It only takes a second and few inches of water for a drowning to occur.

• Keep the Poison Control Center number on hand at all times. If you suspect the child has ingested anything from soap to medications to cleaners, call the center immediately. They will be able to tell you how to proceed. It is now rare for them to recommend causing the child to vomit. Call Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

PERSONAL DANGERS
There are many dangers today that may not have existed in years past.

• Teach your preschooler his/her name, address and phone number.

• Strangers can be a danger at any age. Teach your grandchild about risk and what to do if he/she feels uncomfortable or is approached by a stranger.

• Teach them how to call 911.

• Swim lessons can begin at 1 year old and provide safety around water. Lessons are available at local parks and YMCA locations.

• Make sure to have a family safety plan in case of fire and natural disasters. In the event of a fire, assign adults to gather children, pets or important items. Teach older children about a common meeting place outside of the home.

DISCIPLINE
Spanking is generally frowned upon now. Timeouts and consequences (such as no TV or limited use of toys) are constructive ways to handle discipline. Your pediatrician can be a resource for additional discipline ideas.

An important consideration is to be consistent in providing limits and discipline. Positive reinforcement is a better approach to behavior modification.

One method would be praising your grandchild when you observe a desired behavior. For example, you witness your grandchild putting toys back in the toy box. Simply comment on how helpful the child is being. Focusing more time and energy on desired behaviors versus unwanted actions encourages the child to behave well to get the attention they seek. You can also use a rewards system where the child earns anything from money to computer time to play time. The rewards do not need to be anything of great value. Try to avoid using food as a reward.

DAYCARE AND MOTHER’S DAY OUT
Daycare and Mother’s Day Out programs offer opportunities for socialization for the children and a break for the grandparent. Programs are regulated by the State of Tennessee. A rating system is available that gives standards that a program must reach to be licensed. If you are working, day care expenses may be tax deductible.

Mother’s Day Out programs are frequently operated by local faith communities. Hours are usually from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. with a few offering early arrival or late pickup options. Mother’s Day Out programs are typically more flexible than traditional daycare and can be used just one or two days per week.

Questions to consider include:
• Identify your priorities:
  - Location-near work or home?
  - Daycare or Mother’s Day Out

• Ask the Experts
  - The Child Care Aware Hotline at 1-800-424-2246 can direct you to the local childcare resource and referral agency.
- The Nashville Area Association for the Education of Young Children maintains information on accredited daycare centers. You can call them at (615) 383-6292 or visit their website at www.naaeyc.org for more information.
- Ask family, friends and parents of your grandchildren’s friends for referrals.

**Visit and Interview**
- Ask about hours, fees and vacation schedules
- Ask about discipline, feeding and sleeping guidelines
- Get a typical day or week schedule of activities
- Check child caregiver ratios and how many children in the classroom
- Meet the director and teacher if possible

**Employer Benefits**
Many employers offer child care benefits. Speak to your Human Resources Manager or employer for information about benefits that you may now be eligible for.

**Head Start**
The Head Start program (for children ages 3-5) and Early Head Start Program (infants and toddlers) promote readiness for children in low-income families by providing comprehensive educational, health, nutritional and social services. In order to qualify for this benefit program, you must be a resident of the state of Tennessee and you must be a primary caregiver responsible for a child who is too young for public schools. Additional qualifications may also apply. If you would like to speak to the state representative regarding the program, you can call the TN Head Start Collaboration Office at (615) 741-4849 or visit www.tn.gov/education/headstart. For Davidson County, you can call the Metro Action Commission at (615) 862-8860.

**Imagination Library/Books from Birth**
Imagination Library/Books from Birth is a service that allows your grandchild to receive a free book by mail each month from birth to age 5. Children can be signed up at any point from birth to age 5. The books are age-appropriate and change over time to prevent siblings from always getting the same book. To sign up your grandchild visit www.governorsfoundation.org.

**Support Groups**
Grandparents need to take care of themselves in order to continue raising grandchildren. Local non-profit agencies and faith communities may offer support groups for grandparents raising grandchildren. This can provide a chance for you to share your concerns with other grandparents in similar circumstances. Support groups are also a great way to receive helpful tips and information. Contact Family and Children’s Service at (615) 320-0591 in Davidson County. New Visions, Inc. serves the other counties in Middle TN and can be reached at (615) 445-8711. Another way to receive support is to work with a school to host a support group for grandparents. Online support groups can also be a source of information and friendship if you are unable to leave home to attend meetings. Remember we are all human and we can lose our patience with the sweetest children. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed or on edge, it is okay to place the infant or small child in a safe place and walk away for up to 15 minutes. It’s okay to let them cry while you calm yourself. Call Prevent Child Abuse at 1-800-244-3736 if you need someone to talk with immediately.
RESOURCES

KIDCENTRAL TN. ..........................................................www.kidcentraltn.com

This new website provides information on health, education, development and support to Tennessee families, as well as a searchable State Services Directory. Advice for keeping children safe and healthy has changed over the last several decades. At www.kidcentraltn.com, grandparents can find the most current information on child safety, developmental milestones and support resources.

NURSES FOR NEWBORNS. ..............................................www.nursesfornewborns.com

Nurses for Newborns serves the Middle Tennessee area by providing prevention-based home visits to families at risk. This includes teenage mothers, mothers with intellectual or physical disabilities or diagnosed with mental illness and medically fragile babies. Visits include health assessments, education and links to resources. There are no direct charges for the family.

TN VOICES FOR CHILDREN. ....................................................(615) 269-7751

Educational programs and support groups for families.

METRO HEALTH DEPARTMENT. ..............................................(615) 340-5616

Offers numerous programs on health/parenting issues as well as providing healthcare for children and adults. Additional information available at www.nashville.gov/health.

PARENTS KNOW, KIDS GROW. .................................www.parentsknowkidsgrow.org

Website with information for those who enjoy online learning. It includes information on safety, development, childcare, school readiness, general resources and strengthening families.
Children at this age will begin to seek a world outside of their immediate family. Friends and school will be an integral part of their growth and development. Please see the Working with Schools section for information regarding enrolling your grandchild in school and services available there.

School age children are transitioning to new things and changing physically and emotionally. This is a time of great learning in your grandchild's life. Participation in scouting and sports often start during these years. You may want to explore different activities for your grandchild. Because of the growing number of working mothers, there are many new options available that offer exercise, socialization and mentors for children. Schools and local media as well as other parents may offer suggestions for activities for your grandchild.

Interaction with friends and activity groups help in child development, self-reliance, responsibility, respect for others, sharing and leadership.

NUTRITION
Growing children need good nutrition choices. Your grandchildren may qualify for reduced or free lunches at their schools. Contact the child’s school for more information and options. See the Changes in Children’s Health Care section for more information on nutrition.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE
Children are not legally allowed to stay home alone until they are 12 years old. Many schools offer after school programs including Fun Company which is administered by the YMCA. Inquire at your grandchild’s school for other programs. Organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club also offer organized after school activities. Transportation from the school is often provided. Local parks systems also offer a variety of after school activities.

ADULT ROLE MODELS
Your grandchild might benefit from an unrelated adult to serve as a mentor or role model. This can be especially important if a grandmother is raising a grandson. Big Brothers/Big Sisters offers one-on-one adult relationships for your grandchild. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are other organizations that offer experiences in a supportive environment with adult role models.

SLEEPOVERS
Most children begin sleeping over at a non-relative friend's home around age 8 or 9 or in some cases 10-12. Before your grandchildren begin this you may want to make sure they are mature enough to be away from home. Having the friend over to your home first might make it easier for both of you.

SITTERS
For occasional care needs, you may want to hire a sitter. This is good for you and the child. Ideally you would want to choose a sitter who has training in child care and first aid from a qualified source. Ask friends and neighbors for recommendations and you can always inquire at a local college, faith based organizations, and community centers. Always check references.

COMMUNITY CENTERS AND PARKS
Many local community centers and parks offer classes and activities in art and dance as well as physical activities. They may offer family activities as well. This would be a great chance to meet new people while both of you are enjoying the opportunity to exercise and have fun.
**SPORTS**

Children today begin sports participation earlier than in years past. Many local youth leagues are available for soccer, football, basketball, baseball and many other sports. Opportunities exist for more intense sports involvement at the “travel” or “club” level. These generally require a bigger time commitment and a larger financial commitment. To learn more about sports leagues in your community, consult local media (particularly neighborhood papers), ask other parents and inquire at your grandchild’s school or local faith community.

**SUMMER CAMP**

Summer camp provides opportunities to experience new activities and make new friends. In late winter or early spring several groups sponsor summer camp fairs where you can learn about all types of camps. Camps can be half-day or full day. To learn more about summer camps ask other parents for ideas, research in newspaper and local media or ask at your grandchild’s school. Summer camp also provides a break for grandparents who are raising grandchildren and may be needed for those grandparents still working.

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**RESOURCES**

**KIDCENTRAL TN.**

This new website provides information on health, education, development and support to Tennessee families, as well as a searchable State Services Directory. Advice for keeping children safe and healthy has changed over the last several decades. At www.kidcentraltn.com, grandparents can find the most current information on child safety, developmental milestones and support resources.

**BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS.**

Provides caring adult mentors and role models.

**BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE.**

Provides a safe place with programs and activities. Additionally, provides opportunities to develop relationships with positive adult role models.

**YMCA.**

Centers throughout Middle Tennessee that provide physical and social activities for the entire family.

**BOY SCOUTS.**

(615) 383-9724

**GIRL SCOUTS.**

(615) 383-0490

**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS**

(please see General Resources at the end of the book)

**LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION**

**LOCAL FAITH-BASED GROUPS**
TWEENS AND TEENAGERS

Is There a Generation Gap?
You may have heard the phrase “generation gap” to describe the differences in thinking between grandparents and teenagers. Every generation creates its own styles of music, clothing, and slang, so your teen’s language, music, and interests may not make much sense to you.

But keep in mind that the family still has an enormous influence on children during the adolescent years. Most teenagers agree with their parents and grandparents on basic value topics such as what to do with one’s life, the value of education, and religion. Your teenager will carry many of your family values and beliefs through adolescence and into adulthood.

Your parenting style might need to be adapted as your grandchild enters the Tween (10-12 years) and the Teenage Years. Open communication will be key. Be approachable. Let your grandchild know that he/she can come to you no matter what.

GOING THROUGH PUBERTY
Puberty starts much younger now, as early as 9 or 10. Consult with the pediatrician about changes and be positive. Many books are available that will guide you as you talk to your grandchild about the body changes and emotions the child will experience. As your grandchild begins puberty, this is a great time to begin the discussion about sex. Teens need accurate information about sexual intercourse, how pregnancy happens, and sexually transmitted diseases. You can also use discussions about sex as a chance to share your own values and beliefs. Most teens still pay attention to adults’ values when they are making tough decisions. But be careful to keep discussions of sex from turning into arguments. Adults sometimes lose the chance to help children make decisions about sex because they begin to nag, preach, or moralize. It is important to be “askable.” Let teens know that they can ask you questions any time and help them develop the skills and judgment to make good decisions about their sexuality.

DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
Talking to your grandchildren is one of the most important ways to influence their drinking and drug use. Remember that it’s never too early to start talking about these “tough” topics. Begin sharing your values about drinking and drug use when children are young. Let your grandchildren know your beliefs and explain the reasons behind your views. If you have teenagers in your home and haven’t already discussed these topics, it’s never too late to start. If you don’t talk to your grandchildren, they will learn from someone else — movies, television, their friends — and you may not approve of what they hear. Since drug or alcohol addiction by a parent is the most frequent reason that grandparents gain custody of grandchildren, this addiction can be used as a learning tool. Be a good role model regarding using drug and alcohol use.

THINKING MORE LIKE AN ADULT
Believe it or not, the parts of the brain that handles reasoning and decision-making still are not completely developed in teens. Many don’t understand that they are vulnerable to risks. They might take dangerous risks, such as driving too fast or not wearing seat belts, because they think that nothing bad will happen to them. Even if they know others have been hurt in car wrecks, they believe they are different and don’t always recognize that it could happen to them too. You can handle teen risk-taking by helping your teens evaluate risks and find safer outlets for risk-taking urges. Give them responsibilities at home such as helping with dinner or cleaning their room to encourage them to accept and learn responsibility.
BECOMING INDEPENDENT

Has your teen become more critical of you or less willing to be seen in public with you?

The teen years are a time when young people are becoming more independent of their families. This is especially true if their caregiver is an older grandparent. Teens are figuring out who they are, and they spend a lot of time thinking about how others see them.

What their friends think becomes very important — which is one reason why they worry about looking and dressing like their friends. Friends provide a supportive environment for teenagers because they are struggling with the same kinds of issues.

Teens’ need to become independent sometimes leads to family conflict. Although it’s a myth that the adolescent years are constantly filled with conflict, you may see an increase in disagreements with your teenagers. Remember that they’re trying out new ways of thinking and figuring out who they are. One way to do this is by challenging your beliefs and ideas. Some common areas of conflict are haircuts, clothes, allowance, curfew, music, and dating.

So how do you manage this need for independence? Teens need the chance to express themselves and find their own identity. At the same time, they still need adults to set and enforce limits on their behavior. Allow teenagers to express their feelings, but remember that they still need your guidance. Let them make some choices on things like clothes and hairstyles, even if you don’t like what they choose. Set clear limits and explain the reasons behind them. It’s okay to disagree, but teens need to understand that you expect them to follow the rules.

Try involving your teens in making the rules. They are more likely to follow them if they helped create them. Be calm and flexible, and keep the communication lines open.

Remember that most teenagers still agree with their families on important values. Let your grandchildren know that they can bring their feelings and problems to you.

WHAT ABOUT SERIOUS PROBLEMS?

Despite your best efforts, some teens still get into serious trouble. If your grandchildren are showing signs of school failure, drug or alcohol use, gang involvement, law-breaking or other serious problems, get help as soon as you suspect a problem. Talk with other adults who have influence with your teen, such as coaches, teachers, counselors, or youth workers. Explain your concerns, and get their advice. Enlist their help in keeping your teen on track. Don’t hesitate to find a counselor or therapist if your teen is having serious problems. Stay involved in your grandchildren’s lives. Your support and concern may help them handle the problems in their world.

JOBS

Many teenagers would like extra spending money or the independence that having a job would bring. While many teenagers do hold jobs during school, time for studies must be weighed against any other benefits. Work with the teen to establish schedules that allow reasonable time for school, homework, work and time with family and friends. Be aware of safety issues on the job site and during transportation to and from work. Children may be allowed to start working at 14 but restrictions are set by the state. Information on jobs can be found at www.tn.gov/labor-wfd or by calling (615) 714-2858.

DRIVING

Tennessee allows residents 15 years of age to receive a driver’s permit. This allows them to drive with a licensed adult in the car. At 16 they may receive a license that allows them to drive alone. Under new regulations, a licensed 16-year old may only have 1 other non-family member in the car while driving. At 17, a new type of license is received that allows more privileges. For complete details on driving
regulations, contact the Department of Public Safety at 1-866-849-3548 or visit www.tn.gov/safety.

FRIENDS
During this time, friends have a big influence on a teenager’s life. Make it a point to get to know their friends. Welcome them into your home. It is important to know the parents of their friends. They can be a valuable resource to you as you raise your grandchildren.

DATING
Set the rules that you are comfortable with, but you may need to consider what the norms are concerning dating today. Teenagers may often go out in groups versus individual dates. The new driving rules can also make it difficult for “double dating.” Even though the parents may be younger than you, make an effort to get to know the date’s parents.

CURFEW
By law Tennessee has set curfews for children under 18; However, you may want to set your own curfew times. You need to be consistent and observe penalties if the curfew is not met.

EDUCATIONAL TIPS
Parental involvement in a child’s education is crucial to continued success. As children approach middle school and high school, they often do not want parents or grandparents involved at school. However, this is still a time when grandparents need to be aware of what is happening at the school. Listed below are tips for helping with educational success.

• Talk to your grandchild about current events. Ask questions and gather their opinions.
• Subscribe to magazines or online sites that relate to the child’s interest such as sports, fashion, etc.
• Make sure your teen/pre-teen gets enough sleep and healthy foods. Junk food and late nights are very common at this stage of development.
• Be alert to any drastic changes in mood, behavior, friends and/or grades. Such changes could indicate drug or alcohol use. Seek help, including from the child’s school or pediatrician.
• Praise your grandchild as often as possible. A positive home environment creates better students.
• Lay out your expectations for success in education.

HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND
Information about school requirements and college admissions can be found in the Working with Schools section.

References:
The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating.
Developed and released by Dr. Diane Bales, Human Development Specialist, Cooperative Extension, The University of Georgia. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren series was adapted, with permission, from the Grandparents as Parents series originally developed by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension and released by Sam Quick.
RESOURCES

NASHVILLE AFTER ZONE ALLIANCE ................................................................. www.nashvillez.org
  A coordinated network of afterschool programming in select
  Metro Schools middle schools.

OASIS CENTER ........................................................................................................ (615) 327-4455
  Provides a connection to a caring adult in a safe environment.

BOY SCOUTS ............................................................................................................ (615) 383-9724

GIRL SCOUTS.......................................................................................................... (615) 383-0490

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS (please see General Resources at the end of the book)

LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION

LOCAL FAITH-BASED GROUPS
CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Raising a grandchild with special needs may require a hands-on approach. Children with special needs often have therapies to be conducted along with dietary guidelines/restrictions. Special needs can often be defined as children with either physical or intellectual disabilities or both.

Some of the more common intellectual terms used today include:

**ADHD** is a problem of not being able to focus, being overactive, not being able control behavior, or a combination of these. Symptoms can be controlled in many ways including diet and medicine.

**AUTISM** is a developmental disorder that normally appears in the first 3 years of life, and affects the brain’s normal development of social and communication skills.

The pediatrician can help to test for these and other disorders and offer treatment options.

As you begin to care for your grandchild with special needs you will need to consider the following:

- Gather information regarding any guidelines for medications, therapies, foods, etc.
- Schedule meetings with teachers, counselors and any others at your grandchild’s school to learn of any plans regarding the child.
- Schedule an additional appointment with any therapists or doctors that provide specialized care for the child. You will need to learn about therapies or medications that you will need to administer.
- Seek out support groups that may assist you as you begin to care for this child.
- Associations may provide informational materials on your grandchild’s particular condition as well as support groups and financial assistance.

**RESOURCES**

**DISABILITY PATHFINDER** .......................................................... 1-800-640-4636

Helps Tennessee families find disability resources and services. For additional information visit [http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/pathfinder/](http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/pathfinder/).

**TENNESSEE STEP** ............................................................... 1-800-280-7897

Assists families in knowing their rights about special education services and provides training/assistance. Visit [www.tnstep.org](http://www.tnstep.org) for more information.

**TENNESSEE RESPITE COALITION** ............................................... 1-888-579-3754

Provides respite for families caring for children with special needs.
RELATIONSHIPS AND EMOTIONS

Families in which grandparents or other relatives are raising children (often called kincare families) can be very complex. One major issue is the role of the parents in such families. Although usually not living in the household, parents can affect all members of kincare families. For relative caregivers and children alike, the triangular dynamic in which the caregivers, biological parents and the children interact can be a source of great stress, anxiety and various other emotions. While there are a number of reasons the children are being raised by relatives, research shows that the parents often are still involved in their children’s lives on some level and may have total control in the future.

Grandparents who are raising grandchildren may often deal with feelings of guilt and/or resentment toward their own adult child. If the grandchildren experience trauma and pain, grandparents may feel bad for their grandchildren as well as their own children. Sometimes the grandchildren will act out because they don’t understand the reason for not being able to live with their parents. This often leads to behavioral problems that grandparents have to deal with, while dealing with their own emotional reactions to the situation.

(Helpful Tip) Join support groups if you feel anger, shame, guilt or disappointment towards your grandchildren’s parents, so that you don’t take it out on your grandchildren. If you cannot find a support group, consider starting one at your faith community or school.

Below are some everyday situations that will arise and how to address them:

• First of all, keep all court documents in a safe place so that you can refer to them if any questions or misunderstandings arise between you and your child.

• Then, set very clear boundaries for you, the parent(s) and your grandchild and be consistent.

• If the parent tries to threaten, manipulate or intimidate you with threats to take the grandchild back if you don’t comply with his or her wishes, stand your ground; after all you have the court on your side.

• If your style of parenting differs from that of the parent, explain calmly to the parent that there are certain activities and behaviors that are not acceptable for the child whether in your care or theirs and that you would greatly appreciate their cooperation in this matter.

• If the child seems to act out after an extended visit with the parent, you must remind the child that there are rules in your house that must be followed. Be warm and loving yet firm.

• Remember: NEVER SPEAK NEGATIVELY ABOUT THE PARENT WHILE THE CHILD IS PRESENT. It doesn’t matter how much pain, suffering or trauma the child has endured at the hands of the parents, the child may still seek their parents’ love and acceptance.

• If the parent constantly disappoints the child with broken promises and missed visits, do your best to comfort and to
reassure the child that the parent still loves and cares for him/her.

- **Children should always be reassured** that the reason they are not living with their biological parents is not their fault.

- **If you are a caregiver, remember that** you can control your own behavior and actions but not those of the grandchild’s parents. Focus on what you can do to make the world a better place for the children in your care.

- While many caregivers feel that any relationship with a parent is better than no relationship at all, poor parental relationships may negatively impact the entire family. Therapy and counseling may be needed in order to set the stage for successful interactions.

- Know when to get help! In some cases support, counseling and therapy groups may be necessary for the caregiver, the child and the biological parent. The Nashville area has excellent practitioners. If you are not able to find one, call 2-1-1 for a list of practitioners.

**GRANDCHILD’S EMOTIONS**

Be ready for what your grandchild may feel. These emotions are important to the child and your understanding of this could impact their relationship with you.

- Confused: They may not understand where the parent is or why they are not with them.

- Angry: They may be angry at the situation, their parents or you.

- Guilty: They may blame themselves for the problems that led them to you or they could feel guilty for feeling relief at being in a stable, safe place.

- Embarrassed: A child may feel embarrassed because they are living with a grandparent rather than a parent.

- Suspicious: A child who has been neglected or abused may have a hard time trusting anyone even someone who loves them.

- Scared: It may take time for them to feel your home is a safe place.

If you feel you cannot handle these emotions, it is okay to seek help. Guidance counselors at the school may be able to help or provide you with options in the community for help.

**Sources:**

Colorado State University Extension-Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
Cornell University, College Of Human Ecology, Department of Policy Analysis and Management
Public Folders – Family & Children’s Service

**RESOURCES**

**CENTERSTONE..........................................................(615) 279-6700**

Provides information and support.

**FAMILY AND CHILDREN’S SERVICE ..............................................(615) 320-0591**

Provides support and assistance to families.

**MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA ......................................................(615) 269-5355**

Provides counseling and other services for families with mental illnesses.
CHILDREN & TODAY’S TECHNOLOGY

Technology is an area that is constantly changing and understanding it can be quite a challenge. It is common today for all ages of school children to use technology in the classroom. So what is a grandparent to do? It may seem daunting but it is necessary to understand in order to better communicate, and also to protect your grandchildren from the dangers inherent to the internet. This is true of the occasional sitter as well as grandparent with full custody.

Technology can help grandparents connect with their grandchildren. A study released in 2012 by Microsoft and AARP titled, “Connecting Generations”, found that teens are actually communicating more with their parents and grandparents, and vice-versa, due to the use of social media tools and other online tools that enable cross-generational interactions and richly rewarding connections. The Microsoft and AARP study found that:

- 83% of parents, grandparents and teens consider going online to be helpful forms of communication
- 30% of grandparents, and 29% of teens say connecting online helps them better understand each other
- 40% of teens help their grandparents go online
- 25% of teens communicate with their grandparents several times each week through social media
- 68% of those older than 39 have a page on a social networking site
- 70% of teen say the computer increases the quantity of their communication with family members living far away, and (67%) say it increases the quality of those communications

Technology has brought so many new possibilities and opportunities to our society but it also has introduced new ways for children and youth to be exposed to troubling behaviors. Cyberbullying, online predators and texting while driving are just a few of the dangers that have risen to alarming levels in recent times.

To monitor and effectively understand how your grandchild communicates, understanding the basic concepts of the internet and how that has changed communication patterns is essential. Children and youth now communicate more often via texting and mobile devices. It is not uncommon to see children and youth texting even with they are in eyesight of each other. With a little knowledge, grandparents can use technology to their advantage in raising grandchildren and also protect the child.
THE BASICS

Some grandparents are tech savvy and use the latest technology at their work or for fun. Here are the basics of communication technology and what grandparents should consider in regard to their grandchild’s use of the ever-evolving technology.

THE COMPUTER/TABLET
The computer is comprised of a central processing unit (CPU), monitor, keyboard, and mouse. (The mouse is a small accessory that allows you to complete tasks on the computer by pointing and clicking on screen buttons or icons.) Many computers are small and portable which are called laptop computers. Even smaller are Tablets which have some limited computer programs and access to the Internet.

CELL / SMART PHONES
Cell phones used to be just for calling people and now they are used for so much more. While they still are used for phone calls, tweens and teens communicate via text messages, IM or the Internet (see below). Smart phones offer additional features such as video, photography and music storage as well. Text messages are sent from one cell phone directly to another cell phone. They are typed on a phone in which people often use abbreviated slang terms. Children will want to own cell phones so you will need to consider what age and limitations you want to set, when they can and cannot be used, and other limitations such as cost.

INTERNET
The internet is a virtual world that connects all users to information and the ability to communicate with each other. Once you have your computer, you are not automatically connected. An internet provider is a company that you will pay on a monthly basis for the service to connect you to this virtual world. Examples of internet providers are your cable company or phone company. Once connected, you use a program on your computer called an internet browser. The internet is comprised of pages of information that are organized by what are called websites. These websites are identified by addresses which are set up by www:<website name>,<com, org, edu, net> (com or .org are the most widely used identifiers.) WiFi or wireless internet is available in many public places. Cell phones and tablets are able to connect to this WiFi networks.

EMAIL
Email is short for electronic mail. Just like printed mail you receive at your home or post office box, an email is a communication you receive. But you receive it in your virtual mailbox on your computer. Everyone has a specific address they create where they can send or receive messages. It used to be the basic way people used the internet to communicate. Email has been largely replaced by instant messaging (IMing) and text messaging.

Raising grandchildren is a challenge in itself, but now the growing number of technological advancements that our children use daily creates even more difficulty to stay one step ahead. Where internet and safe browsing was once the biggest concern, now cellular devices, smart phones, and social networking apps have introduced a whole new dimension to potential tech misuse that caretakers need and want to stay on top of. On page 28, is a chart of popular social networking apps that you should know about and discuss with your grandchild.

TEXTING
Unlike emails, texting or Instant Messaging is immediate. Don’t feel that you have to learn the lingo. The kids may say “CUL8R,” but “See you later” is perfectly acceptable. Tweens and teens sometimes prefer text messages to
Tell your grandchild any pictures they post can be seen by everyone. Do not post pictures you will regret later. Do not share personal information with anyone you do not know. People may also create fake accounts to lure in children.

Phone calls because they don’t have to answer right away when they are doing something else. Also, text messages are more discreet. When texting first became popular, some families were hit with huge bills, but most plans now have unlimited texting. In many states, texting while driving is illegal. Tell your grandchildren to neither answer nor initiate text messages if they are driving.

**INSTANT MESSAGING, OR ‘IM’-ING**

In this form of communication, both parties are online at the same time, and they type messages to each other. It’s more like a real conversation or “chat” than texting or emailing because the responses can be so rapid. MSN Messenger and Yahoo! Messenger are the most popular IM programs. Many other programs, such as Facebook, also support IMing.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social Media are websites or applications on a computer (apps) where teens connect with one another to share pictures, post comments and chat. Some common ones are Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat and Instagram but new ones develop daily. It is important to monitor these activities! You should know your teenagers passwords so you can review and monitor who and what is being communicated.

Chances are excellent that your teenager belongs to Facebook. Facebook is the largest social networking site that allows a person to put information about themselves such as comments, pictures and videos for others to see about them. Preteens are not allowed to have Facebook accounts, although many get around the rules. If you are on Facebook, you can request “friend” status and view your teenager’s site. Another possibility is that your grandchildren have abandoned Facebook for other sites. Every couple of years new sites arise that tweens and teenagers migrate to. Instagram, Twitter and SnapChat are two additional social media apps that many children use. Both apps involving posting or sending pictures of themselves.

**DANGERS OF TECHNOLOGY**

Many of the same dangers that exist in today’s society exist on the internet, but dangers are more prevalent online. It is important to discuss what is appropriate in a text message or online, and to communicate the risks. Also, because social media is so popular, it is easy to be the target of predatory individuals. It’s important to not only set limits and enforce them, but explain your reasoning. At this point, grandparents should consider reading the child’s email and social networking pages. It does intrude on the child’s privacy, but digital messages are public information. If you can read them, so can a lot of other people.

Monitoring a child’s communications can also clue you in to cyberbullying. **Cyberbullying** is most common in middle school, but can happen even earlier. Often the fear and isolation is the same as with regular bullying. It follows the child home, which can cause them to feel there’s no safe haven.

So how do you set up safeguards? You can begin by creating a separate account on your computer for your grandchild and setting up the parental controls that are built into the Windows and Mac OS X operating systems. They cover which programs can be used, the time of day the computer can be used and the content or age ratings for games. If you let your grandchild access the internet, you’ll want to add a program that can filter web content and generate activity reports, like Bsecure Online, NetNanny, or Norton Online Family Premier.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPLICATION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask.fm</td>
<td>The Ask.fm app is a website and smart phone application that is intended to be a friendly question and answer forum to get to know peers better. Questions can be asked and answered anonymously. Ask.fm is rated for age 12+ in the app store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>The Instagram app is a smart phone application that allows users to snap, edit, and share photos and videos either publicly or with a network of followers. Users are allowed to comment on other individual’s photos as well as “like” an individual’s photo. Instagram is rated for age 12+.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vine</td>
<td>Vine is a social media site that allows individuals to post and view videos that last for 6-second intervals. Vine is rated 17+ in the app store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>Snapchat is available on smart phones. Snapchat is a messaging app that allows users to send and receive pictures and videos from other Snapchat users. This application puts a time limit on the pictures and videos they send and then the pictures disappear. The app is intended to allow users to send and share fun light moments without the risk of having them go public. Snapchat is rated for ages 12+.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Twitter is a blogging application that allows users to post brief, 140 character messages called “tweets” and follow other users activities. Twitter users must be at least 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Facebook is a popular social networking site that can be accessed using computers and smart phones. Facebook members can join networks based on school affiliations, employers, and geographic regions. Facebook can be used for keeping track of friends both old and new. Facebook is available to anyone with a valid email address that is over the age of 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>Tumblr is an online blog that streams scrapbooks of texts, photos and video and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs called “tumblelogs” that can be viewed by anyone online. Tumblr is rated 12+ in the app store.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**IMPLICATIONS**

- This application allows questions to be answered anonymously it leads to potential for kids to make comments they wouldn’t if they could be identified.
- Bullying and sexually charged discussions have been associated with this application.

- Teens are on the lookout for “Likes.” Similar to other social media sites, teens may measure the “success” of their photos (or even their self worth) by the number of likes or comments they receive. This may become problematic if teens post it to validate their popularity.
- Photos are public; therefore you should monitor what your grandchild is posting. Mature content can slip in: The terms of service specify that users shouldn’t post sexual material however, posts that involve violence, swear words, and drugs are not addressed.

- Inappropriate sexual and violent content has been associated with Vine.
- This app has been linked to bullying
- Videos can be posted without individuals consent. All videos posted and comments made are public by default, privacy settings should be activated.

- Snapchats don’t go away forever. The snap chat server temporarily collects, processes, and stores contents of Snapchats on its server. These contents can be recovered at any time by the Snapchat creators.
- Individual on the receiving end can take screen shots of the image being sent to them before the image disappears.
- This app makes “sexting” seem OK. The application seems risk free and might encourage users to send pictures containing inappropriate content.

- Tweets are public; therefore you should discuss with your teenager about what they post, how quickly a post can spread, and what affects this can have on them in the future.

- Users post their real names, educational and work history, contact information, relationship statuses, and likes/dislikes for the general public and friend to see.
- It is important to keep in mind that disclosing too much information can be used against you. Posting addresses, phone numbers, and full birthdates can lead to identity theft and other potential threats.
- Individuals should use discretion when posting pictures, comments, likes, and dislikes on this site as potential employers and schools could be looking at your information.

- Inappropriate content has been associated with this app. Pornographic images and videos, videos and images of violence, self-harm, drug use, and offensive language are easily searchable.
- Profiles are public and can be viewed by anyone on the internet.
- Posts are often copied and shared without consent from the user.


Marsh, J. (2013, October 2). 4 Apps Kids Are Using That Parents Really Should Know About. Retrieved from http://coolmomtech.com/2013/10/4-apps-kids-are-using-parents-should-know-about/#t4hash.6f4QlXQg.3zX3n.4AB3Lphs
RESOURCES

FREE CLASSES
• Senior Centers and community education programs may offer computer classes especially geared to older adults.

• Nashville Public Library - Free courses, Getting Started Series
  - Computers: Getting Started
  - Internet for Seniors: Getting Started
  - Internet and Computers
  - Mouse, Keyboard, and Windows: Getting Started
  - Microsoft Word, Excel and Powerpoint: Getting Started

• Nashville Opportunities and Industrialization Center
  - Free Computer Class

ONLINE RESOURCES
Texting Shorthand and Acronyms ........................................ www.netlingo.com
Training / Learning ........................................................................ www.seniornet.org
Online Training ............................................................... www.skillfulsenior.com
Microsoft Accessibility Techniques ........ www.microsoft.com/enable/aging/tips.aspx
Online Training ................................................................. www.meganga.com
Senior Citizen helpful internet search page ......................................... http://good50.com
Software to help with the internet ............................................................ www.eldy.eu
Working with Schools

Adult involvement in a child’s education is critical and it has been shown that high student achievement and self-esteem are closely related to positive adult participation in education.

You can be involved in a child’s education in many ways such as joining the Parent Teacher Organization, volunteering in classrooms, insisting on regular school attendance, helping with homework and talking to the teacher about programs or areas of concern. Most importantly, spend time with the child especially through reading.

When a grandparent becomes the primary caregiver it is important that this be discussed with the child’s teacher, school counselor and/or principal. Ask about any particular learning issues so that you can begin to address these. This will also allow the teacher to be alert to any changes in behavior, mood, etc.

Head Start Program
The Head Start program (for children ages 3-5) and Early Head Start Program (infants and toddlers) promote readiness for children in low-income families by providing comprehensive educational, health, nutritional and social services. In order to qualify for this benefit program, you must be a resident of the state of Tennessee and you must be a primary caregiver responsible for a child who is too young for public schools. Additional qualifications may also apply.

If you would like to speak to the state representative regarding the program, you can call the TN Head Start Collaboration Office at (615) 741-4849 or visit www.tn.gov/education/headstart. For Davidson County, you can call the Metro Action Commission at (615) 862-8860.

School Registration
If your grandchild is entering the first year of school or transferring from another school, you will need to register the child. This can be done at the school office of the school. If you are unsure what public school your child will be zoned for, you can call the local school board.

You will need certain documents to complete the registration process. They may include a birth certificate, proof of address, custody papers, and proof of immunization. Contact your grandchild’s pediatrician for immunization records. If the child is transferring from another school you will need to authorize the release of school records from the previous school. The school should have the authorization form needed.

Be sure to ask if your grandchild may qualify for free or reduced lunches and breakfasts.

Special Education Services
Some students may require additional services and supports to assist them in being successful in school. Special education is specially designed instruction, support, and services provided to students with an identified disability (physical or mental) to meet their unique learning needs.

Special education and related services are available to eligible students, ages 3 through 21 years of age. To be eligible for special education:

• The child must have an identified disability;
• The disability must adversely (negatively) affect the child’s educational performance; and
• The child must require a specially designed instructional program.

If your child exhibits difficulties in school and you suspect there may be an underlying learning challenge, you can ask the school to
evaluate your grandchild. Call or write the director of special education or the principal of your grandchild's school. Describe your concerns with your grandchild's educational performance and request an evaluation. However, the school does not have to evaluate your grandchild just because you have asked. The school may not think your grandchild has a disability or needs special education. If the school refuses to evaluate your grandchild, there are two things you can do immediately:

- Ask the school system for information about its special education policies, as well as parent rights to disagree with decisions made by the school system. These materials should describe the steps to appeal a school system's decision.
- Get in touch with your state's Parent Training and Information (PTI) center. The PTI can tell you what steps to take next to find help for your child. In the state of Tennessee, call Tennessee Step at 1-800-280-7897 or visit www.tnstep.org.

If the school thinks that your grandchild may have a disability (physical or mental), then it must evaluate the child at no cost to you. However, the school must ask your permission and receive your written consent before it may perform the evaluation.

Once a need has been defined, an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) will be created. This is a set plan for your grandchild that defines the issue as well as plans and outcomes for gearing them for success in school.

ADHD (problem of not being able to focus, being overactive, not being able control behavior, or a combination of these) is a new issue that can be diagnosed through testing. In many cases, the teacher will notify the grandparent of a suspected diagnosis and suggest the child be tested. In some cases, the grandparent will need to take the initiative to have the child tested. Do not assume your grandchild is “bad” due to poor behavior. Your grandchild’s pediatrician can walk you through the steps in testing for ADD or ADHD.

**GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS**

Children with exceptional ability to perform at high levels are described as “gifted and talented” and include those with general intellectual aptitude which could include creative thinking and talents in the visual/performing arts. Resources for gifted and talented students exist at many public school systems. Once again, communication with the child's teachers, principal or guidance counselor can help determine if your grandchild fits into this classification.

**SHOWING SUPPORT**

It is extremely important to show support for your grandchildren by attending their events and performances at school, faith community or community center.

**LEARNING STYLES**

The three learning styles are: auditory, visual and tactile.

An auditory learner learns best from hearing information and therefore does well listening to lectures and books on tape. For example, an auditory learner can read his notes aloud.

Visual learners benefit from seeing what they are learning. A visual learner does well taking notes, drawing pictures, and making outlines.

Tactile learners are “hands-on” and learn from doing things. A tactile learner can move about while studying and study in shorter increments.

By discovering the child's learning style, study habits and methods can be modified to fit that
style. You can work with the child’s teacher for more ideas on how to incorporate learning methods at home and in the classroom. A quiet and designated place to study should be set up for the child.

**HOMEWORK HOTLINE**
The Homework Hotline is a free one-on-one tutoring by phone for parents, grandparents and students in grades K-12 in Middle Tennessee. The service is available Monday-Thursday 4:00-8:00 CST. The number to access services is (615) 298-6636.

**TUTORING**
If the child is coming from a different school system, he/she may need extra help to catch up to where the new class is academically. Many private companies provide one-on-one educational help for a fee. These can be found in the yellow pages under tutoring. Area universities may also have a list of students who are willing to tutor in certain areas.

**HIGH SCHOOL & BEYOND**
Many high schools offer a variety of educational options. College preparatory classes as well as career-oriented courses are offered. The Advanced Placement (AP) courses are rigorous and academically challenging. The AP classes can provide college credit while in high school. Several middle Tennessee school systems are offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) program which follows a more global educational track and allows students to apply for colleges in other countries.

In recent years, much more time and emphasis has been placed on the “college process.” Colleges use the ACT and SAT testing systems for consideration in admission. These are generally taken in the 11th and 12th grade years. Guidance counselors at your grandchild’s school will be able to provide additional information.

**BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE**
Children ages 5-12 whose caregivers work outside the home may need some type of supervision after school and during school breaks. Solutions may be found in local community centers, YMCA’s, churches and other community organizations such as Boys & Girls Clubs. Also, check with the child’s school as many offer before and after care programs.

**BULLYING**
This can be a big problem in today’s schools. Technology has allowed bullying to take a new turn called cyberbullying. See the *Children and Today’s Technology* section for additional information. Hurtful comments and/or inappropriate pictures can be posted in social media allowing others to make fun of other children. If you notice your grandchild withdrawing from friends, making comments about bullying or not wanting to attend school, you may want to discuss with teachers and guidance counselors the possibility of bullying. Additionally, you may want to review your grandchild’s social media accounts if you suspect they are bullying others. Suspected bullying should be taken seriously. There are numerous cases of children trying to commit suicide after prolonged bullying.
RESOURCES

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

wwwpbskids.org – Play educational games, watch PBS KIDS shows and find activities like coloring and music.

www.education.com – Provides activities, worksheets, videos, expert advice and a school directory to give information and ideas to help children reach their full potential.

www.khanacademy.org – Learn for free about math, art, computer programming, economics, physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, finance, history, and more.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

See the Children with Special Needs section.
CHANGES IN CHILDREN’S HEALTH CARE

As mentioned in the Getting Started section, some of the first tasks a grandparent should do are related to health—getting the authorization for medical treatment and learning the child’s medical status.

NUTRITION
Healthy eating is associated with reduced risk for many diseases, including several of the leading causes of death such as cancer and diabetes. In addition to reducing risk, healthy eating is important for proper growth and development in children. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention provides the following Dietary Guidelines (servings vary by age of child):

• A diet that includes fruits and vegetables (Examples: apples, bananas, broccoli, green beans, etc)
• A diet that includes whole grains (Examples: wheat breads, oatmeal, etc)
• For persons aged 2 years and older, fat-free and low-fat dairy products (Examples: 1% or 2% milk, yogurt, cheese, etc)
• Limited intake of solid fats, cholesterol, sodium, added sugars, and refined grains (Examples: chips, fried foods, processed foods, snack cakes, white bread, etc)

Eating a healthy breakfast is associated with improved cognitive function (especially memory), reduced absenteeism, and improved mood. What one eats has a big impact on your ability to concentrate and do well in school. Provide a good example by taking the time to eat breakfast yourself. Don’t let your grandchild skip breakfast!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends that children and adolescents should have 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day.

Staying physically active is an important step in being healthy for children and grandparents. Being active helps to build strong bones and muscles, decreases the likelihood of developing obesity, Type 2 Diabetes and heart disease and may help reduce anxiety and depression.

There are different types of activity, each very important for healthy growth and development.

• **Aerobic Activity**: Most of the 60 minutes a day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week. Examples of aerobic activities include bike riding, walking, running, dancing, and playing active games like tag, soccer and basketball.

• **Muscle-strengthening**: Children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week. Examples of muscle-strengthening activities include gymnastics, climbing a tree, playing on a jungle gym, push-ups, pull-ups, and weight-lifting.

• **Bone-strengthening**: Children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity on at least 3 days of the week. Examples of bone-strengthening activities include hopping, skipping, jumping, and running.

Joining a sports team or taking lessons in a particular sport will make getting this exercise fun. Teams can also provide socialization as well as life skills such as teamwork and sharing. A great solution for you and your grandchild is to find an exercise activity you can do together or at least different activities at the same location.
**IMMUNIZATIONS**

It’s true some diseases (like polio and diphtheria) are becoming very rare in the U.S. Of course, they are becoming rare largely because we have been vaccinating against them!

Below is a chart that tells about immunizations that helps to prevent the spread of disease.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VACCINE</th>
<th>AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chickenpox (Varicella)</td>
<td>Children who have never had chickenpox should get 2 doses of the vaccine at these ages:  • 1st dose: 12-15 months of age  • 2nd dose: 4-6 yrs of age  • Children 13+ who have never had chickenpox and who have not received the vaccine should get 2 doses at least 28 days apart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTP</td>
<td>Children should get 5 doses, one dose at each of the following ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15-18 months, 4-6 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hep A (hepatitis A)</td>
<td>The first dose should be given at 12-23 months of age. Children who are not vaccinated by 2 yrs of age can be vaccinated at later visits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hep B (hepatitis B)</td>
<td>Children need three to four doses at the following ages:  • 1st dose: At birth (within 12 hours if the mother has hepatitis B infection)  • 2nd dose: 1-3 months  • 3rd dose: 6-18 months  *Older children who did not get the vaccine as a baby should get it as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)</td>
<td>It is recommended for all children younger than 5 yrs old in the US, and it is usually given to infants starting at 2 months old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPV (human papilloma virus)</td>
<td>HPV vaccines offer the best protection to girls and boys who receive all three doses and have time to develop an immune response before being sexually active with another person. That’s why HPV vaccination is recommended for preteen girls and boys at age 11 or 12 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPV (polio)</td>
<td>Children get 4 doses of IPV at these ages: 2 months, 4 months, 6-18 months, and a booster dose at 4-6 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCV4 (meningococcal disease)</td>
<td>MCV4 is recommended for all preteens at age 11 or 12. A booster shot is recommended for teens at age 16 to continue providing protection when their risk for meningococcal disease is highest. Teens who received MCV4 for the first time at age 13-15 yrs will need a one-time booster dose at 16-18 yrs of age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESCRIPTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varicella vaccine protects against chicken pox. This disease is spread through air and direct contact.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This vaccine protects against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus. These diseases are spread through air, direct contact, and through exposure to cuts in skin.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hep A vaccine protects against hepatitis A. This disease is spread through direct contact and through contaminated food/water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hep B protects against hepatitis B. This disease is spread by contact with blood or body fluids of infected individuals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hib Vaccine protects against Haemophilus influenzae type b. This disease is spread through air and direct contact.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPV vaccines are given as a series of three shots over 6 months to protect against HPV infection and the health problems that HPV infection can cause.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPV vaccine protects against polio. The polio disease is spread through air, direct contact, and through the mouth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) protects against some of the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease, such as meningitis or sepsis (bloodstream infection).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Vaccines and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine</th>
<th>Age Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)</strong></td>
<td>A two-dose vaccine schedule is recommended for children, with the first dose at age 12-15 months and the second at age 4-6 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PCV (pneumococcal disease)</strong></td>
<td>PCV is a series of 4 doses, one dose at each of these ages: 2, 4, and 6 months, and 12-15 months. Healthy children between their 2nd and 5th birthdays who have not completed the series should get 1 dose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RV (rotavirus)</strong></td>
<td>This vaccine is administered in a 3-dose series with doses administered at ages 2, 4, and 6 months. The minimum age is 6 wks and maximum age is 14 wks and 6 days. The minimum interval between doses is 4 wks and no maximum interval is set. All doses should be administered by 8 months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seasonal influenza</strong></td>
<td>Everyone who is at least 6 months of age should get a flu vaccine seasonally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis)</strong></td>
<td>One dose of Tdap is routinely given at age 11 or 12. People who did not get Tdap at that age should get it as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### School Health Requirements

The State of Tennessee requires physicals before any athlete can compete at the high school level. Additionally, a complete physical is required for all 7th graders by law. Your pediatrician or local healthcare clinic conducts school or sport physicals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VACCINE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)</td>
<td>This vaccine protects against measles, mumps, and rubella. All of these diseases are spread through the air and direct contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCV (pneumococcal disease)</td>
<td>Protects against pneumococcus. This disease is spread through air and direct contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RV (rotavirus)</td>
<td>RV protects against rotavirus. This is spread through the mouth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The flu vaccine</td>
<td>The flu vaccine protects against influenza. The flu is spread through the air and direct contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis)</td>
<td>Tdap vaccine can protect adolescents and adults from tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RESOURCES

NUTRITION

2-1-1 Help Line – By calling 2-1-1 you can be referred to a food bank in your area that can assist in securing food. 2-1-1 is a call made by dialing three numbers, 2-1-1.

Community Gardens – If there isn’t a community garden in your area, talk with your neighborhood association, Family Resource Center or local school about starting one.

Community Kitchens – Many organizations have “teaching kitchens” or “community kitchens” where families can learn to prepare a healthy meal or a meal budget. Visit www.justeattogether.com to find opportunities in your area or like facebook.com/JustEatTogether to get reminders through Facebook about upcoming events and opportunities that promote healthy eating!

Nashville Mobile Market – The Mobile Market is able to accept SNAP benefit cards. (Visit www.nashvillemobilemarket.org to find a location near you)

Nashville Farmer’s Market – Many vendors at the Farmer’s Market are able to accept SNAP benefits cards. (900 8th Avenue North, Nashville)

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

CDC........................................................................................................................................www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth

  Provides information about physical activity, nutrition, and other topics related to raising healthy children

National Institute of Aging Information Center.................................................................1-800-222-2225

Taking Care of Yourself

Raising your grandchild can be a rewarding but stressful and tiring time. The health and well-being of the children is important, but so is your physical and mental health. You must consider your health if you want to take care of your grandchildren.

- Do not let caring for your grandchild interfere with your medical appointments or filling your prescriptions. Seek out programs that can help with your medical needs or the needs of the children.
- Update your doctor(s) on the change in your responsibilities as you begin caring for your grandchild.
- If you are still working, ask your employer for any programs that may offer assistance to you. The company might offer flexible hours or to work longer days in order to work less days.
- Eating properly will keep you energized and keep you on track for good health as well as providing a good example for your grandchild.
- Ask for help. Make a list of small and large ways family and friends can support you.
- Have a “family conference” of close and extended family members. Share how your life and other family members are changing.
- Let your friends know you would still like to see them, but you might need to plan ahead.
- Utilize after school programs, summer camps or baby sitters to take a break for yourself. A break will help your mood and give you the opportunity to participate in activities you enjoy and maintain friendships.
- Seek out a support group for grandparents. This will allow you time to share experiences with others in the same situation and develop support systems as well as learn practical tips.
- Utilize the Council on Aging of Greater Nashville’s library of materials for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.
- Faith groups may offer support and friendship.
- Bring in other family members to help you. This will foster relationships between the grandchild and other family members.
- Work to maintain current friendships and social activities.
- Utilize programs at local parks and recreation where both of you can attend activities.

Letting Go

As you raise your grandchild, they will likely become a focal point of your life. Some grandchildren may be with you for a short time and some will live with you until they are grown and can live on their own. It is important to remember that you are preparing them for life without you. Your grandchild will be a success if you can teach them about independence and hard work.

When your grandchild leaves your home, you will have given them a safe place to grow and nurture. It will be difficult to let them go after they have been such an integral part of your life but this is part of the process. Making sure they feel comfortable on their own is critical. Letting go will be easier if you feel they are leaving on good terms.
GENERAL RESOURCES

Family and Children’s Service ................................................................. (615) 320-0591

Coordinates the Relative Caregiver Program for Davidson County.
Support group and general assistance available.

New Visions, Inc .................................................................................. (615) 445-8711

Coordinates the Relative Caregiver Program for Cheatham, Dickson, Houston,
Humphreys, Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson,
Wilson Counties. Support group and general assistance available.

The Center for Family Development .............................................. (931) 684-4676

Coordinates the Relative Caregiver Program for Maury and Hickman Counties.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS (FRC) - funded by United Way

Community-Based
Bethlehem FRC .................................................................................. (615) 329-3386 x 119
Edgehill FRC ......................................................................................... (615) 256-4617
Martha O’Bryan FRC ............................................................................. (615) 254-1791 x 213
McGruder FRC ....................................................................................... (615) 242-4681
Northeast Salvation Army FRC ............................................................ (615) 255-0554
South Nashville FRC .............................................................................. 211
St. Luke’s FRC......................................................................................... (615) 350-7893

School-Based
Antioch High FRC ............................................................................... (615) 641-5400 x 2010
Bordeaux/Northwest FRC .................................................................. (615) 291-6355 x 101
Cole FRC ................................................................................................. (615) 333-5043 x 1815
Fall Hamilton FRC ................................................................................ (615) 291-6380 x 8
Glencliff FRC ......................................................................................... (615) 333-5070 x 301
Madison FRC ........................................................................................ (615) 584-7549
Maplewood FRC .................................................................................... (615) 259-5564 x 1100
Napier FRC ............................................................................................ (615) 291-6400 x 655376
Park Avenue FRC .................................................................................. (615) 298-8412 x 659159
Pearl-Cohn FRC .................................................................................... (615) 329-8150 x 1121
Tusculum FRC ....................................................................................... (615) 333-5179

Legal Aid Society .................................................................................. (615) 244-6610

Provides information about legal concerns.

Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee ......................................................... (615) 383-0994

Works to provide education, resources and support to families in Tennessee.
Visit www.pcat.org for more information.

Mental Health America ....................................................................... (615) 269-5355

Provides information and support for families with mental health issues.
Visit www.ichope.com for more information.

Eldercare Locator ................................................................................ 1-800-677-1116

Service helps find local agency on aging and other state and local resources
that can help with public benefits, local programs and other services for
older adults.
ONLINE RESOURCES
The following resources provide information, guidance and support for grandparents raising grandchildren.

**KidsCentral TN** ........................................................................................................... **www.kidscentraltn.com**
This new website provides information on health, education, development and support to Tennessee families, as well as a searchable State Services Directory. Advice for keeping children safe and healthy has changed over the last several decades. At www.kidcentraltn.com, grandparents can find the most current information on child safety, developmental milestones and support resources.

**AARP** ........................................................................................................... **www.aarp.org/quicklink**
A free and private way to find out if relatives or the children they are raising qualify for programs that pay for food, increase income and possibly cover healthcare costs. It gives information on applications as well as contact information for agencies.

**Generations United** ........................................................................................................... **www.gu.org**
Provides online support groups as well as information and practical tips.

**AARP-Grandfamilies State Fact Sheets** ............................................................................ **www.grandfactsheets.org**