
GrOW FACT SHEET

For Grandparents & Other Relatives Raising Children



Number 1, August 2017

Preparing For School Success

Preparing your grandchildren for success in school

You don't have to learn chemistry to help your grandchild succeed in school! You can support their education by giving them the message that you take school and schoolwork seriously, and so should they. Here are a few ways to help:

Sharing Your Expectations & Goals

- Your grandchildren are more likely to succeed in school if you share your expectations and set goals for their success.
- For example, do you want your grandchildren to go to college? Share your goal with them.
- Tell them to ask for help if they run into a problem.
- And even if it's not cool with their friends to do well in school, tell them it's important for their future to find ways to complete homework and get good grades.

Creating a Study Space

- Talk with your grandchildren about where they will study, whether it is at a desk or a corner of the kitchen table.
- Create a quiet area or quiet "study hours" to show it's important to focus on schoolwork.
- Just sitting with your grandchild while they do homework can help. Your attention means a lot.

Where to Find Support

Programs for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Communities in many states have special programs designed to help grandparents and other relatives raising children.

The website Grandfamilies.org has created state-by-state fact sheets listing community-based resources. Visit their website: www.granfamilies.org/State-Fact-Sheets

Your Community

Some organizations offer back to school supplies. A few new school supplies help start the year right.

Your Library

Librarians are a great source of information. They can help you look up resources on computers. Libraries may offer low cost or free computer classes, and typically have all kinds of activities for children of all ages.

Helping Them Get Ready to Learn

- Eating healthy food will help them to focus on learning.
- Kindergarten looks different these days. Play games with pre-school age grandchildren (3-5) to help them get ready to learn their letters, numbers, and shapes.
- School-age children can read during the summer months and grandparents can encourage learning through enriching activities and talking about the value of learning.

Establishing Routines

- Set homework times around chores, play time, and other activities.
- Set a regular bedtime. A good night's sleep is one very important way to prepare for school success.
- A few hours before bed, limit or stop caffeine and sugar, reduce screen time, and set a time to shut off electronics.
- Create a relaxing bedtime routine: read, play soft music, take a warm bath or shower, and lower bright lights.
- Keeping the computer and cell phone out of the bedroom, and keeping the room on the cool side can help you sleep.

Being Involved

- For younger students, talk about how they will answer if asked to talk about their family, a subject that often comes up at the start of the school year.
- Everyday, ask about their day and check for homework.
- Ask them to teach you something they learned that day.
- Quiz them to prepare for tests, using their book or flash cards made by the student.
- Show an interest in what they are learning: ask to see their work, help them brainstorm project topics, share what you know about the subjects they are studying, look it up at the library, or visit a museum or historical site to learn more.

Tutoring and Mentoring Programs

Teachers and other parents can often recommend tutors in subjects your grandchildren have trouble with. These may be for a fee or available at no cost through your Area Agency on Aging or programs like the Foster Grandparent Program. The PTA can also help you find tutors or mentors.

Your Grandchild's School

Contact your grandchild's teacher or the school from time to time to check on your grandchild's progress or to raise concerns.

- If possible, attend back-to-school night for parents and guardians or make contact with teachers at another time.
- Most teachers use email as the primary way to keep in touch.
- Even though email is easiest for most teachers, you can definitely call the school and leave a message for your child's teacher.

Explore resources offered by the school, including whether your grandchildren may qualify for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program.

If you don't have computer access, ask for help at your local library or senior center. Your grandchild's school can also be a good resource.