

Grandparents Parenting their Grandchildren Successfully

By Linda Bagshaw, LCMHC

There are many reasons that a grandparent becomes a guardian and sole caretaker of their grandchild. Their own adult sons and daughters may have addictions, be incarcerated, have had their parental rights terminated, or perhaps their adult child is deceased.

For some grandparents the decision was made quickly and easily. However, others struggle with what is the right thing to do for the child. The options include but are not limited to: having an adoption plan, enter the foster care system, or transition to a family member.

Changing from the role of grandparent to the parent role is confusing for the child and the grandparent. The grandparent is generally seen as the family member that spoils the child, has sleep over visits and trips to Disney World. Their love is never ending. They are not responsible for the child financially or having to place consequences, expectations or house rules on the grandchild.

The grandchild has expectations that their grandparent will give into their every want, pinch their cheeks and hug them till they can no longer breathe.

Often grandparents take on the parent role reluctantly, and feel they have no other choice. Unfortunately, most are not informed on how to become a parent to the grandchild. It sounds wonderful and promising at first. However, as the child's behaviors change and become more challenging the grandparent may feel isolated, overwhelmed, resentful and guilty.

Some grandchildren are depressed, experience feelings of anger and resentment. Many grandparents are in their 60s or older and not up to date with all the new electronics such as ipads, iphones, apps, book readers, smart tv's, blue rays and the list goes on and on. The grandchild is left without the electronics that the schools



expect them to be using at home for home work, and without an adult to have the knowledge of how to use them.

If you are in this situation or know of someone who is, please know that you are not alone and there is help within the community. At Elliot Behavioral Health Services, we are experienced in providing family and individual therapy for the grandparent and child.

We can also provide resources and support for meeting your child's needs at school. Our goal is to help you parent your grandchild successfully. To learn more about how we can help, give us a call at (603) 668-4079.



Linda Bagshaw, LCMHC, specializes in children, adolescents and young adults with cognitive, emotional, and physical disabilities. She treats clients diagnosed with ADHD, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, and Conduct Disorder, depression, anxiety, Bi-Polar Disorder and obsessive-compulsive behavior. She also provides therapy to clients who have been sexually abused or molested and children with Reactive Attachment Disorder.

Linda counsels children who have lost a parent through suicide, divorce, abandonment, abuse or neglect and works with foster children and children living in a group home setting. She has prepared teens for independent living, including teaching parenting skills to pregnant teens.

She obtained a Bachelors degree from Springfield College of Human Services, Springfield, MA and received a Masters degree from Notre Dame College, Manchester, NH. Linda is a licensed clinical mental health counselor.

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