



Grandparents Corner

April 2016

Encouraging Open and Honest Communication

Communicating openly and honestly with your grandchildren is one of the best things you can do to help them cope. It is especially important to take time to really listen as they need an adult they can go to with their questions, concerns and feelings.

Plan regular times to sit and talk - free from games, TV, or other distractions.

Encourage your grandchildren to talk about their feelings, both good and bad - try to listen without judging or dismissing their feelings.

Help your grandchildren learn to identify their feelings - example: if your grandchild seems upset, you might say, "You look sad, is something bothering you?"

Young children communicate through play - young children may not be able to verbalize how they feel, but will express themselves through their play.

It's OK to say "I don't know" - you don't have an answer for everything. If you don't know, be honest about it. Don't evade the question or lie.

How Much Should You Tell Young Grandchildren?

Avoid telling the child too much - many children are too young to understand the whole story about their situation. If you tell them all the details of the situation, it may do more harm than good. Too much information can be confusing, scary or overwhelming for them.

Avoid telling the child too little or nothing - kids are smart and they will pick up tidbits about their situation. If kids learn about their situation from someone else, they could feel hurt, deceived and confused. They may avoid asking you questions or talking to you about other important concerns because they think certain topics are "off limits."

Never twist the facts or lie to your grandchild - even young children know the difference between the truth and a lie. They often piece together information, but then are afraid to talk about the truth. Some people may twist the facts in an effort to protect the child.

The best strategy is to be honest at their level of understanding. Your grandchildren will learn the importance of trust and honesty in a relationship.

Source: University of Wisconsin - Extension

The chronic stress many caregivers face can cause back pain or increased pain caused by a previous injury. The intensity of pain can range from constant to piercing, affecting both your quality of life and your ability to provide care. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Improper movements can cause injury to the person being moved, such as abrasions to skin, strains, sprains and tears - even fractures. T F

2. Create a base of support by standing with your feet 8 - 12 inches apart (about shoulder width), with one foot a half-step ahead of the other. T F

3. The back muscles are your strongest muscles. T F

4. Maintain a healthy weight to reduce pressure on your spine. T F

5. Let the person you are helping do as much as they can do safely. T F

6. The nicotine in cigarettes slows the flow of blood to the vertebrae and disks and impairs their function. T F

7. When lifting a person, avoid sudden jerking movements; move slowly and communicate what you are doing and need the person to do. T F

8. When planning on the space you need to move, pivot or transfer, allow for more space than you think you need. T F

9. You can injure your back by not focusing on what you are doing. T F

10. Extra weight does not place stress on knee joints. T F

KEY: 1. T 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. T 9. T 10. F