

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For most of America's sixty million grandparents, grandchildren are seen as one of the rewards of growing older. The Bible refers to grandchildren as "the crown of the aged." In our culture grandparenthood is portrayed as a time to enjoy children without the tensions and responsibilities associated with child-rearing. The grandparent-grandchild relationship is idealized as consisting of mutual love, respect, and enjoyment. For most older adults it is assumed that this intergenerational bond will be a voluntary bond. The most common orientation towards the role of grandparenting is "pleasure without responsibility" (Barranti, 1985 p.344).

Grandparents are of great importance to the family structure, often referred to as "guardians of generations" and "family national guard" (Hagestad, 1985 p.22). They play a strong role in keeping the family together, often acting as unofficial arbitrators between the generations.

Past research shows that grandparents are seen as the symbol of family continuity, possessing great wisdom,

experience, and authority (Bengston & Robertson,1985). Perhaps the most important symbolic dimension of grandparenthood is, very simply, " being there" (Hagestad,p.21). The presence of grandparents helps to maintain the identity of the family and serves as an imaginary buffer against the younger generations mortality. The symbolic function of "being there" is also evident during times of family crisis. The presence of the older generation appears to have a calming effect, adding a sense of stability during times of crisis and transition (Bengston & Robertson,1985).

Being there is sometimes not enough. Increase in life expectancy means more people are living long enough to become grandparents and even great-grandparents. This, combined with a rise in the number and severity of social problems in America, has brought about new and unexpected roles for many grandparents. Among the functions a grandparent may be required to fulfill is that of full time caregiver to the grandchildren. When the adult children are unable to care for their children, grandparents often step in assuming a role that exceeds the boundaries of "grandparenting."

The increasing occurrence of grandparents raising their grandchildren is a subject of recent interest in the media. Public awareness of the problem is growing as evidenced by recent newspaper and magazine articles and segments on " The

Donahue Show" (July 11,1991) and 20/20 (March 22,1991). The December,1991 issue of U.S News and World Report (Creighton,1991) addresses the subject in an article titled " Grandparents: The Silent Saviors". Grandparents raising grandchildren was also a topic of several sessions at the 1992 American Society on Aging conference held in San Diego, California.

Although still few in number, support groups for grandparents who are primary caregivers to their grandchildren are beginning to form. Participation in a support group can help ease the feelings of isolation, provide a sounding board for frustrations and worries and serve as an arena in which to share experiences and practical information. "GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN" is one of the foremost groups offering support. They describe themselves as grandparents whose first choice was not to become full-time grandparents but whose last alternative was to become full-time grandparents. Their primary purpose and goals include providing moral and emotional support to the grandparents and working towards legislation to protect the legal rights of grandparents. Although " GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN" is based in Colleyville, Texas, they provide organizational information to anyone wishing to begin a support group in their area (Kirkland, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

As demographics change, the number of elderly continue to increase. In the United States the numbers of those 65 and older rose from 16.6 million in 1960 to 31 million in 1990. Even more dramatic has been the increase in those who are over the age of 85. In 1960 the number was only 0.9 million, in 1990 the number had climbed to 3.0 million (U.S Bureau of the Census,1989.) Brubaker (1990) estimates that of those over 65 years of age or older 77% are grandparents and 51% are great-grandparents.

The likelihood of becoming a grandparent increases as life expectancy increases. At the turn of the century it was rare for an adult to survive long enough to see their grandchildren reach adolescence. Now, three, four and even five generation families are becoming common (Bengston & Robertson,1985).

Due to the scarcity of research on this issue there are no statistics defining the exact number of children under the care of their grandparents. In the last decade there has been a sharp increase, from a little over 2 million in 1980 to approximately 3.2 million in 1991, in the number of children in the United States that live with grandparents or other relatives. The U.S Census Bureau estimates that parents are not present in about a third of these cases suggesting that the grandparents are the major caregivers (Minkler,Roe & Price,1992). The December 16,

1991 issue of U.S News and World Report states that there are 3.2 million children in the United States living with their grandparents. Rough estimates suggest that 4 percent of all white children and 12 percent of all black children in the United States are living with grandparents (Creighton,1991).

The middle generation continues to encounter increasing problems that render them incapable of responsible parenting. Drug and alcohol abuse seem to be the primary cause. Other situations which force the older generation to step in are teenage pregnancy, incarceration of the adult child, physical or mental illness of the adult child, and cases where the grandchildren are being physically or sexually abused (Montemayor & Leigh, 1982; Larsen,1990).

As grandparents are called to active duty they face many challenges. Unexpectedly thrust into the world of parenting again they must cope with the physically and emotionally draining tasks of day to day child care. Uncertain custody status is a major source of worry ,adding the fear of future custody battles and complicating legal rights. Uncertainty over the future can obscure the grandparent's position in the family structure.

Grandparents often have many powerful emotions concerning their adult children which may include anger, guilt, worry, resentment and disappointment. It is very common for the grandparent to question "Where did we go

wrong ? " They watch and try to help as their children struggle in situations that ultimately render them incapable of responsibly caring for their children. Compounding the problem are frequent feelings of anger and resentment towards the adult children for having placed them in such a difficult position.

It is well documented that most grandparents prefer the role that will allow them to have " pleasure without responsibility " (Barranti,1985,p.344). Grandparents raising their grandchildren must give up this role. Many grandparents in this situation feel as though they have been robbed of the much anticipated role of grandparents. Gone are the dreams of spoiling, then sending home their grandchild to a safe, happy environment. For grandparents who become full-time parents to their grandchildren the responsibilities eliminate the concept of grandparenting being a voluntary bond. They literally become parents to young children again at a time in their lives when it is not the norm, not anticipated, and rarely desired. Coming to terms with the discrepancy between expected grandparenting roles and the reality of being surrogate parents to grandchildren is difficult. Lack of role clarity leaves no clear cut role definitions or models to follow.

Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study is to better understand the role of grandparents as surrogate parents and the special needs and challenges they confront. Role theory is the theoretical framework used in this study. Role definitions, factors affecting role transition and role clarity will be examined. The discrepancies in the grandparental role expectations versus the current role as surrogate parents will also be studied. The ambiguous nature of their role leaves no clear definition or guidelines in which to adhere, creating role confusion. Variables affecting role clarity will be studied. The relationship that the grandparents have with their adult child who is the parent to their grandchildren will be examined. As the transition from grandparent to surrogate parent is made many internal and external stressors are encountered. Some of these stressors will be examined in the study.

General questions to be addressed in this study are:

1. What does the grandparent view as the ideal level of involvement with grandchildren?
2. What role does the grandparent feel they are fulfilling in relation to their grandchildren?
3. What factors have an impact on the grandparents level of satisfaction with the role ?
4. Does the absence of legal custody present problems?
5. What is the relationship with the adult child?

6. What do the grandparents perceive as their greatest needs?

7. Is there a social support network available?

Summary

The incidence of grandparents that must assume responsibility for raising their grandchildren is on the increase. Because this is a circumstance for which society has no set norms and for which there is no preparation, transition into the role can be complex. The discrepancy between what the grandparent perceives as the stereotypical grandparent and the role that they fulfill will be studied. How the grandparent defines their role in relationship to their grandchildren will be looked at. Relationships between the grandparents and their adult child will also be studied.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Grandparenting is one of the oldest social roles; yet until recently, little research has focused on grandparenting . Grandparents have always been looked to as a symbol of family continuity, keeping the family together and maintaining a sense of family identity. Functioning in an authoritarian role , the grandparents were traditionally put on a pedestal apart from the other generations (Barranti, 1985). As society changes, family roles, including the role of grandparent, are rapidly undergoing transitions.

Grandparenting Roles

Changing views of grandparenting were researched in the 1950's showing the desired role to be a form of friendly equality and informality (Albrecht, 1954 ; Apple, 1956). The relationship of friendly equality and informality was shown to be most prevalent in the absence of the grandparent holding a role of authority in the family structure. Disassociation from family power paves the way for the desired warm, indulgent relationship between grandparent and grandchild. Grandparents that participated in the grandparenting studies of the 1950's endorsed a pleasurable yet minimal accountability orientation toward the role of

grandparenting. Barranti (1985,p.344) indicates that the "pleasure without responsibility" orientation remains the preferred role today. The idealized grandparental role in our society has shifted from authoritative to indulgent.

Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) described different types of grandparenting and classified them into five categories. The "Formal" grandparent follows what he or she believes to be the prescribed role for grandparents, leaving parenting strictly to the parent. The "Fun Seeker" grandparent views his role as one of playmate to the grandchild. The "Distant Figure" grandparent has minimal contact with the grandchild, usually only on ritual occasions such as holidays, birthdays, and family reunions. The "Surrogate Parent" assumes care and responsibility for the child. The final category is the "Reservoir of Family Wisdom" . In this category the grandparents are seen as dispensers of skills and resources and maintain a position of dominance in the extended family.

Exploring the meaning of grandparenting, Kivnick (1982) developed five dimensions of grandparenthood. While all dimensions may be present in any grandparent, the importance of a particular dimension is individualized. Rather than being related to behavior and actions, these dimensions communicate what it means to be a grandparent and how grandparents view the experience. The dimensions as described by Kivnick are as follows; (a) **centrality-**

grandparenthood is central to the grandparents lives. (b) **valued elder**- passing on tradition and being valued in that capacity. (c) **immortality through clan**- patriarchal or matriarchal responsibility, identification with grandchildren and family immortality. (d) **reinvolvement with personal past**- grandparents reliving their own earlier lives and identifying with their own grandparents. (e) **indulgence**- attitude of lenience and indulgence toward grandchildren. If an individual attaches a great deal of importance to one dimension of grandparenthood and is unable to express this dimension, disappointment and dissatisfaction will be evident.

Cherlin and Furstenberg (1985) constructed five classifications of styles of grandparenting: detached, passive, supportive, authoritative, and influential. These styles of grandparenting will be further examined in the Role Theory section of this paper.

The preferred role of grandparenting is one of a voluntary nature but this is not always possible. As the middle generation faces such problems as divorce, substance abuse and unemployment, the impact is felt by all generations. Frequently it is the older generation that must be there to pick up the pieces. Help is often given in the form of financial assistance, living arrangements, emotional support and assumption of responsibility for the full time care of the grandchildren.

Historical Precedence of Black Grandparents

The grandparent, more specifically the grandmother, has always held a position of importance in Black families. It was not viewed as unusual for the grandmother to assume the role of parenting her grandchildren due to needs of the extended kin, cultural precedence or historical events (Burton,1992). Traditionally, black families are seen as having a high level of interdependence between generations.

Jones(1973,p.20) discusses the status endowed upon the black grandmother in the era between the early 19th century until the mid-1960's. Accompanying the status was active duty of role behaviors befitting the status. Jones writes: "As she (the black grandmother) grew older, she was even more respected and esteemed for her knowledge and for her contributions to people, for she willingly helped neighbors, as well as her own kin. In fact, it was not uncommon for the black grandmother to accept and rear, in addition to her own grandchildren, a niece, a nephew, a cousin, or even an orphan who had nowhere to turn for societal aid."

Grandmothers continue to be a vital link in the black family serving many necessary functions. The role of surrogate parent to their grandchildren continues to be one of these functions as statistics show that 12% of all black children in the United States are currently living with their grandparents (Minkler,et.al,1992). What has changed are the reasons grandparents are taking on the role. Burton

(1992) cites the main reasons now include economics, teenage pregnancies, high rate of single parent families and the epidemic of drug abuse.

In Cherlin and Furstenberg's (1985) study of styles and strategies of grandparenting they found a significant difference between black grandparents and white grandparents. Two styles that are associated with a high level of parental authority, authoritative or influential, were found in 63% of black grandparents as compared to only 26% of white parents. A passive style of grandparenting was reported by only 8% of Black grandparents, emphasizing the major role Black grandparents play in their grandchildren's lives.

Family Roles

Elkind (1990) contends that the American family is drastically different than it was even 25 years ago. The family structure that was once viewed as typical- one mother, one father and two children- is now in the minority. According to Elkind, single-parent families, two career families, and blended families are becoming the norm. Such dramatic changes in the family structure are unprecedented.

The increase in life expectancy is a factor that has changed the structure of the family. Rosenwaike and Dolinsky (1987) note that the life expectancy for a white male has increased from 48.2 in 1900 to the current figure

of 73 years. For white females in the same time frame the numbers have gone from 51.1 years to 78.9 years. This increase has led to the verticalization of the family, making four and even five generation families not unusual. Dychtwald (1989) points out that these changes mean that the family is no longer child centered but rather adult centered. The opportunity for intergenerational bonds is greatly increased leading to the older generations frequently assisting the younger generations.

Dychtwald (1989) discusses how grandparents are increasingly being called on to fulfill functional roles. In times of crisis the grandparents are called on to help in various ways which often includes assisting financially, providing child care, and occasionally stepping in to head the household.

Legal Issues

Becoming a parent to young children is generally not anticipated or desired but in many cases there is little choice. Faced with the prospect of allowing the state to gain custody most grandparents choose to take over the care of the children. Placed in the unexpected role of surrogate parent the older adult may experience a sense of confusion concerning their role. Although they are biologically grandparents they are functioning as parents to the child. There are no pre-determined guidelines to assist them in

clarifying their position in the family structure.

Kennedy and Keeney (1988) in a study titled The Grandparent Project found custody arrangements to be an important variable in the attitudes of grandparents raising their grandchildren. There are several different types of formal and informal custody arrangements. This may include temporary or permanent custody awarded by the court as well as legal adoption of the child. In cases of informal custody it is common that the child has been with the grandparents since birth with no intervention from the natural parents. Another classification is the grandparents who are full-time care givers while the parents retain legal custody. This is seen when the situation is expected to be temporary or in cases where the grandparents have not yet been awarded custody but are in the legal process currently. Kennedy and Keeney (1988) suggest that the clearer the arrangement in favor of permanent custody , the lower the levels of stress, anxiety, and conflict with the child's natural parents. They noted that uncertainty of custody was reflected in psychopathologies and conflicts with the natural parents that were revealed during group therapy. The occurrence of being involved in ongoing bitter custody battles was a source of stress for many of the grandparents that did not have legal permanent custody of their grandchildren (Kennedy & Keeney,1988).

Without legal custody the grandparents often live in fear that the grandchildren may be taken away at any time. At the mercy of the unstable adult child's whims, the grandparents are often subjected to emotional blackmail by the adult children. As long as they do what the adult child wants, they will be allowed to continue providing a stable ,loving home for the grandchildren. It is the uncertainty that causes stress for the grandparents and grandchildren. Not knowing if this situation will be permanent or temporary makes it difficult to establish set role identities.

Obtaining legal custody can be difficult, the legal system recognizes very few rights of grandparents. There is great reluctance on the part of the legal system to interfere with the parent-child relationship. Even in the worst circumstances courts tend to favor leaving the children with their natural parents. Despite evidence to the contrary they want to believe a parent will not harm their own child. The natural parents must be proven totally unfit as parents before the grandparents are allowed any legal rights (Wilson & DeShane,1982). Going to court to prove that one's own child is an unfit parent can be devastating, emotionally and financially.

In a paper presented at the 38th annual meeting of the American Society on Aging, Knieps (1992) discussed cases involving grandparents attempting to gain custody of their grandchildren. Each state has it's own statutes concerning

rights of the grandparents. However, more states are using guidelines to determine the best interests of the child rather than automatically awarding custody to biological parents.

Without legal guardianship or custody the grandparent may encounter a variety of problems. Unless one of the natural parents lives in the school district, enrollment in the public schools may be prohibited. Except in cases involving life threatening situations the grandparents have no legal rights to seek medical treatment for their grandchildren. Because of the background these children typically come from, they are often in need of counseling or other special therapy. Without custody or guardianship access to these services may be denied. Insurance companies will not cover the grandchild unless the grandparents have legally adopted the grandchild (Kirkland,1991).

Role Theory

The conceptual framework for this study will be based on role theory. There are many definitions of roles. Biddle and Thomas (1966) note that perhaps the most common definition is that role is the set of prescriptions defining what the behavior of a person in a specific situation should be. Roles are sets of social norms, beliefs or expectations that people ought or ought not to behave in certain ways (Burr, Hill, Nye & Reiss,1979). Linton (1936) proposed that

" role" refers to the behavior of people in positions or statuses. The term "role enactment" is frequently used to refer to the behavior of people in social roles.

Sarbin (1968) describes the variable of organismic involvement as the proportion of a person's concentration, effort or engrossment that a role demands. Sarbin theorizes that there are seven levels of involvement ranging from noninvolvement at the low end of the continuum to bewitchment at the high end.

In Sarbin's scale (see figure 1.) the base level is non-involvement which is described as when a person has a role or status, but it demands no activity. The next stage is casual role enactment in which a person can perform a role with little attention or concern. Behavior is often routinized. In the second stage, ritual acting, there is a slightly greater involvement of the self. The next stage, engrossed acting, the role becomes the main activity although other things can still be done. In the fourth stage involvement in the role becomes exclusive and requires high level of involvement. This is called the hypnotic stage. The upper three levels described by Sarbin, hysterionic neurosis, ecstasy, and bewitchment, are very rare requiring maximal involvement of the entire organism.

Figure 1. Sarbin's Scale of Organismic Involvement

Zero. Noninvolvement

I. Casual role enactment

II. Ritual acting

III. Engrossed acting

IV. Classical hypnotic role taking

V. Hysterionic neurosis

VI. Ecstasy

VII. Bewitchment

These levels of role involvement can be looked at in relation to grandparenting roles. The beginning five levels in Sarbin's scale can be compared with Cherlin and Furstenberg's (1985) five categories of grandparenting styles. The grandparent's level of involvement with their grandchildren categorizes grandparents into five styles : detached, passive, supportive, authoritative and influential.

Grandparents that fit the description of "detached" are those that are grandparents in a symbolic sense only. They are distant, remote figures to their grandchildren. On Sarbin's scale this type of grandparent would rank on the zero level, non-involvement. The "passive" grandparent has

more frequent contact but on a superficial level. They offer assistance if needed but prefer not to interfere. This level of involvement can be classified on Sarbin's scale as casual role enactment or ritual acting. The "passive" grandparent best fits the image of the typical American grandparent. The "supportive" grandparent is very involved in their role as grandparent. They generally provide many services to the grandchild and have frequent contact. This style of grandparenting correlates with Sarbin's stage III, engrossed acting. Sarbin's stage IV, the hypnotic stage, can be used to describe the "influential" grandparent. "Influential" grandparents have almost daily contact with their grandchildren sometimes fulfilling the role of surrogate parents. Grandparenting is their main role requiring almost all of their time and energy. The style of "authoritative" grandparenting can overlap stage III and stage IV on Sarbin's scale. Frequency of contact may be less for "authoritative" grandparents than for "influential" grandparents but similarly they exhibit parent like behavior towards the grandchildren.

When people are required to make major adjustments in their role they go through role transition. Grandparents who become surrogate parents to their grandchildren are often removed from a minimal level of involvement, such as "passive" grandparenting, and are forced to immerse themselves in maximal involvement as "influential"

grandparents , a pseudo-parental role. The addition of a new role that is unexpected at this stage of life makes the transition complex. Dissatisfaction may be high if a grandparent was removed from a desired role of grandparenting and placed in one that was not chosen.

The transition to becoming parents of dependent children again causes stress due to the unexpected sequence in the life course. People operate on invisible timetables having certain expectations for each stage of life. Anticipatory Socialization is a theoretical idea within role theory describing the process of learning the norms of a role before being placed in that role. Without the opportunity to learn the norms of the role the transition into the role will be more difficult. Also affecting the ease of transition is the presence of a set of peers that are going through the same transition and provide social support.

The ease of role transition is impacted by the idea of role clarity. If the new role is one that society views as important and there is a designed procedure for the move the transition will be smoother (Cottrell,1942). Most grandparents have little preparation for the transition from grandparent to surrogate parent to their grandchildren. Although having parented children before, it was at a time in their life when it was most likely a desired and expected role. Becoming parents to their grandchildren is a role for

which society has no set norms or even more importantly, no social support system. Lacking knowledge of others in this position exacerbates feelings of inadequacy and also isolation.

Summary

As Bengston and Robertson (1985) cite, grandparents have always been an important part of the family structure. Traditionally they were seen as authoritative figures, the heads of the family. Historically, their function was primarily symbolic, preserving the sense of family continuity and giving a sense of stability by simply "being there".

Changes in our society have brought about changes in the role of grandparenting. The foremost change is the increasing life span, allowing more people to experience grandparenthood. Problems in our society appear to be on the rise: drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy, child abuse, mental illness. These problems affect all generations of a family. More and more often grandparents are called out of their symbolic role and forced into a functional role. Assistance may be required in the form of occasional babysitting, financial aid or, in extreme cases, raising their grandchildren.

In this study the author will attempt to explore, in- depth, the intricacies of the situation of grandparents

involved in raising grandchildren. Stresses commonly related will be probed as will positive aspects. The goal of this study is to broaden the base of knowledge existing about grandparents raising their grandchildren.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

As the prevalence of grandparents raising grandchildren increases more information must be generated to enable a better understanding of their situation. Programs, services and support groups must be developed to help meet the needs of older adults. Although this is a topic that is increasingly evident in the popular media, there has been very little research done. Because of this and the nature of the topic, this study was designed to be descriptive and exploratory.

Sample

Purposive sampling, in which subjects are chosen based on the purpose of the research, was used. In utilizing purposive sampling subjects are chosen to participate because of their relevance to the research topic (Smith, 1991). This study will focus on grandparents in a large Metropolitan area in the Southwest who are currently raising their grandchildren. Contact was made through a support group, "GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN". Ten people were interviewed, eight female and two male. The sample size was small because of the time requirements necessary to conduct in-depth interviews and the repetition of information being collected. One hundred percent of the respondents were

White. This middle class, White sample was selected because previous studies discussing grandparents raising grandchildren have focused on Black grandparents (Minkler, et. al., 1992), (Burton, 1992). Age range of the respondents varied from 39 to 58 with the median age being 51.4 years. Fifty percent were the maternal grandparents and 50% were paternal grandparents. The age of the adult child who is parent to the grandchildren ranged from 21 to 37 with 25.6 years as the median age. Seven of the grandparents had one grandchild living with them, one had two, one grandmother had three and one grandmother had four grandchildren living with her. Ages of the grandchildren ranged from one year old to sixteen years old with the mean age being 4.16 years. Of the sixteen grandchildren involved in the study thirteen were male and three were female. The grandchildren have been living with their grandparents from one year to four years, 1.6 being the average. Half of the respondents were married, half were single.

Instrument

Because there has been very little research on this topic it was decided to devise a research instrument for the purpose of this study. In developing the instrument a pilot study was done as well as informal discussions with grandparents who are raising their grandchildren.

Initially a small pilot study was done as part of a

class research project. A twenty-five question survey was developed concerning grandparents attitudes regarding their role as caregivers for their grandchildren. Issues addressed included methods of discipline, perception of role, and challenges and rewards associated with their situation. A demographic section was included to ascertain specifics of their situation. Interviews were conducted face to face lasting approximately one hour. The sample size was very small, only four respondents. Although this study was inconclusive, it assisted in clarifying what direction the research needed to proceed. Questions were narrowed from 25 questions to ten questions and redirected to generate more open discussion.

To better understand the situation of grandparents raising grandchildren the researcher met with 10 grandparents who were raising their grandchildren. After a lengthy discussion it became obvious that there were numerous recurring issues. Repeatedly, grandparents discussed their disappointment with missing out on the expected grandparent role. Another issue that appeared to be a source of great stress was the uncertainty of what the future held. Not knowing what length of time their grandchildren would be with them and not having any legal rights concerning custody was a point of emotional confusion and worry. The remaining issue that brought very strong response was concerning their adult child. A surprising

number stated that they felt their life would be easier if their own adult child were totally out of the picture. Sporadic visits created tension and interfered with the emotional well-being of both the grandchildren and the grandparents. Because of these responses the final research instrument was designed to elicit information about the grandparent's role with their grandchildren and their adult children.

A research instrument has been developed consisting of ten in- depth open-ended questions. The questions have been designed to elicit information about many aspects of the issue. The focus of the questions have been devised to retrieve respondents perception of their role with their grandchildren, their adult children and their feelings regarding their role. Open-ended questions were decided to be the most appropriate for this study because they will allow the researcher to gain knowledge of people's experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge without the constraints of pre-determined responses. Using open- ended questions will enable the researcher to enter without pre-conceived ideas and biases. Using this method also facilitates the inclusion of individual variations.

The non-schedule standardized interview format was used to present the same questions to all respondents while still allowing the researcher the freedom to alter the sequence of questions to meet the needs of the respondent. Denzin

(1989,p.107) states "with this approach, the interviewer will often find that the interviewees will raise important issues not contained in the schedule, or will even summarize entire sections of the schedule in one long sequence of statements."

Data Collection

Participants in the support group, "GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN", were told about the research project and volunteers were requested. It was advised that the interview would last approximately one hour. A sign up sheet was passed around and those interested signed their names and telephone numbers. Appointments were made with each respondent, stressing that it be a place and time convenient to them. Respondents were called the night before to confirm their appointment. Eight of the ten respondents chose to meet at their home. The remaining two interviews were conducted in a restaurant at lunchtime to accommodate their busy schedules. Before beginning the interview the respondent was asked to read and sign the consent form. They were also verbally reassured by the interviewer that all information would be confidential. Permission to tape record the interviews was asked for and granted by all respondents.

Statistical Analysis

This study is qualitative in nature, allowing the issue to be explored in-depth and in detail. As information was gathered through interviews it was organized into narrative descriptions. Categories were created to record consistencies in responses. Case studies were used to gain a full understanding of individual situations and bring an awareness of similarities and individual variations among respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the particular characteristics of the group studied and the sample responses.

Limitations

The lack of generalizability is a concern for this study due to the fact that a purposive sample was used rather than a random sample. Although some commonalities may be assumed for grandparents in similar situations, it is also speculated that many variations exist.

The small size of the sample, ten respondents, is a definite limitation. A larger sample may be seen as being more representative of the group being studied.

Internal reliability may be threatened if respondents do not answer truthfully. Because this is an emotional topic, some of the questions may have been difficult for the respondent to answer candidly. Assurance of confidentiality and the researcher's non-judgmental approach appeared to help to alleviate fear of disclosure.

Interviews were conducted in comfortable atmospheres of the respondents choice. Occasional disturbances that did not appear to affect the respondents in any way were not uncommon. These included the telephone ringing, children playing in a nearby room, other family members occasionally coming in and out and in one case a television in the background. For the respondents, these were the normal activities and noises that did not interfere with the interview. In only one situation did the activity in the background intrude to the extent that it made concentration difficult for the researcher. In that case there were six children ranging in age from two to nine playing in a nearby room, two adult children in and out of the room, the grandmother's bedridden husband in the next room and a television on in the background. Upon leaving the interview site the tape was analyzed immediately. Although this was definitely not a controlled environment the advantages of conducting the interviews at the respondents homes outweighed any inconveniences. For most of the grandparents, obtaining child care in order to assist a student with research would be out of the question,logistically and financially. More importantly visiting in their homes seemed to put them more at ease, in control of the situation. It also allowed the researcher an inside view of the reality of their lives.

Validity of the research heavily rests on the skill and

effort of the researcher. Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, the rapport established between the researcher and respondent is critically important. Although this could be seen as a weakness, this researcher believes that this was a definite strength of the study. Before any data was collected the researcher had developed a comfortable relationship with all the respondents through the "GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN" support group.

CHAPTER IV

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

MANUSCRIPT FOR PUBLICATION

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
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Abstract

Grandparents have always been an important part of the family structure, a link between the generations. As the middle generation attempts to deal with challenges in society : unemployment, increasing divorce rate, substance abuse, it is becoming increasingly common for the older generation to be called in to raise their grandchildren. With this role come many complex problems and role issues. The purpose of this study is to explore the intricacies associated with grandparents accepting the task of raising their grandchildren. Role issues were also addressed. Ten grandparents currently raising their grandchildren were interviewed using an in-depth interview format. Grandparents reported financial difficulties associated with raising their grandchildren as a major area of stress. Relations with the adult children were also reported as a primary cause of dissatisfaction. Deprivation of the desired grandparent role was seen as a source of disappointment for a majority of the grandparents interviewed. A large discrepancy between desired role and actual role existed for the most of the respondents.

Introduction

Grandparents have always been an important part of the family structure, playing a strong role in keeping the family together and acting as arbitrators between the generations (Dychtwald,1989). Traditionally, their most important function has been very simply "being there", a symbolic dimension that helps maintain the identity of the family and preserve a sense of continuity (Bengston & Robertson,1985).

Because of several factors, medical technology, healthier lifestyles, people are living longer. The longer life expectancy means more people live long enough to become grandparents (Rosenwaike & Dolinsky,1987; Brubaker,1990; Bengston & Robertson,1985). This change, combined with a rise in the number and severity of social problems such as unemployment, divorce, substance abuse, mental illness, and child abuse, has brought the expansion of roles necessary for grandparents to fulfill. Among those roles is the increasing frequency of grandparents who must assume the task of parenting their grandchildren. (Minkler,Roe & Price,1992; Creighton,1991).

Grandparenting Roles

Research about grandparenting in America has shown that most grandparents prefer a role that is voluntary, focusing on fun and pleasure with minimal obligatory functions (Albrecht, 1954; Apple, 1956; Barranti, 1985; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1983). "Passive" grandparenting is the stereotypical role for American grandparents. According to Cherlin and Furstenberg's (1983) categories of grandparenting styles, the "passive" grandparent has frequent contact but it is on a superficial level. They offer assistance if needed but prefer not to interfere.

In contrast to the "passive" style of grandparenting envisioned by many Americans is the historical role of the Black grandmother. The Black grandparent, specifically the Black grandmother, occupies a role of great importance in the family. The Black grandmother has traditionally performed many vital functions including raising grandchildren (Jones, 1973; Burton, 1993). Acting as a link between the generations, the Black grandmother continues to play a critical part in the family structure.

Role Theory

Being asked to give up an expected and desired role of grandparenting in exchange for the seldom envisioned or coveted role of raising grandchildren brings about a multitude of complexities (Kennedy & Keeney, 1988; Kirkland, 1991). Role theory forms the foundation for understanding the changes experienced when making the transition from one role to another (Biddle & Thomas, 1966; Linton, 1936; Sarbin, 1968; Cottrell, 1942). Sarbin (1968) discusses roles according to the level of involvement required to fill particular types of roles. Sarbin theorizes that there are seven levels of roles requiring various levels of effort ranging from non-involvement to maximum involvement. The base level and the upper level are rare, most roles demand an effort somewhere in between. Making a transition from one level to another, especially if done involuntarily, can be quite difficult.

In this study the author will discuss some of the problems grandparents encounter when they become parents to their grandchildren. The main focus of this study is to explore in-depth the feelings and experiences of the

grandparents concerning their situation; their relationship with their adult child and their relationship with their grandchild.

Methodology

Sample

Respondents were selected from a group of grandparents participating in a support group organized by the researcher, "GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN" in a Metropolitan city in the Southwest. This purposive sample of participants are currently involved in the full time responsibility of raising at least one grandchild under the age of eighteen.

The sample consisted of ten grandparents, eight women and two men, ranging in age from 39 to 58 with the median age being 51.4 years. All of the respondents were white. This type of sample was selected because a majority of previous studies examining grandparents raising grandchildren have focused their attention on Black grandparents (Minkler, Roe, & Price, 1992; Burton, 1992). Although these studies have been vital to the development of knowledge, the rapidly growing phenomena of grandparents raising grandchildren in the middle class, white community is an overlooked area of research. The White grandparents were also chosen because of previous studies suggesting that

raising grandchildren is more often expected and more easily accepted among Black grandparents (Jones, 1973; Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1985).

Fifty percent of the respondents were maternal grandparents and 50% were paternal grandparents. (See Table 1.) Grandparents were equally divided in regards to marital status, 50% were married, 50% were single. A large majority, 70%, were raising only one grandchild while the remaining grandparents had two or more grandchildren currently living with them. Ages of the grandchildren involved ranged from one year of age to sixteen years of age, the mean age was 4.16 years. Of the sixteen grandchildren, thirteen were males and three were females. The grandchildren had been living with their grandparents from one to four years, 1.6 years being the average.

Insert Table 1 about here

Primary causes given for the adult child being unable to take care of the grandchildren were substance abuse (60%) and the adult child abusing or neglecting the grandchildren (40%). In four of the six cases where substance abuse was reported as the main cause physical abuse, sexual abuse or

severe neglect of the grandchildren were recounted as secondary causes.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed a set of ten open-ended, in-depth questions to be used in a non-structured, standardized interview format. This arrangement allowed the researcher to approach the interviews without pre-set response categories, possibly omitting relevant material. Because there is very little information on this subject, this design was particularly beneficial to this exploratory research. Ordering of questions was altered to meet individual respondents needs and further optimize accurate, clear answers. The questions were designed to elicit information about the individual's situation, their relationship with their adult child, and their perception of their role in regard to their grandchild.

Data Collection

During the pilot study phase of the study the researcher organized an ongoing monthly support group in the community, "GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN". From the beginning participants were aware of the researchers graduate student status and research intent. Developing relationships through the support group prior to the research enhanced the success of this project. Subjects had

the opportunity to become acquainted with the researcher and develop a rapport that made discussion of personal lives more comfortable. Four months after the group was formed the researcher explained the details of what participation in the research project would entail and volunteers were requested. Appointments were made with the time and location convenient to the respondent. Telephone calls were made the night before an interview to remind the participants and confirm time and location.

Eight of the participants were interviewed in their home, two in restaurants. Interviews varied in length from one hour to three hours, with approximately one and a half hours being the average length of interview. Brief notes were taken during the interviews but permission was gained from each individual respondent to allow the interview to be tape recorded to allow better accuracy.

This study was exploratory in nature, attempting to learn more information about grandparents who assume the task of raising their grandchildren. Through open-ended questions the research aspired to gain knowledge about individual situations and perceptions concerning role fulfillment.

Analysis and Findings

This study examined seven major research themes. They are:

1. What does the grandparent view as the ideal level of involvement with grandchildren?
2. What role does the grandparent feel they are fulfilling in relation to their grandchild?
3. What factors have an impact on the grandparents level of satisfaction with the role?
4. Does the absence of legal custody present problems?
5. What is the nature of the relationship with the adult children that are parents to the grandchildren involved?
6. What do the grandparents perceive as their greatest needs?
7. Is there an adequate social support network available?

Grandparents Discuss Grandparenting Experiences

Level of Involvement

To address the first major theme, grandparents were asked what they thought the ideal grandparent- grandchild relationship was and what they envisioned their relationship with their grandchild would be like five years from now.

In discussing the grandparents perception of the ideal grandparent-grandchild relationship, eight of the ten talked about spending time in leisure activities with their grandchild. The word "fun" was mentioned by each of these eight grandparents.

Insert Table 2 about here

One of the grandmothers felt that she did have the ideal grandparent-grandchild relationship with two grandchildren that do not live with her. Filling the role of the indulgent grandparent, she stated, " I have the ideal relationship with two other grandchildren. They come to see me, I dote on them, and buy them things."

The remaining respondent, a grandfather, saw the ideal relationship with his grandchild being one of a voluntary nature with frequent visits. Envisioning the ideal relationship with his grandchild he articulated, " He would come to visit, talk about problems, I would give him love and support."

None of the grandparents felt their current situation of being primary caregivers to their grandchildren was ideal. Using Cherlin and Furstenberg's (1985) classifications of styles of grandparenting, 90% desired the role of "passive" grandparenting. "Passive" grandparenting which is defined as frequent contact on a superficial level is the stereotypical role for American grandparents. The remaining grandparent's visualization of the ideal situation fit Cherlin and Furstenberg's category of "supportive" grandparenting. This type is very involved with the

grandchild, providing many services and having frequent contact.

Also dealing with the first research question, respondents were asked how they viewed their relationship with their grandchildren five years from now. Half of the grandparents responded that they are hopeful that their adult children will have gotten their lives in order enough to resume parenting duties. Several of the grandparents expressed similar desires for the future:

*I hope my daughter can make positive changes in her life, take the kids back and I can be a grandma again.

*Ideally one of the parents will mature enough to take over the parenting responsibilities so I can be a part-time grandmother again.

The remaining half of the grandparents saw no significant changes in caretaking arrangements in the next five years. Most of the grandparents in this segment seemed to have come to the realization that their adult children could probably never be expected to successfully resume parenting duties. Exemplifying the half-hearted resignation many grandparents express about the future one grandfather expressed his thoughts concerning the future. "We'll still be raising Alex, our son will still be out there doing his own thing, it's a vicious circle. I just pray he (the adult child) will settle down."

The grandparents in this group had been parenting their

grandchildren an average of 3.14 years as opposed to the group that foresaw a change in their status having been in their current role a minimum of six months, a mean of 1.41 years. This difference may be attributed to the length of time necessary for the grandparent to grieve the loss of their role as grandparent and begin to accept the role of parent to their grandchildren.

Role Fulfillment

The second research question dealt with the issue of role fulfillment. In an effort to better understand the question of roles, participants were asked two questions. The first question considers the reasons the grandparents have taken over the parental role. In response to this question all of the grandparents (100%) expressed their concerns about their grandchildren's well being and felt it was their duty to protect them.

In conjunction with this question of roles the grandparents were asked about the difficult aspects of the situation. Many of the grandparents discussed the role in which their grandchildren appeared to view them and how they dealt with attempting to clarify often confusing and shifting roles. The seemingly simple fact of what the grandchildren call the grandparent raises many concerns and uncertainties for the grandparents.

For example, a grandmother of a two year old says that

although she always tells him that she is his grandma, he still calls her "Mama". When his Mother visits he also calls her "Mama". The grandmother worries about the grandchild's confusion at having two "Mamas". A grandmother of a four year old reports that he recently asked if he could call her Mama but she said " No, I'm your Nana." Now she questions whether that was the right thing to say. One grandmother feels very strongly about the grandchildren not calling her " Mom". She has told her grandchildren: "You call me grandma, I am your grandma. No matter what terrible things your mother did to you she is still your Mom." Despite her insistence the grandchildren still frequently call her "Mom". A grandmother raising two grandsons reports incongruity even among the two grandchildren. The three year old calls her " grandma" but the younger child, whom she has cared for since infancy calls her "Mama."

The sadness at the loss of being a grandparent was also addressed at this time. Sixty percent of the grandparents expressed a sense of sorrow at the deprivation of experiencing the expected role of grandparent. One grandmother quite eloquently summed up the feelings:

*You cannot be a grandparent and a parent too. You grieve because it hasn't turned out like you thought. You expected to rear children and then sit back and be a grandparent. Now I can't be a grandparent. I have to be a parent.... again.

A grandfather concurs adding:

*You can't be parents and grandparents both. You have to pick one role and stick with it. If you're going

to do a good job raising these kids, unfortunately, it must be the grandparent role that goes.

Insert Table 3 about here

Factors Affecting Satisfaction

In this study the author also attempted to determine variables that grandparents report to positively or negatively impact their satisfaction with the situation. To ascertain these factors the grandparents were asked two questions. What are the most difficult aspects of your situation? What are the most positive aspects of this situation? Respondents were allowed to report as many factors as they desired.

In considering the most difficult elements, financial burden and dealing with the adult child were the most frequently reported with six out of the ten citing them as troublesome. Discussing the strain of finances one grandfather asserted, " We should be financially comfortable by now but we're giving it away, we work too hard."

The stress of dealing with the adult child was an ordeal for 60% of the grandparents. Some of the comments

made about coping with the adult children:

*Taking care of the baby is easy, it's dealing with my daughter that's tough!

*I have a great deal of difficulty getting along with my son. We have very different ideas about child rearing.

*I don't like Steve (his son). Sometimes I want to kill him for what he's done to all of us.

Other factors that caused stress for the grandparents were the fatigue resulting from the physical act of taking care of young children (40%), lack of time to pursue own interest was mentioned by 30% of the respondents and deleterious effects on their own health was a concern for 20% of the grandparents. The need to sacrifice their own lives was referred to by 50% of the respondents. Some comments made pertaining to sacrifice:

*I gave up everything, my business, my social life. I had to give up the life I had. It was hard but it was the only way to survive. There is very little of my old life left, I miss it.

In discussing the positive aspects, 70% of the respondents conveyed that love for the grandchild was the best aspect of the situation. A grandmother of a two year old summed up the feelings of love quite eloquently when she said, "There's nothing better than warm baby snuggles to get your day off to a good start."

Insert Table 4 about here

Despite the negatives grandparents enjoyed the opportunity to know their grandchildren on such a close level.

Forty percent felt that the chance to raise their children in a safe, loving environment was extremely important. Transmitting good values and helping the grandchild to grow to be a productive person was viewed by these respondents as a positive consideration. A grandfather illustrates this feeling by commenting, "The satisfaction, knowing we're doing the right thing, molding him, giving him good guidance."

Three of the respondents felt that one of the positive facets was the ability to use experience to facilitate their parenting skills. They felt more knowledgeable about children and more confident of their abilities at this point in their lives. A grandmother said, "I'm happier with myself now than I was when my own child was young." A grandfather who felt he was getting a second chance at parenting reported the most positive aspect of raising his grandchild is "...being a parent again with all the wisdom and knowledge I've accumulated over the years."

Legal Issues

The fourth research question dealt with the issue of legalities involved with raising their grandchildren. Grandparents were asked if they had encountered any legal problems associated with their situation. Fifty percent of the grandparents have legal custody of their grandchildren, 20% have legal guardianship and 30% have no legal standing. Of those that have legal custody two are in the process of attempting to adopt the grandchild.

Those without any legal standing are in the most tenuous of circumstances. They must get permission from the parents to seek medical care or even enroll the child in school. At the mercy of the custodial parents they are often victims of blackmail, the adult child threatening to remove the child from their home. All of the respondents in this category conveyed a feeling of being "in limbo". One grandparent expressed ambivalent feelings about his legal standing, "Sometimes I think we should either make our son (who has legal custody) take responsibility for him or that we should try to adopt him."

Those respondents with legal custody report few legal problems. The exception was a grandparent that received custody in another state. When her daughter-in-law kidnapped the children she discovered the custody arrangement had not transferred between states. She reports that there was a great deal of time and money involved in

clarifying her legal standing.

Two of the respondents (a married couple) who have legal custody of their grandchild are currently in the process of attempting to adopt. They have had legal custody since the grandchild was six weeks old, a period of two and a half years. Their daughter, who has had very little contact with the grandchild, is now seeking to terminate all of the grandparents legal rights to the child and reinstate herself as the legal parent.

The Adult Child

The fifth research question was designed to ascertain the nature of the relationship between the grandparent and their adult child. Respondents were asked to describe their relationship with their adult child.

Only one respondent felt that her relationship with her adult child was good. She felt the situation was out of her son's control because he was in the service and out of the country. Her motivation for taking care of the grandchildren was to help her son. Concerning the mother of the grandchildren, the grandmother acknowledged that her daughter-in-law was not truthful or dependable and had very possibly abused the grandchildren. Despite this, she remains sympathetic with her ex daughter-in-law and continues to try to help her.

The remaining 90% of the respondents described their

relationships with their adult children in negative terms, ambivalent at best. Many complex emotions surface when discussing the adult child; anger, resentment, guilt, love, disappointment are some of the more prevalent feelings. Four (40%) of the grandparents alluded to a feeling of disappointment associated with their adult child. A grandmother who is raising three young grandchildren describes her relationship with her daughter, "Our relationship is strained at best. I really don't like the person she has become, we have little in common. There are many disappointments to deal with."

Guilt was a strong emotion verbalized by two of the grandparents. A grandmother stated, "It's hard for me to accept that I raised a child that is incapable of being a good parent."

Another grandparent felt he was partly responsible for the situation because when the adult child was growing up he had been selfish and immature, never developing a close bond with the child.

Two of the respondents referred to a rather tenuous relationship, it's status based on their ability or willingness to please the adult child. A grandmother caring for her infant grandson expressed her fears, "I love her. I know I'm too soft on her but I don't know where to draw the line. I don't want to get her upset, she might take the baby."

A grandmother who is raising her son's child described her relationship with her son, "My son resents any advice or interference. We get along if I watch what I say."

Two of the grandparents remarked that they felt resentful of their adult child. A respondent discussed that she felt many complex emotions related to her son including pain, anger, and sadness. She said that she constantly fights off feelings of resentment towards him. Another participant said that although he thought he still loved his son, he did not like him and resented him for what he had done to the family.

Grandparent's Perceived Needs

The sixth research question was devised to determine what the greatest needs of the grandparents raising their grandchildren are. Although there were two questions aimed at eliciting this information, it was actually obtained through varying parts of the interview processes.

Many of the respondents (60%) felt that the need for financial assistance was important. A grandfather said that the reason they had not tried to adopt their grandchild was that they would lose essential financial assistance from the state if they did.

Four of the grandparents talked about the vital necessity for outside support. Informal support networks, such as friends, families, and co-workers were seen as

essential as well as organized forms of support such as the "GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN" support group.

Four of the participants communicated the need for time away from the grandchildren. The physical exhaustion associated with raising young children led to the desire for an occasional respite from responsibility. Also mentioned as a reason for needing time away was to spend time with the spouse uninterrupted.

The need for legal information and counsel was mentioned by three respondents. Time, money and vague laws concerning the rights of grandparents were given as the reasons for citing legal information as a concern.

Insert Table 5 here

Support Network

The final question asked was concerning the social support network available to the grandparents. To acquire this data respondents were asked about how friends, families and co-workers have reacted to their situation.

Ninety percent of the respondents said that they had at least one family member that had been extremely supportive. Family members that were actively involved included other adult children, sisters, ex-in-laws, and parents. One of the respondents stated that her mother was very understanding of

what she is doing because she raised a grandchild herself for a period of five years.

Only three people mentioned friends as a positive source of support. Of those three, two were the youngest respondents in the study, aged 39 and 42, reporting that most of their friends still had young children so their social activities naturally included children. The subject of friends brought no response from four people. Two of the remaining three respondents stated that they no longer had time for friends. One respondent felt her friends had been a source of stress rather than support. She remarked, "Our friends complain that we can't go out anymore. They don't understand why we're doing what we're doing. None of them offer to help, to give us a break."

In answer to the researcher's question about the formal support system, it became known during the pilot study phase of the research that no support group for grandparents raising grandchildren existed in the Tulsa area. Feeling there was a definite need for such a group the researcher organized an ongoing monthly support group which began in July of 1992.

Discussion

Role Issues

The results of this study validated the researcher's expectations that there would be a large gap between the

role that the respondents viewed as ideal and the role that they are immersed in as grandparents. In accordance with previous research (Barranti,1985; Cherlin & Furstenberg,1985; Jones,1973), the majority of the respondents envisioned a fun or indulgent relationship with their grandchild. Using Cherlin and Furstenberg's scale of grandparenting styles, their desired role fits the category of passive grandparenting. The actual role that they are fulfilling fits the classification of influential grandparenting. This signifies a major gap between desired role and actual role of grandparenting.

Respondents that had been taking care of their grandchildren for a relatively short period of time (ie, a year and a half or less) expressed the hope that they would eventually return to their desired level of involvement. Those that had been involved in parenting their grandchildren for a longer period of time (3 years or more) communicated that they had accepted the fact that they would be permanent caregivers to their grandchildren.

This difference relates to the issues of role transition (Cottrell,1942). To make the transition from grandparenting to parenting the individual must deal with the issue of role loss, grieving for the deprivation of the expected role. Making the transition difficult is the lack of anticipatory socialization. Raising grandchildren is not

a role for which there is any preparation for nor are there any societal norms to follow.

As the grandparents remain in the role of parents to their grandchildren for an extended period of time the role of parenting their grandchildren becomes more comfortable and acceptable to them.

Financial Strain

Although 90% of the respondents could be classified as middle class, a high percentage (60%) reported that the financial burden was a negative factor. There exists a substantial amount of confusion, even among the Department of Human Services, about what financial help grandparents are eligible for to assist in raising their grandchildren. One of the grandmothers openly vented her frustrations with "the system". After many frustrating encounters with the Department of Human Services she finally gave up. She stated: "They are supposed to be helping people who are trying to help themselves, but they're not."

Compounding the financial strain is the added expense of counseling and therapy that many of the grandchildren are involved in. Recovering from the trauma inflicted by abusive or neglectful parents can be a long and difficult process that requires professional intervention.

The Adult Child

Grandparent's reactions to their adult children brought strong responses. Disappointment and guilt were common threads running through talk of adult children. "Where did we go wrong?" "How could I have raised a child that turned out so bad?" "I'm so disappointed with the person my child has become." These were typical comments made about the adult children. Grandparents that had other adult children seemed to take comfort in the success of their other children, often citing their accomplishments. This could be viewed as a mechanism to validate their feelings of self worth as parents.

Despite the negative feelings towards their adult children ambivalent feelings were also voiced. Although several of the respondents profess that they do not like the person their adult child is, they continue their parental feelings of love. In association with the topic of love, the concept of "tough love" was frequently mentioned. Clear boundaries must be drawn to protect the grandchildren and to ensure that the grandparents are not taken advantage of.

Social Support Network

Family is a strong sense of emotional and physical support for most (90%) of the respondents. Grandparents talked about how essential a support network is in maintaining sanity. Five of the eight female respondents

are single which makes a outside support even more vital. Listed as sources of support within the family were other adult children, siblings, in-laws, and parents.

Friends were seen as a support for only three respondents. Because the median age of respondents was 51.4 it is assumed that most of their peers have children that are no longer in the home. Adapting activities to include young children is not desirable to the friends. As one grandmother reported, by the time arrangements are made for someone to watch the child they are too exhausted to go out. Several other respondents said they did not ever leave their grandchildren with babysitters due to a fear of kidnapping by the adult child.

The formation of "GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN" has helped to bring people in similar situations together. Although no formal evaluation has been done the loyalty to the group is evidenced by the consistent attendance, active participation and positive comments. The group has grown to over thirty in just nine months. From the beginning participants have been willing to help by taking turns bringing refreshments, passing out fliers and helping make decisions about future speakers. The group has recently elected officers for the first time, delegating most duties to the participants. The group is now self sufficient, only occasionally relying on the researcher for assistance. It is a frequently heard comment at the monthly support group

meetings that the group is their only social activity. Quality child care offered at the site of the meetings makes it possible for the grandparents to attend. The researcher is often thanked for organizing the group.

Recommendations For Future Research

Because the situation of grandparents raising grandchildren is in a state of rapid growth and changing demographics there is a need for further research. There are few published studies dealing with the issue, particularly using non- ethnic minority samples. There exists an abundance of issues dealing with grandparents that are raising their grandchildren that need to be examined. Some recommendations for future research:

1. To measure the effectiveness of a support group on overall satisfaction with their situation, pre-test participants at the time they attend the first meeting. Six months later administer the post-test. Look for significant differences in areas of perceived social support, knowledge of community resources and confidence in parenting skills.
2. To measure the effect of time on role transition compare those who have been parenting their grandchildren three to five years with those that have been parenting their grandchildren six months to three

- years. Develop and administer test concerning issues of role transition and role clarity.
3. To compare various ethnic groups in relation to their role expectations of grandparenting, determine how those expectations effect satisfaction with their current role of parenting their grandchildren.
 4. To develop educational programs for grandparents, a study focusing on adults that were raised by their grandparents would be very beneficial.
 5. To understand the complex emotions of the grandchildren, there is a need for research to be done on the children that are being raised by their grandparents.

Implications of the Study

The formation of the support group was an important start for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. However, there are still many needs that are not being met. This study points to the need for an increase in awareness among professionals about the unique problems that grandparents encounter when raising their grandchildren. The scope and complexities involved are unfamiliar to most, yet touch professionals in many areas including the school systems, health care , the legal system, and all types of social service agencies. Awareness and education about the needs and rights of the grandparents raising their

grandchildren is imperative for professionals in these fields.

Education for the grandparents themselves is also essential. Grandparent support groups are a needed educational resource for grandparents raising their grandchildren assisting them in coping with the bureaucracies and providing emotional support of others in similar situations.

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Table I

Demographic Characteristics of Grandparents Raising
Grandchildren

| Characteristics of Grandparents | Mean | Min. | Max. | N=10 |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| F=8 m=2 | | | | |
| Age | 51.4 | 39 | 58 | |
| Caucasian | 10 | | | |
| Maternal Grandparents | 5 | | | |
| Paternal Grandparents | 5 | | | |
| Married | 5 | | | |
| Single | 5 | | | |
| Ages of residential grandchildren | 4.16 | 1 | 16 | |

Table 2

Question asked: What do you think the ideal grandparent-grandchild relationship is?

Results: Eighty percent discussed the ideal of a relationship of a voluntary nature based on shared leisure activities and pleasure. Some of the responses are as follows:

39 yr. old grandmother- "Take vacations together, garden together, play, send them home- to a home where you don't have to worry about them."

45 yr. old grandmother- "Live in the same town, take on outings, send them home to a safe, happy environment."

56 yr. old grandmother- " I would spend time doing fun things, going to the park, keeping them on the weekends."

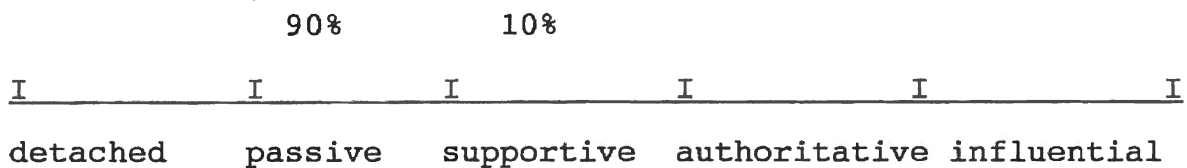
58 yr. old grandfather- "The ideal relationship would be to do fun things together, spend the day together, then say goodbye."

56 yr. old grandmother- " I don't know what the ideal grandmother relationship is. I only got to be one for two years. I suppose spend time with them, play and read."

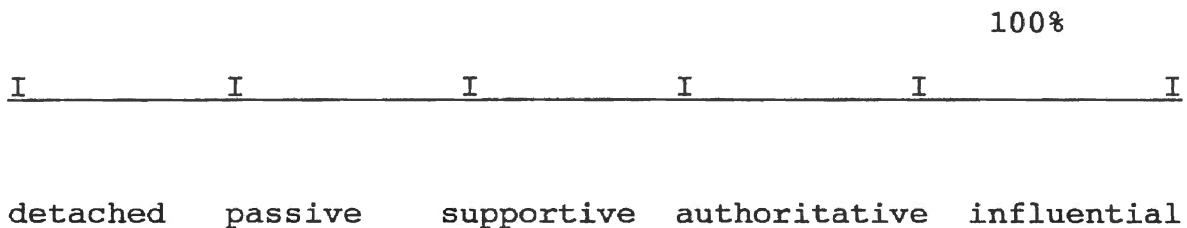
Table 3

Cherlin and Furstenberg's Styles of grandparenting (1985)A continuum of involvement

Grandparents responses for desired role of grandparenting:



Actual roles they are involved in:



Gap between desired and actual role:

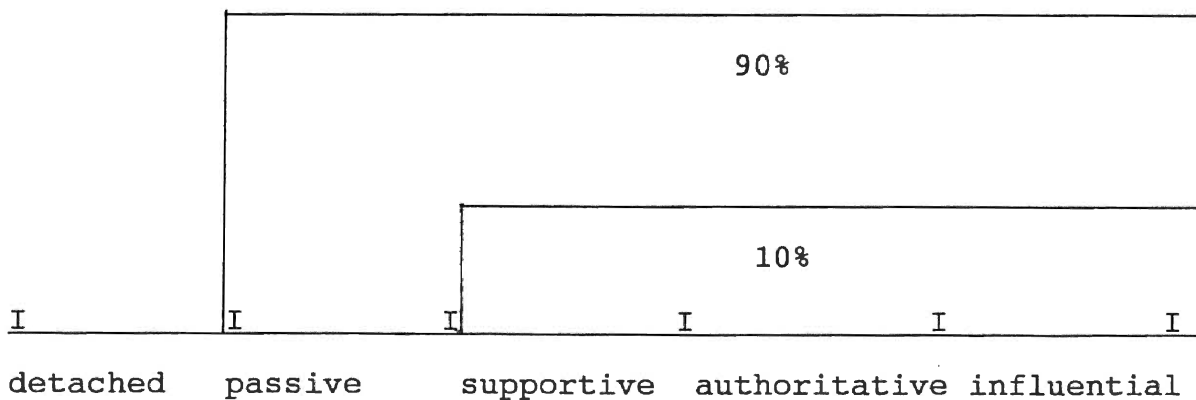


Table 4

Negative Factors as Perceived by Grandparents

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Finances | 60% |
| Dealing with adult child | 60% |
| sacrifice of personal life | 50% |
| Physical fatigue | 40% |
| Lack of free time | 30% |
| Personal health | 20% |

* Respondents were allowed to give as many answers as applicable.

Table 5

Needs as Reported by Grandparents

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Financial assistance | 60% |
| Support network | 40% |
| Time away from grandchildren | 40% |
| Legal information and aid | 30% |

*Respondents were allowed to give as many answers as applicable.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

PILOT STUDY INSTRUMENT

GRANDPARENTS AS CAREGIVERS OF GRANDCHILDREN
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. How many grandchildren are living with you?
2. What are their ages?
3. Are the grandchildren your daughter's children or your son's children?
4. Are there others living in the house with you and the children?
5. How long has the child care situation been as it is now?
6. How did the situation come about?
7. Are either or both parents involved with the child?
8. Are other family members or the child's other grandparents involved in the care of the child?
9. Are you working outside the home?
10. (If no. 9 is yes) How do you manage day care?

CONTENT QUESTIONS

- A. What hobbies or interests do you have?

- B. How much time do you have to pursue your own interests?

- C. Do you have time away from your grandchild on a regular basis?
- D. What is the most rewarding part of what you are doing?
- E. What challenges you most about the current situation?
- F. Has this put a financial strain on your resources?
- G. What form of discipline do you use?
- H. How are these methods of discipline different from the ones used in raising your own children?
- I. Do you feel you are teaching your grandchildren what's really important?
- J. Do you consider yourself a grandparent, a parent or something in between?
- K. What would the ideal grandparent/grandchild relationship be like?

L. How would your life be different if you were not raising your grandchildren?

M. Do you foresee changes in the situation in the next five years?

N. When the interview is about to end, ask whether the interviewee would object to stating his/her age. Then ask health status of grandparents.

O. Ask whether it would be helpful to meet with other grandparents in similar situations. Give information about support groups if interested.

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Consent Form

I, _____, voluntarily consent to participate in a research project titled " Grandparents Raising Grandchildren" investigating the complexities of grandparents who are involved as primary parents for their grandchildren. I understand that the purpose of this study is to learn more about the issues that grandparents raising grandchildren deal with.

I understand that I will be asked a series of open - ended questions by the researcher that will take approximately one hour. I understand that I may answer the questions as completely as I feel comfortable, or not at all. I understand that my privacy will be protected and that all information I give will be confidential. My name will not appear on any document other than this consent form.

I understand that I may withdraw from this study without any consequences to myself.

I may contact Diane Morrow-Kondos, the project investigator, at (918) 481-6594, or Dr. Joseph Weber, faculty advisor, at (405) 744-5061, should I wish further information about the research. I may also contact University Research Services, 001 Life Sciences East, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK. 74078, (405) 744-5700, concerning my legal rights as a research subject.

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

8.What are the most positive aspects ?

9.How do you envision your life, your adult child's life and your grandchildren's life five years from now?

10.If you could give advice to other grandparents that are raising their grandchildren what would it be?

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL FORM

~~OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY~~
~~INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD~~
 FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Proposal Title: GRANDPARENTS RAISING CHILDREN

Principal Investigator: Joseph A. Weber/ Diane Marrow-Kondos

Date: August 26, 1992 IRB # HE-93-006

 This application has been reviewed by the IRB and

Processed as: Exempt Expedite Full Board Review

Renewal or Continuation

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):

Approved Deferred for Revision

Approved with Provision Disapproved

Approval status subject to review by full Institutional Review Board at next meeting, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

 Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reason for Deferral or Disapproval:

COMMENTS:

Question #25 needs an "s" on aspect(s).

Consent Form: The last sentence of the second paragraph should read, "My name will not appear on any document other than this consent form."

The name Terry Maciula should be removed, just leaving University Research Services.

Signature: *Maria S. Tilley* Date: 8-26-92
 Chair of Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX E

SUPPORT GROUP INFORMATION

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN- A chronological history of the formation of the ongoing support group for those grandparents who have assumed the task of raising their grandchildren.

MARCH 1992- Attended a one night class for grandparents raising grandchildren at St. John's Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma. About ten grandparents were in attendance and all expressed a strong desire for an ongoing support group. Researcher volunteered to organize the group.

May- Began the search for a location to hold monthly meetings. Many places offered the use of a room but would not allow child care on the premises. Knowing this was an essential prerequisite, the search continued. Finally a church, Christ United Methodist, offered a meeting room plus the use of already existing child care arrangements on the premises.

JUNE- Contacted grandparents from March meeting to let them know about the first meeting to be held July 1st. Decided on agenda for first meeting. Sent press releases about the group to newspapers and professional organizations dealing with the elderly and also organizations offering parenting education.

A local specialty newspaper for older adults-"Vintage Tulsan" interviewed researcher and some grandparents concerning the new group.

JULY- First meeting held with six grandparents attending. The main purpose of this meeting was to determine the needs of the grandparents and what they hoped to gain from the group. Information, education and moral support were the most frequent responses. A speaker was decided on for the August meeting. A grandmother offered to assist with refreshments for the next meeting and another volunteered to help put together a flier advertising group.

"Vintage Tulsan" ran the story about the grandparents they interviewed on their front page plus a smaller article inside the newspaper.

Contacted speaker for August meeting- Child Developmental Specialist, Barbara Wright enthusiastically accepted.

Sent reminder notices to grandparents about August meeting.

AUGUST- Ten grandparents attended and were very eager to receive parenting information from Ms. Wright. Grandparents requested speaker from "Tough Love" for next meeting.

Finished fliers and distributed to various locations around town.

SEPTEMBER- Representative from "Tough Love" was the guest. Very lively meeting, most felt they were very much in need of the tough love philosophy when dealing with their adult children.

OCTOBER- Speaker was a Child Psychologist from Children's Medical Center that has worked with children living with their grandparents. Average about 15 members at meetings.

NOVEMBER- One of the more popular meetings, attorneys specializing in family issues spoke about grandparent's legal rights. Had elections for officers- Coordinator, Secretary, and Public Relations.

DECEMBER- Meeting was open discussion, no speaker.

Christmas Party at researcher's house mid-December.

National Public Radio show - 30 minute interview with one of the grandfathers about grandparents raising grandchildren and the support group.

JANUARY- Child Psychologist was speaker, about eighteen grandparents in attendance. New officers now in charge, researcher taking a less visible role in group. Reporter from the Tulsa World came to meeting, interviewed researcher and several grandparents.

Article in Tulsa World, excellent article, lots of response.

FEBRUARY- Five new grandparents attended meeting as a result of newspaper article. Meeting was informal, no speaker, open discussion.

Researcher spoke at Legislative Day Conference in Oklahoma City.

MARCH- Family counselor spoke about communication skills and relationships. More new members, active list is now 30 grandparents.

Researcher and three grandparents spoke at Cooperative Extension Service Conference at Shangri- La.

APRIL- Article in "Tulsa Kids", Grandparents or Parents?

...Couple

Continued from F 1

"It was hard at first, especially since I couldn't lift. Ed has his own business, but he couldn't be home all of the time to help with the baby — and because he can't see ... Michael can never be left alone.

"I had my pity parties and I told Ed, 'If I start crying, just let me cry. I have to do it.' I cried a lot ... and it helped."

...Guardian

Continued from F 1

"By then she had had another baby and asked me to take it too," Virginia said. She didn't.

"It was a tough period to get through," she said. "The week I got the children back my mother died of cancer."

She said the mother's problems were related to drug and alcohol abuse.

Although the children started calling Virginia "Mom," she told them, "You call me Grandma. I am Grandma. I am not your mom. But they call her Mom and me Mom, too."

Virginia practices "tough love," she said. "The children say they are afraid if they don't get right they'll have to go back. I say, 'Do you want to go back like you were?' They say 'No.'"

She said she had often been frustrated in wrangles with Oklahoma's Department of Human Services when she has been denied help, and at times has had feelings of self-pity and helplessness.

"I finally just gave up on DHS," she said. "They are supposed to be helping people who are trying to help themselves, but they're not. They say it's 'the system.'"

Some of the children receive some financial support from Social Security.

Virginia works 30 to 33 hours a week as a waitress. She works a late morning shift so she can take the children to therapy or to the doctor or have conferences with their teachers. One of Virginia's daughter's baby-sits while she's at work.

"My faith has helped hold me up, and my church God is with me spiritually," said Virginia.

Diane Morrow-Kondus describes Virginia as "A good, Christian woman who has given the kids stability and love."

"I was in despair during that period," said Ed. "I wonder how Gloria did it."

Since then, a mammogram has revealed Gloria has a suspicious looking mass in one of her breasts, but she says she's not worrying about it now.

"Doctors say that if I'm still cancer free in May, chances are I will be physically OK. I don't have time to be sick, anyway."

She says her positive mental outlook and sense of humor have helped her deal with both Michael's problems and her own. There is resentment, though, that at this time in their lives, she and Ed are unable to spend the kind of time together they had expected. They recently observed their 29th wedding anniversary.

"I feel robbed of time," said Ed, "and at 54 I feel as though I'm aging very rapidly. Our son takes no responsibility for the child."

My wife and I have no time for ourselves. How to be together as adults.

Michael is now a full-time student at the Little Light House, and his behavior has improved tremendously, Gloria says.

She makes a 40 mile daily round trip to take him there and pick him up, she said.

"We've tried to get sitters, but they don't know how to handle a blind child. They look at him like he has leprosy or something, and don't want to touch him."

"I've always been a high-energy person, but since I have to take Michael with me on many errands, such as to the grocery store, I can only do two things in the amount of time in which I did 10 things."

If Ed and Gloria get away for the weekend, their son comes over to look after Michael.

"He's 28 and he hasn't got himself together yet. He's a musician, but at least he's straight and has no drug or alcohol problems," she said.

Except for church and the grandparents' group, Gloria and Ed have no other social outlets, she said.

"Before we started going to the support group, we thought we were the only ones like this. But after listening to other people's stories we realize we have so much to be thankful for."

"We can laugh now, at ourselves and with the others. But we cry, too."

...Custody

Continued from F 1

to health and near the weight he should have been for his age.

"I couldn't believe it," said Julie. "For four days he couldn't stop eating."

During the period Willie was under her care, she kept a detailed, daily journal concerning his health, his weight, the times he was sick, trips to the doctor, what and how much he ate.

"I noticed that every time he went to visit his mother, he came back sick," she said.

There was no doubt about what to do, she said. The baby's life was at stake.

When her son sought custody, Julie was ready to present the court with 85 pages of typed, single spaced notes of the baby's condition. Her son was awarded custody, on condition that he and Willie live with her. The baby and Julie came to stay in the summer of 1992.

Willie's mother has visiting rights.

"Willie has bounced back, and is a normal, happy energetic boy today," said Julie.

But Julie, 53, didn't have just the baby to worry about. Divorced 13 years, she has been a single parent ever since. Her son is a recovering alcoholic who has been sober for five years, but he has been chronically depressed for several years. Julie goes to Alcoholics Anonymous.

"I know I cannot change my son's behavior," she said. "But I

have learned to deal with my own feelings. I tried to remember to breathe."

Julie works full time during the day and her son, who works at night, takes care of the baby while she's not at home. "He and Willie are very close," she said. "Both of them need that closeness."

She said that she and her son have good communication, probably better than average for mother and son.

"We talked it over and decided that we would be friends. But we loved each other, and that we would not be enemies."

But Julie is not responsible for him.

"What I'm doing is worth it, but I am not committed to my son. I am doing it for the baby, for my grandson. And I think that I'm a good grandmother."

Julie said her hands are full, and she has no time or energy to spare for other activities. And she has to guard her few resources, my time, my energy and my money.

I need all these resources

every day and I have to take it a day at a time. The grandparents group helps, she said, as does her abiding faith in God.

She said that even though bringing up a baby is a lot of trouble, "there will never be anything I do that is more important. I'm determined that this child would not be 'thrown away.' I am Willie's advocate, but there are so many other babies that need someone to take an active stand in their behalf. There are no disposable children."

"Willie is lucky to have me and I'm lucky to have him. In the morning when he's barely awake and so am I, I hold him in my lap as I sit in the chair with the paper. It's an awfully good way to start a day."

"You just can't beat a arm baby snuggles."

. . . Grandparents

Continued from F-1

had trouble dealing with the child's parent.

Some individual comments included:

■ "Here I raised a child that can't raise a child . . . So where did I screw up?"

■ "I'm bitter (about the children's parent or parents) but I don't hate them."

■ "I had to be both mother and father to my child. Now I'm mother, father and grandparent. It's almost too much."

■ "We don't know where to turn to or how to proceed," one of the grandfathers said. "I've taken the responsibility (for my grandson) but I don't want it. I just lie there at night and think, 'God, what am I to do?' I need to change my heart."

"In spite of everything, these grandparents love their children, or they wouldn't be able to do what they are doing. It's emotionally wearing," said Morrow-

Kondos.

Support group member Bode is 45, single and works full time as a data technical specialist.

She had lived alone for eight years, until she became the legal guardian of her daughter's children. The children are Christina, 8; Dustin, 7; and Johnathon, 5.

"I liked living alone," she said. "At first when I got the children I felt completely overwhelmed. I was desperate, just desperate. Becoming their parent was a tremendous responsibility."

She said she felt cheated out of being a grandparent.

She has a strong family support system, she said. "I can't imagine how it would be without their help."

The youngest group members at the support meeting were Mary, 39, and Charles, 42 (who requested that their real names not be used.)

They have been legal guardians of their 2½-year-old grandson since he was 8 weeks old.

Married at age 18, the couple's daughter and her husband went to California, where they planned to live a carefree life on the beaches. Instead, their daughter quickly became pregnant and the couple became destitute.

Eventually Mary and Charles were given custody of their grandson.

Mary stays home to be full-time mother to the child.

"No way would we give him up," she said.

Other group members include: Julie (not her real name), a single grandmother

rearing a 2-year-old with a 21-year-old son at home; Karen, caring for her daughter's 13-month old baby and whose 21-year-old son lives at home; Gloria and Ed, who are rearing their 4½-year-old blind grand-



Kondos

son; Jo, a single grandmother who has had legal guardianship of a teen-age grandchild for about five years.

Grandparents or Parents?

by Joan W. Hour

Spring 1993 is special for my family. In late January we welcomed a new member to our family, a granddaughter, Abigail Joy.

I had the wonderful privilege of holding this beautiful child when she was just a couple of weeks old. As she looked into my face with her deep blue eyes, I again realized how fortunate I am to be at this stage of my life.

Abby joins her big brother, Sammy, and their parents, Karen and David Buttle, in a family that is separated by great distance, but always close in thought.

When I returned home and shared memories of my trip to England with my mother (Abby's and Sammy's great-grandmother), Mother asked, "Were you tired?" Yes!" I responded. I was amazed at the energy required to keep up with a toddler and a newborn.

While I am one of the truly blessed grandmothers, many are not so fortunate. Grandparents raising grandchildren, for whatever reason, is an all too increasing situation.

Recently I talked with Diane Morrow-Kondos who, last year, organized a support group for grandparents raising grandchildren.

Diane explains some of the issues involved in this growing family relationship.

"Love them, feed them, spoil them, then send them home to their

parents." That is how most Americans envision the ideal grandparent-grandchild relationship.

Grandparenthood is viewed as a time to enjoy children without the tensions and responsibilities associated with child-rearing.

Although a majority of grandparents may desire an indulgent, fun relationship, an increasing number are being asked to forego that role and assume the task of full-time parenting of their grandchildren.

An estimated 4 percent of all white children and 12 percent of all black children in the United States are living with their grandparents.

Adult children are unable to care for their own children for a variety of reasons. Substance abuse, incarceration, physical or mental illness, teenage pregnancy and financial problems are some of the more common situations. Physical or sexual abuse of the grandchildren can also lead to the placement of the child in the grandparents' home.

Grandparents in this situation face a myriad of complexities — legal, emotional and physical. Without legal



custody, grandparents have very few legal rights concerning their grandchildren.

Even if they have been raising the child for many years they can be denied the right to seek medical care for the child, enroll them in public school or include them on

insurance policies.

Obtaining legal custody can be very difficult, costly and emotionally devastating, but without it the grandparents and grandchildren remain in a tentative position and at the mercy of the natural parents' whims.

Becoming parents to their grandchildren usually carries a high emotional price tag. The circumstances surrounding the placement are almost always less than ideal. It is common for the grandparent to deal with many powerful emotions concerning their adult child: anger, guilt, worry, resentment and disappointment.

Compounding the problem, grandparents are often actively involved in attempting to assist their adult child deal with their problems. Because of what the grandchildren have been through, they often have

confused and negative feelings the grandparents must consider.

Many grandparents who are raising their grandchildren are relatively young and in good health. But for those grandparents who are in poor health, the stress of parenting young children again can be especially difficult.

In addition to the physical toll is the constant concern over what will happen to the grandchildren if the grandparents die or health problems escalate to the point they can no longer care for the grandchild.

For grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, isolation is often an issue. To help alleviate that problem, Tulsa now has a support group, "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren," whose purpose is to provide socialization, education and moral support.

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Christ United Methodist Church. Child care is available for \$1 per child.

For information please contact Diane Morrow-Kondos at 481-6594 or Val Bode at 749-0063. Please consider this a special invitation to contact Diane or Val if you are interested in the grandparent support group.

Joan W. Hour is a parent, grandparent and regular contributor to Tulsa Kids.

Second family

Love them, feed them, spoil them, then send them home to their parents. That is how many of America's sixty million grandparents picture spending time with their grandchildren. In our culture grandparenthood is often portrayed as a time to enjoy children without the tensions and responsibilities associated with child-rearing.

A majority of grandparents envision an indulgent, fun relationship with their grandchildren. However, an increasing number of grandparents are being asked to forego that role and assume the task of full time parenting of their grandchildren. It is estimated that 4% of all white children and 12% of all black children in the United States are living with their grandparents. Although the prevalence of this situation is increasing, the magnitude and complexity involved continue to be unrecognized and unappreciated by the general public.

While working on my Master's thesis on the subject of grandparents raising grandchildren it became increasingly apparent that many of the grandparents involved felt isolated, having

little or no contact with others in this situation. While attending a one night class for grandparents raising grandchildren, I met people and heard stories that made me understand how vitally important a support group could be. The camaraderie shared in just a two hour meeting left everyone anxious for more; the surface had barely been scratched. It was then I realized that forming a support group was not just a nice idea; a support group was a necessity and the time was now.

The need for a support group was obvious and from this need came the formation of GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN. Participating in this group will provide an opportunity to become acquainted with others in similar circumstances. It will be a forum where worries, concerns and helpful information can be shared by members. Various professionals from the community, child development specialists, physicians, psychologists, attorneys, will occasionally be called on to share their knowledge in areas that are of specific concern to grandparents involved in parenting their

grandchildren.

GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN will hold their first monthly meeting Wednesday, July 1st, 7:00 p.m. at Christ United Methodist Church 3515 S. Harvard. Child care will be available at a cost of one dollar per child to cover child care worker's wages. Subsequent meetings will be held the first Wednesday of each month, same time and place. Any interested persons are encouraged to attend. For further information call 481-6594.

Diane Morrow Kondos

Support in sight for grandparents

"They call me 'Mom' and Jerry 'Dad,'" said Kay.

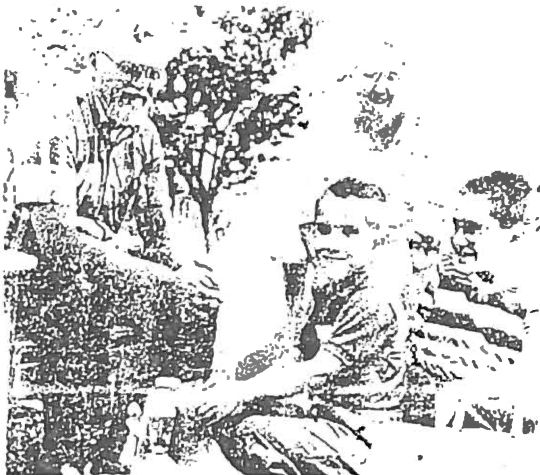
What's so unusual about that? "Mom" and "Dad" are Kay and Jerry Gibbons of Inola and Jerry Lee and Christopher are Jerry's biological grandchildren. Each child has been with them since before each was a year old. They are now 8 and 6 respectively.

Kay says, "We had two teenagers still at home and we were also hosting a foreign exchange student from England. Because of problems involved with Jerry Lee's home life, it was mutually agreed from all parties involved that we raise him. When Christopher came along, two years later, the same decision was made. Now we have legal guardianship."

Kay and Jerry don't feel "saddled" with this situation. They cherish the time they have with the children. But there are social problems that have cropped up they didn't expect. Jerry says, "We had to gravitate from our old circle of friends. They had all had children but they were grown and gone. We had two little ones. We had nothing in common any more. We aren't asked out because the host or hostess may think we will bring the kids. So, we go out by ourselves (as a family) a lot."

At the day-in, day-out stress of rearing children at Kay when she realized she wouldn't be able to work any longer for being needed at home. She quit a position with a local bank after being there 17 years.

Jerry and Kay agree the best advice they could give to anyone who may find themselves in a similar situation is to "be either grandparents or parents. You can't be both.



Jerry and Kay Gibbons enjoying an outing with Christopher (L) and Jerry Lee

You have to decide which role you are going to play and stick with it."

Kay says she learned about the original seminar, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren held at St. John Hospital from reading an article in the *Tulsa Tribune* back in March. She said she decided they needed to go to the meeting. They both admit now they weren't too optimistic about finding solutions to some of their problems there because they had tried so many other areas already; seeking help and other people in the same situation, always to no avail. Both were pleasantly surprised. Although the group attending was small, they saw that there were others who did share similar situations and were easier to talk out problems and share ideas with them.

"They feel the new support group that is starting will be a blessing, not only as a sounding board but hopefully as an avenue to open

up new social situations that they need as a family.

Diane Morrow-Kondos, who saw a need and acted on that need, says, "At first I wasn't sure we would be able to find a place to meet. Most of the places I contacted said we could meet there but we couldn't. For child care. Child care is absolutely necessary. I was lucky to find Christ United Methodist Church. They have been wonderful in helping make arrangements for this group."

The first monthly meeting of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren is July 1 at 7 p.m. at Christ United Methodist Church, 4515 S. Harvard. Child care will be available at low cost. For more information about the group, please contact Diane Morrow-Kondos at 481-6594.

Judith B. Ross
Editor

**GRANDPARENTS RAISING
GRANDCHILDREN**

AN ONGOING SUPPORT GROUP FOR THOSE WHO HAVE ASSUMED
THE ROLE OF PARENTING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN

MEETINGS MONTHLY, THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY
MONTH, 7:00 PM AT:

CHRIST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
3515 SOUTH HARVARD
TULSA

Child Care Available (Donation of \$1.00 per child requested)

*For more information, contact:
VAL: 749-0063
DIANE: 481-6594*

📌 RESOURCE LIST 📌

NOTE: We have compiled this list in an effort to provide our members with resources for various needs. These are businesses and individuals whom members of the Grandparents Support Group know of and feel they can recommend. However, we don't as a group endorse anyone on this list and recommend you use your own best judgement in selecting from this list.

(04/93)

| ATTORNEYS SPECIALIZING IN FAMILY LAW, GUARDIANSHIPS, ADOPTIONS, ETC. | | | |
|---|----------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Steve Edgar & Jerry Perigo | 496-8602 | 2524 E. 71st St., Tulsa 74136 | guest speakers at our meeting 11/92 |
| Helen Kannady | 587-3161 | 502 W. 6th, Tulsa 74119 | |
| PHYSICIANS | | | |
| Rita Browning, M.D. (with T.L. Carey & Associates Pediatric Clinic) | 481-8100 | 7125 S. Braden Suite A, Tulsa | accepts Medicaid |
| DENTISTS | | | |
| Jerry W. Smith, DDS (Pediatric Dentistry) | 492-1106 | 6565 S. Yale Tulsa | |
| Mark E. Morrow, DDS (Pediatric Dentistry) | 742-9810 | 3233 E. 31st St., Tulsa 74105 | accepts Medicaid |
| FAMILY AND CHILD COUNSELING | | | |
| Children's Medical Center (Laura Fisher) | 664-6600 | 5300 E. Skelly Drive, Tulsa 74135 | accepts Medicaid (our guest speaker 10/92 and 1/93) |
| Family and Children's Services | 587-9471 | 650 S. Peoria, Tulsa 74120 | charges on sliding scale; several locations; see phone book |

| FAMILY AND CHILD COUNSELING (cont.) | | | |
|---|--------------|---|---|
| Susan K. Geiss, Ph.D. | 582- 6281 | OSU College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dept. of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, 2345 Southwest Blvd., Tulsa | accepts Medicaid; specializes in stress management; our guest speaker 4/93 |
| Christian Family Institute (Tom Emerson) | 745- 0095 | 2816 E. 51st St., Tulsa 74105 | accepts health insurance; charges on sliding scale; (our guest speaker 3/93) |
| CHILD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST | | | |
| Barbara Wright Hillcrest Center for Women's Health | 749- 4444 | 1822 E. 15th St., Tulsa 74104 | our guest speaker 8/92 |
| CHILD CARE | | | |
| Let's Go Play | 665- 2172 | 4016 S. Yale, Tulsa 74135 | hourly, drop-in child care; \$2.25/hr. (\$3.25 for under 1 yr.). Open Mon- Thurs 8:30 AM to 11 PM; Fri. 8:30 AM to 1 AM; Sat. 9:30 AM to 1 AM. (closed Sunday) |
| Broken Arrow Club-House | 355- 5437 | 3015 Mockingbird Lane, Broken Arrow (71st & County Line) | full day care and before & after school care for ages 3½ to 13 |
| Wagoner County Learning Center | 357- 2712 | 22700 E. 71st. St., Broken Arrow | full day care ages 6 wks. to 5 yrs. |

| USED CHILDREN'S CLOTHING | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| Just Kidstuff | 495-3590 451-2986 | 6555 E. 71st. St. Tulsa 101st St. & Elm, Broken Arrow | |
| Kid's Corner | 455-8464 | 101st St. & Elm, Broken Arrow (NE Corner of intersection) | accepts used clothing on consignment |

VITA

Diane Morrow-Kondos
Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Field: Natural and Applied Sciences

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma May 12, 1958.
Currently residing in Tulsa. Single, two
children.

Education: Graduated from Charles C. Mason High School
in Tulsa, Oklahoma in May of 1976; received
Bachelor of Science in Recreation from Oklahoma
State University in May of 1980; completed the
requirements for Master of Science Degree at
Oklahoma State University in May of 1993.

Professional Experience: Recreational Therapist at St.
Francis Hospital, Tulsa, Oklahoma 1980-1984.
Specialty areas were Geriatric and Psychiatric
Units. Raised children full time 1986- 1993.
Developed and implemented support group
"GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN" July 1992-
present.