

# **Becoming Parents Again: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren**

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# **Custodial Grandparents: Raising Children the Second Time Around**

As the middle generation attempts to deal with the challenges of unemployment, increasing divorce rates and substance abuse, it is becoming increasingly common for the older generation to be called upon to raise grandchildren

# **Custodial Grandparents: Raising Children the Second Time Around**

- In the USA approximately 5.6 million grandparents maintain households that include children younger than 18.
- Research has already documented that custodial grandparents' life satisfaction and well-being are greatly impacted by the re-parenting role.

# **Custodial Grandparents: Raising Children the Second Time Around**

- Grandparents do not plan to raise their grandchildren.
- Re-parenting is often regarded as an “accidental crisis”. (note: not part of typical life style expectation of grandparents).
- Parenting and re-parenting are distinctly different.
- Custodial grandparents must often face the failure of their earlier parenting efforts.

# **Custodial Grandparents: Raising Children the Second Time Around**

Grandchildren frequently come under the care of grandparents because of precipitating parental complications such as divorce, incarceration, child neglect or abuse, drug abuse, death of parents, dysfunctional parent(s).



# **Custodial Grandparents: Raising Children the Second Time Around**

Grandparenting stressors:

- Dealing with adult children (complex emotions involved)
- Legal issues
- Becoming a surrogate parent (role confusion / role complexity)
- Financial
- Guilt / embarrassment
- Need for clear boundaries
- Physical and emotional fatigue
- Lack of time to pursue own interests
- Effects on health and well-being
- Drastic alteration to lifestyle



# Conclusion

- Need for an increase in awareness among professionals about the unique problems / challenges that grandparents encounter when raising their grandchildren.
- Implications for:
  - Schools / Teachers
  - Health Care
  - Legal System
  - Social Service / Community
- Need for grandparents support groups
- Need for research to uncover the nature, extent and trends surrounding grandparents becoming parents again. Research on ethnic and cultural diversity, coping mechanisms etc.