

GRANDPARENTS / PROBLEMS

PARENTING CHALLENGES ★ PAGE 1 OF 1

I often get the question about what to do with grandparents who are spoiling your children or who let them get away with inappropriate behavior.

You have a right to raise your children as stupidly or brilliantly as you choose. Your parents and your husband's parents had that same right. Guilt does not belong in the category of telling the grandparents that you are going to raise your children the way you see fit.

To the grandparents who are spoiling the child, draw the line, "We love that you come to see the children. I am concerned that you bring a gift for them every time you come to see us."

To the grandparent who says, "It is my job as a grandparent to spoil them!", you might say, "That's an old saying. The problem is that continually giving them a gift teaches them to value the gift rather than you. I want them to value time with you because it is a special treat to have a grandparent. If you want to give the children something, put some money in a savings account that they can't touch until they are eighteen years old. The children could add their money to the savings account and therefore could watch it grow. The point is that I want you to stop bringing a gift for the children every time you come over to see us."

In the discipline category: If the grandparent says, "We were not allowed to talk back to our parents when we were children," respond with, "Expressing feelings and talking back are two different things. I have a right to discipline my children the way I see fit. It would be so loving if you could just come and visit us and leave the child raising to me. I'm learning how to be a better parent every day."

If the grandparent continues with a lecture, raise your hand saying, "No more. I want us to enjoy these children together. You need to keep your opinions to yourself. If it would help, you might write me a letter telling me all the things you want me to know about raising children. Then I can choose what to use and what to do my way. This way isn't working. I don't want to be defensive with you or angry. Let's just enjoy these children together."

If the grandparent doesn't put the child to bed at a reasonable time, fights with the children, gets angry because they talk back, etc., it might be best not to have that grandparent baby-sit. It is not relaxing to come home from a night out to find an angry, spouting grandparent waiting for you.

It is very difficult to stand up to your own parent. And....you have a right to raise your children in a way that works for you. Hopefully, each generation will improve on the efforts of those in the generation before--which is why I teach parenting!!!

Remember, you only get one time through with each child. There are no re-runs. If the choice is between raising your child in a more loving, respectful way and pleasing a parent, I hope you will choose to honor your child's needs first. It isn't disrespectful to parent your way. Your way may be better for your children.