Grandparents,

Raising a grandchild can be challenging and yet highly rewarding. Indeed, what greater gift could a grandparent receive than the love and respect of their grandchild who appreciates the sacrifices their grandparents made so that they would grow to be happy, healthy people? The words of loving praise that these grandchildren have for their grandparents brings tears to the eyes of all who hear them and a glow to the hearts of the grandparents who deserve them.

If you are raising a grandchild, you have an added responsibility to educate others about what you are doing, so you are supported and respected for your efforts. To this end, make the effort to join together with other grandparents raising grandchildren and urge government agencies, the legal system, schools, insurance companies, social agencies, and religious and other institutions to recognize the good you are doing and to help lighten your burden as much as possible.

To begin these efforts, join us Wednesday, September 20, for our 2006-2007 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group Kick-Off Meeting. The meeting will begin at 10 a.m. with a sponsored lunch following the meeting for those who attend. The meeting will be held at the O. P. Owens Agriculture Center, Highway 72 West, Lumberton. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at 671-3276 for additional information. Individuals with disabilities and/or special needs interested in this meeting should call so proper arrangements can be made.

Here’s to family!

Christy Strickland

Christy S. Strickland
Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences

CSS/dp

Enclosure
**TIPS FOR ADVOCATING IN SCHOOL FOR YOUR GRANDCHILD**

*From AARP The GIC Voice, Summer/Fall 2003*

Schools are usually well-equipped to cope with the "average" child who has no special problem. But as most of you know, children in kinship care often have difficulties in school. They may be behind in their schoolwork, have trouble getting along with teachers or other children, or are stuck in behavior patterns or have physical problems that make it hard for them to learn.

What can you as the grandparent in your parent role do to help your grandchild succeed in school? By law, schools must provide certain services to meet a student's special needs. However, don't assume this happens automatically. You must make sure your grandchild's school recognizes and addresses their academic challenge.

Here are some tips to help you to be a better advocate for your grandchild:

- Learn assertiveness skills (don't be aggressive or angry).
- Tell your grandchild's teacher about the child's background.
- Build a relationship with the child's teacher.
- Ask the teacher to help your grandchild achieve success in some areas, even if academics are a problem - such as watering plants, passing out supplies, or feeding animals.
- And check with the school district to see their requirements for caregivers enrolling the kids for whom they are responsible in school.

**COMMUNICATION**

Often we get so wrapped up in our own problems we don't listen and can't hear about the problems of others. What are some barriers to communications between family members?

- reluctant to share personal feelings with others
- afraid to admit a mistake to someone
- not willing to take time to listen
- not interested in what someone else has to say anyway
- too much talking - not enough listening

Be a better listener by:

- really understanding what the person is saying
- not interrupting or changing the subject
- not closing your mind
- do not finish the other person's sentences/thoughts
- don't rush them or put them off to another time
- don't close your mind, keep your attention on the person - don't let your mind drift

**FAMILY DINNERS CAN HELP PREVENT TEEN DRUG ABUSE**

*Taken from Shoulder to Shoulder eNewsletter, May 2006*

Do you sit down to dinner as a family at least three to four times a week? If yes, do you talk to each other or do you watch television?
Research on the power of family dinners has shown that teenagers who eat dinner more often with their families are less likely to drink, smoke cigarettes, or use other drugs. The most recent study compared two specific groups: teenagers who have two or less family dinners per week and those who have five or more a week. Those who ate two or less family dinners were:

- three times more likely to try marijuana
- two and a half times more likely to smoke cigarettes
- one and a half times more likely to drink alcohol

The researchers also linked more frequent family dinners with:

- lower levels of family tension
- teenagers who more often said that their parents are proud of them
- teenagers who more often said that they can talk to their parents about a serious issue

This confirms what we all know - shared dinners make stronger families. However, with our busy schedules, it is often challenging to put this concept into operation. Here are a few suggestions that may help you plan these all-important family times.

- Make it a requirement. Set a nonnegotiable rule about the number of dinners that your teenager is expected to eat with you each week.
- Involve teenagers in all phases of the meal. From planning to preparing favorite meals.
- Make meals enjoyable. Try and avoid touchy topics like homework and peer groups. Make an effort to talk about things that interest all family members and won't cause conflict.
- Make it takeout, or a late supper, or even dinner out. The important thing is family together.
- Ask open-ended questions. What could we do to have more fun as a family? What's your dream job?

Keep eating together as your teen matures. Even though your teen is 16 or 17, they still need guidance, support, and a connection to their parents.

### Dates to Remember

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<th>Fun Dates</th>
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