Dear 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 bring 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 19, for our 2007-2008 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group Kickoff Meeting. The meeting will begin at 11 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. Persons with disabilities and persons with limited English proficiency may request accommodations to participate by contacting me at 671-3276, or by fax at 671-6278, or by E-mailing me at Christy_Strickland@ncsu.edu, or in person at the County Extension Center by Monday, September 16.

See you in September.

Christy S. Strickland
Extension Agent
Family and Consumer Sciences

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Making Back To School – COOL!
Angie Fletcher, Human Development Specialist
in Douglas County, University of Missouri Extension

Back-to-school time is often a time of change for many families. Making a smooth transition between the summer break and the beginning of school can help children feel good about themselves and help everyone in the family create and maintain a positive outlook about the coming school year. Parents play an important role in helping make this transition a smooth one. Here are some tips to help make this transition more relaxed and enjoyable for everyone.

Establish a Routine: Bedtimes, rise and shine times, where do I put my backpack and important notes when I get home—whatever your routine/schedule will be, begin following it at least a week or so before school actually begins. This will help adjust you and your child to the routine early.

Take a School Tour: This is especially important if your child is new to the school system or building. Knowing where to go on the first day can relieve a lot of stress.

Meet With Your Child’s Teacher(s): Introduce yourselves. Discuss what will be happening in the classroom, any special needs, or situations your child may have. Is there any way you can help out in the classroom?

Make Sure All School Records Are Up To Date: Make sure the school has any new phone numbers, changes of address, immunization updates, etc. Having these in an emergency can save precious minutes.

Get All Required Examinations: Try to schedule appointments for sports physicals, immunizations, dental exams, etc., before school starts. This will help avoid absences from school.

Be Sure Your Child Knows Their Address and Phone Number: This is especially necessary if you have just moved!

After-School Care: Make necessary arrangements and be sure your child knows where they are to go and what they are to do after school. It is also a good idea (especially for elementary school students) to inform the teacher of these plans also.

Purchase School Supplies: Check with your child’s teacher or school for a list of needed supplies.

Create a Homework Center: Stock it with extra crayons and supplies to complete homework. Make sure it is not near a television and distractions are few.

Stress the Importance of Good Nutrition: Healthy, well-balanced breakfasts, lunches, snacks, and dinners can unleash the Brainiac in your child! Studies have shown that good nutrition helps keep children focused, their energies high, and their moods balanced—all of which are factors that promote learning.

Three Parenting Techniques that Foster Self-Esteem

Keep in mind—Self-esteem is a term so popularly and broadly used these days that it is now vaguely regarded as "feeling good about oneself" or "something your parents give or do not give you." According to parenting educator Jean Illsley Clarke, a better definition of self-esteem is feeling loveable and capable. They are two sides of the same coin. Self-esteem is both gleaned from those around us (being loved and valued) and earned (becoming a capable, growing person). Both components are equally important.
Part of our job as parents is to foster both sides of self-esteem in our children. All parenting techniques have the potential to build up or tear down self-esteem. Praise or positively-stated suggestions are esteem-building; criticism or sarcasm erodes self-esteem. Other, less obvious, techniques such as consequences, rewards, or teaching the steps to a task can also be highly esteem-building, since they teach our children to be responsible and capable.

Try these ideas to help build your child’s self-esteem:

- **I-Messages** - This communication technique helps parents correct their children without calling them names. For example, instead of saying "You are so lazy!" a parent can say, "When you don't do your homework, I feel disappointed and disrespected." The child gets very specific information on what behavior is wrong instead of general criticism of his character.

- **Consequences** - Consequences promote learning and responsible behavior without threats. A threat intends to frighten a child into obedience and is usually critical or punishing. Consequences offer real experience and real choices. A natural consequence happens by itself: the child who forgets his homework gets in trouble at school. The parent imposes a logical consequence: the child who does a poor job of cleaning the kitchen must re-do it until it is right. Consistent experiences with fair consequences help children develop into capable people.

- **Attention** - This is a classic esteem-builder if it is used right. Pay attention to the behavior you want to see. Comment on it. Reward it. For example, "I really appreciate it when you are kind to your little brother." Eventually, the child will internalize your feedback--"I am kind to little children." Attention can also be negative. For example, "What? Another bad grade in math? We'll be spending a lot of time this winter on fractions, young man." Again, the child will internalize your message, "I am bad at math." Positive attention can build a good and realistic self-image.

As a parent, you don't choose to have your kids at home alone, but sometimes the pressures of two parents working, school schedules, and babysitting problems require you to do so. There are some very easy things you can do to reduce the risk for your kids. Every parent can implement these tips to keep their family safer.

1. **Set some rules.** Sit down and tell the kids what the rules are. Write them down. Then post the rules in plain view. Your kids will be more aware, and that's a good thing. If you don't want them near the gas stove, write it down. If they need to leave the sharp kitchen knives alone, write it down on the rules.

2. **Talk to them.** Sounds simple doesn't it? Talk them through the rules and talk to them about personal security. Remind them to lock the doors. Make sure they know not to let anyone in when you're not there, except people you have already told them can come in.

3. **Show them how to use 911.** Make sure they understand when to use it. Also, make sure they know it's not a joke.

4. **Gun safety.** If you have firearms in the house, place them in a gun safe, NOT under a mattress or in a cupboard. You have a legal, ethical, and moral responsibility to secure your firearms. The same applies to fireworks.
5. **Give them emergency contact numbers.** Friends or neighbors who you trust to have good judgment if you aren't available or when you can't get home fast enough.

6. **Make sure the kids understand Internet security.** You aren't there and you need to know what they're doing on their computers. Look into Internet Monitoring Software, low-cost products that invisibly monitor the activities of your kids and then privately E-mail you the results as often as you like. The best of these software products track Internet sites visited, downloads, chat room conversations, and instant messaging (IM).

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### A Few 2007 School Dates to Remember

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>First day of school</td>
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<td>September 3</td>
<td>Holiday-No School</td>
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<td>October 26</td>
<td>End of 1st 9 weeks</td>
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<td>October 29</td>
<td>Teacher Workday-No School</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 12</td>
<td>Holiday-No School</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Teacher Workday-No School</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 22-23</td>
<td>Holidays-No School</td>
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For more information about your grandchild’s school check out this website:
http://www.robeson.k12.nc.us/robeson/site/default.asp