



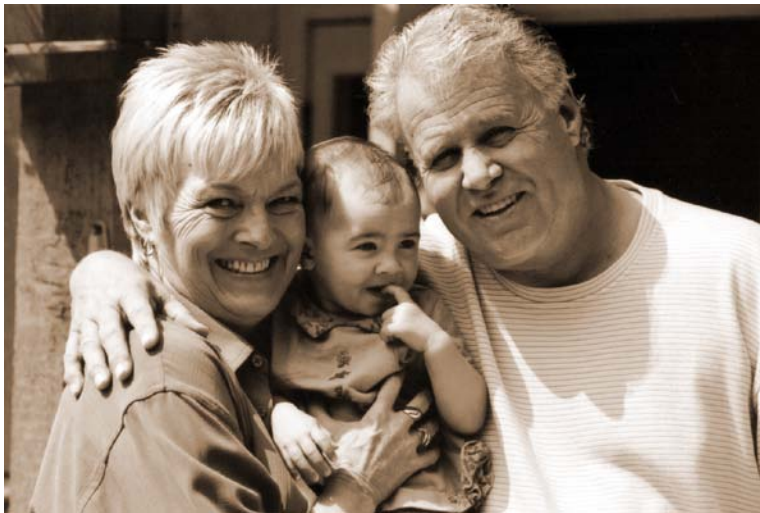
HOW GRANDPARENTS CAN HELP GRANDCHILDREN ADJUST TO THE CHALLENGES OF DIVORCE!

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By Rosalind Sedacca

January 24, 2012

Editor's Note: One thing we have heard time and again in talking to grown children of divorce is how important their grandparents were to them during the whole process. In this article, Rosalind Sedacca shares advice with grandparents about what they should and shouldn't do in helping their grandkids adjust to a divorce.



Grandparents are often caught in the tensions between parents when divorce takes place. Eager to help ease the situation, many grandparents are confused about how they can play a part in addressing the pain, confusion and other emotional issues that may be affecting their innocent grandkids. Since every divorce is unique there are no cookie-cutter solutions that do the trick. But there are some guidelines to keep in mind, especially in regards to being there for your grandchildren.

If you haven't been close to the kids beforehand, post-divorce is a difficult time to develop a relationship. But if you already have that bond established, it's important to keep the on-going connection at this time when the children are facing so many unknowns.

When communication and trust are strong between you and your grandchildren it's easier to bring up issues that concern you for a chat. Children who are comfortable in their relationship with you are more likely to confide their frustrations, fears and insecurities to you. Keep in mind that it's always more effective to offer advice once they ask or bring the subject up. Then you can share your wisdom in an age-appropriate manner.

One important word of caution: If you are going to discuss issues regarding divorce or other life challenges, it is essential that you discuss this subject first with the children's parents to get permission in advance!

It's never a grandparent's place to interfere where you are not welcome -- tempting as it may be. So bring up the topic you want to talk about with your own adult child or son- or daughter-in-law first. Explain your concern on behalf of the children, and what message you'd like to share with them. If their parent approves, then give it your best shot.





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If the child is resistant to the conversation, don't push the issue. You're better off retreating into safer territory. If they do confide in you, be careful not to make judgments about their parents. Listen; offer sound advice they can use, and then talk with the parents about ways you believe they can provide healing, reassurance and support to their children during this difficult time.

If the issues are complex, be sure to suggest bringing in professional counselors to handle the situation with all involved. They are trained to handle heavy emotional and psychological challenges. So leave it in their hands. You want to be loved as a caring grandparent – not as a therapist or judge!

If your own son or daughter is unaware about the emotional turmoil the divorce or other challenge is taking on your grandchildren, schedule a time to talk with them. Arm yourself with resources in advance. Assemble articles, study results, websites and other valuable information about how children can be adversely affected by family drama and share them during your conversation. Have some positive and concrete suggestions regarding where they can get help and support. Let them know you're there for them, on their side and also an advocate for the children. Don't accuse, judge, dismiss or demean their parenting. Remind them they are not alone and that most all families coping with divorce face similar issues. Help is out there. You want to make sure they find it.

Remind your grandchildren's parents how much those children mean to you so they don't overlook your relationship with the kids following the divorce, especially if relocation or other major changes are in the works. Children need, want and value the safety and reassurance of their grandparents' love. Be there for them and you can be an asset in their adjustment to life's many challenges for a long time to come.

Rosalind Sedacca, CCT, is a Divorce & Parenting Coach and author of [How Do I Tell the Kids about the Divorce? A Create-a-Storybook Guide to Preparing Your Children -- with Love!](http://www.childcentereddivorce.com) For her free book on Post-Divorce Parenting, her free weekly ezine, coaching services and other valuable resources about divorce and parenting issues visit <http://www.childcentereddivorce.com>. To learn more about her internationally acclaimed ebook, visit <http://www.howdoitellthekids.com>.

