

February 2013

Kindred *Spirits*

How to be a really terrific grandparent

Make lasting memories

Flu Season is Here

To help ward off illnesses, we're advised to wash our hands with soap for 20 seconds, several times a day.

Trouble is, that's a lot longer than you might think. In fact, it's long enough to sing "Happy Birthday" twice while you're soaping up.

Try it and see for yourself.

The International Food Safety Council recommends washing from fingernails to forearms in hot, running water.

Remember your grandkids are watching you so the longer you soap up, the more they understand the importance. Stay well!

MU Extension contributors:

Marsha Alexander, Melissa Bess, Dr. Nina Chen, Christeena Haynes, Saralee Bury Jamieson, Shatomi Luster, Susan Mills-Gray, Diana Milne, Tammy Roberts, Lisa Wallace, and Megan Webb.

As more and more Boomers reach their 50s and 60s, they are redefining what it means to grow older and to be a grandparent. No rocking chairs, shuffleboard or even being called "Grandma" for us. Some have chosen to be called "Mimi," "Gigi," or "Tutu!" We run marathons, attend zumba classes and continue to work in a variety of settings.

According to Saralee Jamieson, MU Extension human development specialist, "Our generation has the potential of being the best grandparents ever. She suggests the following."

- ◆ Be fair. It's hard to parent your grandchildren. Often, you have to juggle your needs with their needs and the needs of your own children. Be careful not to make unreasonable demands on your kids' and grandkids' time. Be sensitive to the fact that there may be grandparents on the other side of the family who want to see them as well.

- ◆ Be firm. It's fun to indulge and spoil your grandkids somewhat, but be careful as it can get out of hand. Don't tolerate disrespect from your grandkids toward you or their parents.

- ◆ Be fun. Many entertaining things vie for your grandkids' attention, and they don't necessarily think of time with you as the highlight of their lives, especially if they live with you fulltime. Of course, having fun all the time isn't possible; you have to have a balance. But, ask yourself, "Is life in this house fun?" Make lasting memories with your grandkids.

- ◆ Be flexible. Be sensitive to the fact that children are constantly growing. Their abilities and interests change regularly so you will need to stay abreast of their needs and developmental levels.

- ◆ Be affirming. As grandparents, you are in a position to lavish exuberant praise on your grandchildren. What would have been seen as bragging with your own children is acceptable coming from grandparents!

Affirming your children in their parenting role is powerful as well. Applaud your child's new parenting techniques. This goes a long way toward building their confidence as a parent.

Setting Limits

Children need limits to feel secure

How many times have you heard a grandparent say: "I let the grandkids do what they want when they're at my house, then send them home to their parents!" That attitude may work for some grandparents, but if you are *raising* your grandchild, that is no longer a workable plan!

If you're a grandparent/aunt/uncle in a parenting role, then you have important responsibilities. One of those is learning to set limits for the children. You may have looked back on how you raised your own children and want to do a better job

now. It is never too late to learn new habits when it comes to child-rearing.

According to Diana Milne, MU Extension human development specialist, "One of the most difficult parenting issues today is the problem of setting limits on a child's behavior." It surprises many adults when they learn that kids actually need and want limits set for them.

Setting boundaries provides them with a sense of security within their family. When this security net is not provided for children by the family, they often drift to less wholesome sources to provide that security.

Ron Taffel, Ph.D. suggests:

- ◆ Set limits at home on cursing, verbal put-downs, sarcasm and talking-back.
- ◆ Expect, teach and model respect and empathy within the family.
- ◆ Teach children that mis-behaviors have consequences. Talk about your expectations of them at home, at school and in the community. Consequences should be logical and age-appropriate.
- ◆ Focus on good behaviors first and deal with problem areas when you are calm, not angry.

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University of Missouri Extension

Urban Region

Clay County	816.407.3490
Jackson County	816.252.5051
	816.482.5850
Jefferson County	636.797.5391
Platte County	816.270.2141
St. Charles County	636.970.3000
St. Louis City	314.367.2585
St. Louis County	314.615.2911
	314.516.6392

West Central Region

Bates County	660.679.4167
Benton County	660.438.5012
Camden County	573.346.2644
Cass County	816.380.8460
Cedar County	417.276.3313
Cooper County	660.882.5661
Dallas County	417.345.7551
Henry County	660.885.5556
Hickory County	417.745.6767
Johnson County	660.747.3193
Laclede County	417.532.7126
Moniteau County	573.378.5358
Morgan County	573.378.5358
Pettis County	660.827.0591
Polk County	417.326.4916
St. Clair County	417.646.2419
Vernon County	417.448.2560

Taming the food budget

Food is our third highest household expense after housing and transportation. According to Tammy Roberts, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, "It is possible to decrease that expense with careful planning and shopping."

One of the most important things you can do to save money is to plan menus for an entire week and only shop once.

Other things that will help you save money include:

- Use the grocery store ad to plan menus around the best bargains.
- Use coupons only on items you were planning on purchasing.
- Consider using store brands. They will usually cost less and be perfectly acceptable in quality.
- Don't be afraid to stock up on non-perishable foods when they are on sale.
- Don't shop when you are hungry.