

# HEALTHY *Kidz*

A Special Publication for Grandparents

## Peer Pressure

*Caregivers can strengthen a child's ability to resist peer pressure*

When faced with a problem, whether the issue is big or small, most children will turn to a parent. However, if the parent is no longer in a child's life for reasons ranging from divorce to death, the child can feel abandoned and lost and think there is no one to turn to to help make important decisions. Often, in conditions such as these, a child will fall under the influence of negative peer pressure; their problems haven't been eliminated with the loss of a parent, just the child's ability to deal with the situation. It is easier for these children to succumb to peer pressure and form habits that could be detrimental to them in the future.

Since the parent that the child is used to is gone, another family member needs to take over as a positive role model and help steer the child away from potentially damaging peer pressure. In instances where grandparents are the predominant influence in the child's life, they must become the role model. Grandparents can take steps to ensure the child's emotional stability and the

grandparent's positive influence on the child.

One step to battling negative peer pressure is encouraging the child and helping better the child's self esteem, or image of himself or herself. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) urges parents, or grandparents playing that role, to raise their child to feel good about themselves and what makes them unique and special, and to acknowledge their child's thoughts and feelings regularly.

A second step is to show interest in the child's hobbies, music, friends, favorite activities and school work. This positive encouragement helps to ensure a stable role between child and caregiver.

The AAP also stresses the importance of being honest with a child, and this is especially crucial in the area of the relationship between child and caregiver. If the child knows a parent or grandparent is lying or breaking promises, it gives the child a reason to distrust them. Another key element for positively influencing a child and building a bond with him or her is to acknowledge and praise a child's successes, whether it is for good grades, an award, or just keeping their room clean. A child who is never praised at home will seek out praise from another source and is more likely to be influenced by peer pressure to gain recognition.

The last important goal a parent or grandparent should set when dealing with peer pressure is to clearly define attitudes and rules

about tobacco, alcohol, and illegal substances including drugs. A caregiver should talk frankly to children about harmful substances and the consequences of using them from both a health and a disciplinary aspect.

According to the AAP, children are not particularly motivated by long-term consequences, so to encourage a child not to smoke or drink, a parent or grandparent needs to tell the child or more immediate drawbacks to smoking, such as bad breath, yellowing teeth, etc. By establishing boundaries with the child, it secures effective communication between the caregiver and child.

By practicing these steps to increase a child's self esteem, you will help the child feel better about himself or herself, and help yourself to feel more at ease when the child is away from home and out with friends.



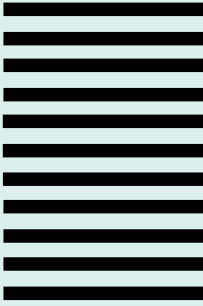
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**Yes, I'd like a free subscription to Healthy Kids!**

We hope you enjoyed this introductory issue of the Healthy Kids grandparenting newsletter. Children's Hospital is pleased to offer the Healthy Kids newsletter free of charge four times per year. If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please fill out the form below and return to us as soon as possible!

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\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to receive the Healthy Kids parenting newsletter at my home.  
Check one: \_\_\_ *Preschool Version*  
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When you have completed this form, cut or tear this page (page 2) off the newsletter and fold it once in half along the dotted line. This form and the mailing information above should be visible on the outside. Tape the open end closed (do not staple), and drop it in the mail!

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# Communicating with your grandchild

If your grandchild lives with you as a result of his or her parents' death, divorce or imprisonment, he or she may find it hard to communicate with you about feelings, problems and concerns because of the psychological issues (scars) he or she has from the loss of their parent on a full-time basis.

Communication is vital for a relationship of any kind to thrive and grow, and without communication it is hard for a child to develop confidence, self-worth and relationships with others.

Here are a few suggestions for getting your grandchild to communicate with you, whether they live with you on a permanent basis or just visit you on occasion:

- Teach the child to listen, and set a good example for your grandchild by listening attentively to what he or she has to say.
- Speak in a quiet voice or calm voice so children must listen to hear what you have to say.
- Look a child in the eyes when speaking, and you will be better able to tell when the child does not understand.



- Bend or sit when talking to a child so that you are on his or her level and not talking "down" to them.

- Practice listening and talking: talk with your family and grandchildren about events, television programs, school and friends.

- Respect the child and use a courteous tone of voice. Talk to the child as you would your friend, and the child may be more likely to seek you out as a confidant.

- Notice when the child is good, not only when he or she is misbehaving. Praise them for cooperating with you or their siblings, or for doing those little things that are so easy to take for granted, like cheerfully doing what they are told, doing chores without being asked, etc.

- Use conversation openers that invite the child to say more about an incident or their feelings. Openers such as "I see," "Oh," "Tell me more," "No kidding,"

"Really," "Mmmmmhmmmm," and "Say that again, I want to be sure I understood you," help to get the child talking.

- Praise builds a child's confidence and reinforces communication. Unkind words, particularly when related to inappropriate behavior, tear children down and send them the message that they "just aren't good enough."

- Children are never too old to be told they are loved. Saying "I love you" is very important, and writing it in a note provides the child with a reminder that he can hold on to.

- Give your undivided attention when your children want to talk to you. Don't read, watch television, fall asleep or make yourself busy with other tasks while in conversation with a child, or you can risk making a child feel that what he or she is saying is unimportant.

Source: Kids Source OnLine ([www.kidsource.com](http://www.kidsource.com))

**10-Second Tip**

**Set aside time each day to talk with and listen to your grandchild; this will help to strengthen the relationship between the two of you.**

# Childproofing

## KEEP YOUR GRANDCHILD safe at HOME and THEIR HOME away from HOME

Your grandchild is staying in your home, and it seems like all the “rules” have changed since your children were small. She has pulled everything out of the cabinets, turned over the vase and loves to play with the toaster. How do you protect her while still encouraging her to play and just “be a kid”?

Home safety and childproofing are important topics to think about when a toddler or young child moves in, whether for a few days or on a permanent basis. You must evaluate your home and realize that there are many potential dangers for your grandchild in each room of your house. Here are some tips for making different rooms safer for small children.

### All rooms

- Make sure all open windows are protected with screens or barriers that cannot be pushed out.
- Keep doorways that lead to steps or rooms not safe for children closed or gated.
- Purchase door knob covers. The knob covers will make it hard or impossible for the child to open the door.
- Cover all electrical outlets with caps.
- Install smoke detectors and check them monthly. Also, every house should have a fire escape plan and practice it regularly with every member of the family, including babies and toddlers.
- Bookshelves should be secured to the wall. If not secured, the bookshelf can be pulled over onto the child.

### Kitchen

- Secure all cabinet doors with safety locks, which can be installed on the cabinet door to keep the child from opening it. Do not allow children to play in the cabinets. This may lead the child to believe that all cabinets are play areas, when actually they can be dangerous.
- Be aware that children can crawl into refrigerators, freezers and other large appliances and become trapped. Locks can be purchased inexpensively and installed to prevent this.
- Place all sharp appliances, glass items and household cleaners, like bleach and anything with chemicals included, out of reach of children on a top shelf, in a high cabinet that is out of sight or in an area that can be locked or secured.
- Keep all knives, forks, scissors and other sharp utensils separate from safe utensils in a latched drawer.
- Unplug appliances when they are not being used; children can accidentally turn them on and possibly harm themselves. Do not let the electrical cord dangle so that a child could pull the cord and cause the appliance to fall on him or her.
- When cooking, keep pot handles turned toward the back of the stove so your child cannot reach them.
- Hide all matches.
- If you have a gas stove, secure the dials to the off position.

If the dials are easily removable, remove them when not in use.

### Bathroom

- The best way to keep children safe in a bathroom is to not let the child play there and keep the door closed.
- Never leave a child alone while bathing. Children can drown in only a few inches of water within seconds after being left alone.
- Prevent your grandchild from falling by placing no-slip strips in the bottom of the shower or bathtub. A cushion over the faucet will also protect the child from bumping his or her head while bathing.
- Keep the toilet seat closed. Latches may be purchased to help keep the toilet seat secured.
- Store all medicines in containers with child-resistant or safety caps and place them in a locked cabinet. Toothpaste, soap, shampoo and other health care items should be placed in a separate locked cabinet; even items that seem perfectly “safe” can cause problems in the hands of a small child.
- Do not forget to return razors to a safe place after use.
- To prevent burning or scalding, set your hot water heater no higher than 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48 degrees Celsius) and teach your grandchild to always begin with the cold water and then turn to hot.
- Make sure all electrical appliances are unplugged and out of reach—an appliance can electrocute the child and cause severe harm if it comes in contact with water or another liquid.

### Garage and Basement

- Keep all chemicals, paints, pesticides and fertilizers locked away in a cabinet.
  - Store tools in an out-of-reach area and keep power tools unplugged when not in use.
  - If your garage has an automatic door opener, be sure that the child is not in the area before opening or closing. Make sure the automatic reverse mechanism is properly adjusted.
- Childproofing your home will keep your grandchild safe and, just as importantly, make you feel more at ease.



WBIR-TV 10 has partnered with Children's Hospital as a sponsor of Children's Hospital's *Healthy Kids Campaign*. WBIR is dedicated to promoting better health for the children of this region.

There are many differences in the “tastes” of grandparents and grandchildren. They seem to have different preferences in everything from clothing to music. One area that can really pose disagreements is deciding what to eat, where there usually seems to be a difference of opinion between the caregiver and their younger counterpart.

Salty and sweet sensations can decline dramatically, and this can attribute to the differences in food preferences between family members of different ages.

Dr. Heather Edgley, a pediatrician at East Tennessee Children’s Hospital, offers the following tips for reconciling food differences and helping grandchildren eat healthy not only at home, but also while dining out and snacking.

Though children and senior citizens may not agree on what they like to eat, each group needs to eat similar things to maintain good health.

- Lots of calcium- grandparents need to keep bones strong and ward off osteoporosis; grandchildren need to build strong bones and teeth now. Tip: include skim or 1% milk at every meal.

- Avoid too much sugar- both grandparents and grandchildren need to gain energy from proteins and carbohydrates which give lasting energy, not a temporary burst given by sugary foods and drinks. Tip: eat a mid-day apple or crackers instead of cookies and candy.

- Keep fatty foods to a minimum- As people age, their metabolism slows, and it becomes much easier to gain weight. Children need to develop healthy eating patterns from the beginning. Tip: Steer clear of too many indulgence foods.

- Variety is the key-Add new items to your menu so that you don’t get bored with your food. Tip: Try a theme night!

## EATING AT HOME

Preparing a meal that your grandchildren will like may seem difficult. While children should be encouraged to try new foods, they should not be told to “clean their plates” after they appear to be full. Pushing children to continue eating encourages overeating.

One helpful way to get children to eat the right foods is to involve them in the preparation activities. If children are old enough, let them help plan the menu for the coming week; grandparents will have to set guidelines for the menu planning, such as each meal must have a meat, vegetable, dairy and grain, but let children decide what those foods will be. If children are not old enough to actually help plan a menu, take them to the store to assist in the shopping. Let older children choose products and give younger children options to decide between. For example, “Would you like to have graham crackers or granola bars for snacks this week?” Then, when snack time comes, children will be more eager to eat the food they picked out.

Children of all ages can also help cook meals. Older children can help with preparation by chopping vegetables, grating cheese and mixing batter, while younger children can perform smaller tasks such as tearing the lettuce for the salad or setting the table. While you cook, explain what you are doing so that the children feel involved.

## EATING OUT

Deciding on restaurants when eating out can also be a difficult task when grandparents and grandchildren have varying tastes, and it can also be difficult to eat healthy while at a restaurant. Dr. Edgley said several ways to eat healthy on the go include ordering regular sized portions at fast food restaurants instead of supersized and getting grilled meats instead of fried. Use mustard and low-fat salad dressings to add flavor instead of mayonnaise, cheese and regular dressing. Boost nutrition on pizza by ordering vegetable toppings like green peppers, tomatoes and mushrooms instead of fatty pepperoni and sausage, and ask to have the pizza topped with extra, low-fat mozzarella cheese to increase calcium intake.

Dr. Edgley warns about getting trapped into ordering high fat side items; instead of fries, order a salad. Another tip for dining out is to request that extra salt and butter not be added to food, and replace sugary soft drinks with milk, juice or water.

## SNACKS

Contrary to popular belief, snacks are beneficial to a child’s development and help to keep their energy up during the day. However, snacks need to be chosen wisely, and children’s hunger between meals can be satisfied with easy, healthy snacks rather than “junk food.” Try frozen grapes as an alternative to candy, or apple slices with peanut butter and graham crackers instead of cookies. Baked tortilla chips and salsa are a tasty substitute for potato chips and dip. Recipes for inventive, nutritious snacks can be found on web sites such as [www.healthykids.com](http://www.healthykids.com) (the American Academy of Pediatrics), [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org) (the Nemours Foundation), and [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) (the American Dietetics Association).

One way to encourage healthy snacking is to keep your kitchen well-stocked with healthy foods easily accessible to little hands. Dr. Edgley says a well-prepared kitchen for snacking should have several of these items: yogurt cups, fresh fruit (already peeled and cut), nuts, reduced fat cheese, low-fat microwave popcorn, peanut butter, pretzels, granola bars, pre-cut vegetables and dip, skim or 1% milk, low fat cottage cheese, dried fruit, whole grain crackers, baked tortilla chips and salsa, just to name a few.

Most importantly, remember to set a good example for your grandchildren when it comes to food choices and to be patient with them. Children are still in the process of developing a taste for what foods they like, and until they are old enough to make healthy decisions on their own, encourage them to eat well by serving a variety of tasty, nutritious foods. By doing this, children will develop good eating habits at an early age and become aware of the importance of a balanced diet. Just as grandparents encourage kids to try new foods, they should also be open to new tastes and new foods.

“Be open to trying the foods your grandchildren enjoy, and plan menus that incorporate foods that you both like,” Dr. Edgley urges. “Compromise and good planning should help you avoid future food conflict and keep your grandchildren on track to healthy eating.”



# PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

Once your grandchild is born, you don't want to even think about the possibility of illness or injury. Unfortunately, however, accidents and illnesses do occur, and we are not always as prepared for emergencies as we could be. J. Michael Connors, M.D., pediatric emergency medicine specialist at Children's Hospital, discusses prevention strategies and how to be prepared for emergencies BEFORE they happen.

**Q.**

**What are some ways I can prevent accidents and injuries?**

**A.**

Many prevention techniques are quite simple but just require a little time and effort.

Here are a few tips to help you get started with prevention of the most serious injuries:

- In motor vehicles, always require the use of seat belts, car seats or booster seats for everyone riding in the vehicle, including yourself. Learn the proper installation and use of car seats and booster seats, and place children in seats away from air bags.
- Require your grandchildren to wear helmets when they ride bicycles (and be a good example by wearing one yourself!). Helmets are 85 percent effective in reducing the incidence of head injury in bicycle accidents.
- Use child-resistant caps on all potentially poisonous substances (such as medicines and household cleaners), and store these items out of reach in locked cabinets.
- Do not use a walker for your grandchild, as these items increase the risk of a baby falling down a staircase or reaching a dangerous item (such as a cup of hot coffee on a table). Also, place gates at the top and bottom of stairs in your home to prevent falls.
- Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees to prevent anyone from being scalded.
- Never leave children unattended in the bathtub, keep toilet lids down and latched, and never leave out buckets of water or other

liquid (children can fall head first into a bucket). Children can drown in as little as one inch of water.

- To prevent choking, allow children to play only with age appropriate toys, have your grandchild sit down when eating, avoid hard foods (such as peanuts, popcorn and candy), and check frequently for small items which may have fallen to the floor.

For more home safety tips, talk with your grandchild's pediatrician or family physician, or call Children's Hospital's Healthy Kids Community Education Line at 541-8262.

**Q.**

**What should I do to prepare for an emergency?**

**A.**

Accidents often happen in just a split second, so you need to plan ahead. There are several steps you can take:

- Talk to your pediatrician or family physician about where to take your grandchild in an emergency. Sometimes the doctor's office may be prepared to handle a minor emergency, while more serious problems may warrant a trip to the Emergency Room. In an emergency, you will find yourself in unfamiliar surroundings with medical caregivers you do not know. Some hospitals are better prepared than others to treat pediatric emergencies. With your pediatrician's advice, you can feel comfortable and trust the hospital and the staff.
- Be familiar with the route to the hospital from your home. Travel the route to learn it or have written directions handy.
- Post emergency phone numbers by all telephones. Dialing 911 will put you in contact with emergency assistance in most, but not all, areas. Know ahead of time if your area is serviced by 911; if it is NOT, post the local ambulance service's emergency number. Also know your area's Poison Control Center number, which is 800-288-9999. Other numbers to post prominently: your pediatrician or family practice physician, police and neighbors or family

members. An emergency is not the time for you or a caregiver to have to look up one of these important numbers.

- Teach your grandchildren, as soon as they are old enough, how and when to dial 911. They should also know how to reach you if they are old enough to stay at home alone.

**Q.**

**My grandchild is in a child care center during the week. What information should the caregivers have to prepare for an emergency?**

**A.**

Anyone who cares for your grandchild — including you — should have the following information: a list of your grandchild's medications, pre-existing conditions, medical history, immunizations and allergies; and health insurance information. If the child has ingested something, bring the item along to the Emergency Room.

If your grandchild is in the care of someone other than his or her legal guardian, the caregiver should have a consent form signed by the legal guardian granting permission to obtain emergency medical treatment for the child if necessary, and information about where and how to reach you.

**Q.**

**How do I recognize a true emergency?**

**A.**

A true emergency is when you believe an injury or illness may cause permanent harm or is threatening your grandchild's life. Your pediatrician or family practice physician can discuss with you some signs and symptoms of potentially serious illnesses and injuries.

**Q.**

**What do I do when an emergency occurs?**

see **Emergencies**, page 7



# As a grandparent, did you know ...

... many first-aid and safety misconceptions -- “myths” -- have become accepted as popular truths when actually they are not based on any factual evidence? Believing in these myths and acting accordingly can lead to injury or perhaps even death. Pediatric emergency medicine specialists at Children's Hospital respond to some of these myths:

**Myth: Butter, oil or toothpaste is the best treatment for a burn.**

**FACT:** These are among the worst treatments because they hold in the heat of the burn, allowing the burning to continue. Cool plain water is the best treatment for minor burns and should be applied for 30 minutes or more until pain ceases. Seek professional medical care for more severe burns.

**Myth: Children who are hit by cars or who fall from high places should be picked up and rushed to the hospital.**

**FACT:** Children who are in severe accidents are at great risk of head or spinal cord injury and possible lifelong disability, especially if they are moved incorrectly. Children in these situations should only be moved by the emergency medical professionals responding to the accident.

**Myth: Screens protect children from falling out of windows.**

**FACT:** Screens keep bugs out but are not strong enough to keep children in. Watch children closely around open windows.

**Myth: Dressing a child in warm clothes will “break” a fever.**

**FACT:** Bundling a child up in warm clothes actually will make the child’s fever rise even higher. The child should be dressed in cool clothes, and the fever should be treated with Tylenol or Motrin.

**Myth: Feed a cold, starve a fever.**

**FACT:** Any time an individual is ill, good nutrition is an important part of getting well. However, eating will not affect a fever. Drinking or eating hot or cold foods affects the temperature of the mouth but will not affect a person’s true core temperature. Wait at least 30 minutes after eating or drinking to take an oral temperature to ensure an accurate reading.

**Myth: Children with chicken-pox should stay indoors and should not bathe.**

**FACT:** Sunshine and bathing are good for a child who has chicken pox. Children *should* spend time outdoors, and they should bathe *at least once* per day, if not twice.

**Myth: Colds and ear infections are caused by going outdoors with wet hair or without a hat.**

**FACT:** Wintertime is the season for more frequent colds and ear infections because we spend more time indoors, where germs are passed more easily. Viruses, not wet or hatless heads, are the cause of colds and ear infections.

**Myth: A drowning person surfaces three times.**

**FACT:** Many drowning victims sink like rocks and never reappear. Others struggle and thrash to the surface a dozen times before finally sinking. Either way, you cannot predict how long a drowning person will struggle. If you see someone struggling in water, take immediate action.

**Emergencies, continued from page 6**

**A.**

First of all, STAY CALM, even though it may be difficult. Your grandchild needs you to be at his or her side, providing calm reassurance. By staying calm, you will be better able to meet your grandchild’s needs:

- Start CPR if necessary and only if you know how. If you don’t know CPR, now is the time to learn. Call Children’s

Hospital’s Healthy Kids Community Education Line to register for an upcoming class.

- Call 911 if the emergency appears life threatening.
- Apply pressure to a bleeding wound.
- Do not move a child who has taken a serious fall.
- If the child is having a seizure, lay him or her on the floor with the head turned to the side.

**Q.**

**If I have to take my child to a hospital, what should I expect in the Emergency Room?**

**A.**

Your child will be evaluated by a triage nurse, who will determine the severity of the illness or injury and begin planning the child’s care. The most serious

see Emergencies, page 8



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## Emergencies, continued from page 7

cases are treated first, so if your child's injury or illness is less severe, other patients may be treated ahead of your child. Other children are seen in the order in which they arrive.

Once your child is seen by a doctor, x-rays or other tests may be ordered as part of the evaluation of the child's condition.

If you bring your child to Children's Hospital's Emergency Department, your child will be seen by a pediatric emergency medicine specialist. These physicians have three years of training in pediatrics and an additional two to three years of training in pediatric emergency medicine (emphasizing trauma, orthopedics, wound care, sedation, poisoning and critical care). They also take board certifying exams in pediatrics and pediatric emergency medicine. Children's has 13 board-certified pediatric emergency medicine specialists and one board-eligible pediatric emergency medicine specialist on staff.

**Q.**

**What should happen before my**

## **grandchild and I leave the Emergency Department?**

**A.**

Make sure all your questions have been answered before you leave. If you still have lingering questions, do not hesitate to ask! Do you understand your child's condition, how to treat it and what medications he or she needs? Do you have instructions such as when to follow up with your child's pediatrician or what symptoms to watch for in the next 24 hours? Follow-up care is an important part of your child's treatment, so be sure you fully understand everything you need to know.

No one likes to think about the possibility of an emergency situation happening to them. Unfortunately, accidents and emergencies do happen, often very quickly. By making preparations before an emergency occurs, you will be better able to handle the situation, act appropriately and allow better care for you and your grandchild.

Children's Hospital's

# HEALTHY Kidz

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This newsletter is a part of Children's Hospital's *Healthy Kids* Community Education Campaign, which serves as a resource for parents, offering classes, literature and other opportunities for learning how to improve children's health. For more information about Children's Hospital's *Healthy Kids* Campaign, please call the community education line at (865) 541-8262.



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