



# Grandparents Corner

*August 2014*

## *Dealing with Adult Children*

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Grandparents and other relatives often raise grandchildren for a variety of reasons. Substance abuse by the child's parent is the most commonly reported. Other reasons might be teenage pregnancy, illness, death, unemployment, divorce, incarceration and/or child abuse.

Dealing with adult children is very challenging at times, especially if you do not have legal custody. Some troubled adults might be verbally, physically and emotionally abusive. Many can be manipulative, using their children as pawns to extort money or shelter. Some may be in and out of their children's lives, causing continuous disruptions.

Grandparents may love their adult children, but not their behavior when it disrupts the family's well-being. They may feel they are on an emotional roller coaster ride, holding onto hope that their troubled adult child will resume the parental role one day.

Having to raise your grandchildren may cause feelings of anger and frustration. You may feel guilty, thinking that you did something wrong in raising your child.

The following are a few tips to deal with challenging adult children:

- Set rules and limits that will be firm and consistent. Follow through by enforcing the consequences if needed. If possible, a written contract with specific details that both parties read and sign can provide documentation if rules are broken.
- Learn to say no to things that enable an adult child to continue negative behavior. Sometimes, providing or giving someone numerous chances can continue to feed destructive behavior.
- Grandparents may need to sever the relationship with the adult child if the rules are not followed. This is one of the hardest decisions to make; however, for the well-being and safety of the grandchild, it may be the only option.
- Find a support system of family members and friends who are concerned for the grandparent's well-being. Also, consider a support group where grandparents gain some expertise when dealing with the issues.
- Seek out local resources and professional help.

Remember, every situation is different when dealing with a troubled adult child. What works best in one situation might not be the best for another. Reflect on what you have been doing to deal with the situation. Consider what is working or what may not be working.

**Source: [urbanext.illinois.edu/grandparents](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/grandparents) - University of Illinois Extension.**

## QUICK QUIZ

*One of the results of Alzheimer's disease is that the person is unable to plan how to spend their time. They are also unlikely to initiate activities. They often spend much of the day napping and pacing, which results in what others would judge to be an "empty day." That is why it is important for you to set up a plan for day-to-day activities that can be followed on a regular basis. Answer True or False to the questions below.*

1. *To help maintain self-esteem, it is important to help the person with AD continue to engage in activities and participate in family and community life. T F*
2. *Activities should make the best use of a person's remaining strengths and skills. T F*
3. *Often, when there is no activity they can do, touch can become an important part of communication. T F*
4. *People with Alzheimer's will never discover new talents. T F*
5. *Telling a person with Alzheimer's about an activity far in advance may cause anxiety. T F*
6. *Some people with AD become very upset watching violence on TV because they think it is real. T F*
7. *A person with AD, even in the early stages, will probably have subtle changes in walking ability that will become more severe as time goes on. T F*
8. *There is nothing you can do to help a person find their way around the house. T F*
9. *Memory of song lyrics can remain longer than the ability to carry a conversation. T F*
10. *An activity doesn't have to be something out of the ordinary and even activities of daily life (ADLs) can become an opportunity to use senses or tell a story. T F*

**KEY:** 1. T 2. T 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. T 7. T 8. F 9. T 10. T