

# Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Ashley Beatty, Oregon State University-Cascades, Soc 432

## Abstract

The roles of today's grandparents have drastically changed from fifty years ago. Grandparents are now expected to give up their retirement and that "grandparent relationship" to fill in the position of "parent" when the child's parents can no longer do so.

This can be a hardship for both the grandparents and the grandchildren. Grandchildren in the care of their grandparents are more likely to have needs and behavior problems. Grandparents raising grandchildren are more likely to experience increased depression, poverty, isolation and need assistance.

There has been a 77% increase in grandparents raising their grandchildren, but there have actually been cuts in the funds and programs that would assist these families.

## Introduction

➤ Over 5.5 million children being cared for by grandparents (Sand, et. Al, 2000)

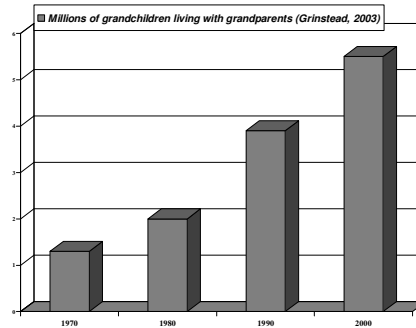
➤ ~50% children have behavior problems & poor school performance (Thomas, et. Al, 2000)

➤ Grandparents raising grandchildren are increasing while funds are decreasing (Kropf, 2003)

## Literature Review

➤ Definition of grandparent has changed (Thomson, 2005)

- Roles & Expectations
- Lack of parental involvement
- Drugs & Alcohol
- Early Death
- Teen Pregnancy
- Many More!
- Grandparents need support
  - "Too old for this" (Grinstead, 2003)
  - Education (Thomas, 2000)
  - Lack of Resources
  - ~50% in poverty (Sands, 2000)
- What are they missing?
  - Earned Retirement
  - Grandparent Relationship



## Future Directions

- Research on play therapies to increase child outcomes (Thomas, et. Al, 2000)
- Increase community collaboration & agency involvement (Sharpe, 2004)
- Research focusing on grandfathers
- Attachment of children with grandparents (Poehlmann, 2003)
- Increase involvement
- Decrease parent risk factors
- Policy change

## Conclusions

- Grandchildren living with grandparents are better without parental interference (Thomas, et. Al, 2000)
- Grandparents have increased depression & stress who raise grandchildren (Thomas, et. Al, 2000)
- Correlation with grandparent anxiety and grandchild success (Sands, 2000)
- There need to be changes made (Sharpe, 2004)
  - Policy & Money
  - Community Collaborations
  - Awareness & Education
  - Services for Grandparents and grandchildren

## Resources

- Bullock, K. (2005). Grandfather and the impact of raising grandchildren. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 32, 43-57.
- Grinstead L., Leder, S., Jensen, S., Bond, L. (2003). Review of research on the health of caregiving grandparents. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 44, 318-326.
- Kropf, N., Burnette, D. (2003). Grandparents as family caregivers: Lessons for intergenerational education. *Educational Gerontology*, 29, 361-372.
- Poehlmann, J. (2003). An attachment perspective on grandparents raising their very young grandchildren: Implications, interventions, and research. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 24, 149-173.
- Sands, R., Glen, R. (2000). Factors Associated with Stress among grandparents raising grandchildren. *Family Relations*, 49, 97-105.
- Sharpe, D. (2004). Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of grandparent maintained households: Early evidence from census 2000. *Consumer Interests Annual*, 50, 48-60.
- Thomas, J., Sperry, L., & Yarborough, S. (2000). Grandparents as parents: Research findings and policy recommendations. *Child Psychiatry and Human Development*, 31, 3-20.
- Thomson, E., Hayslip, B., Patrick, J. (2005). Introduction to the special issue: Diversity among grandparent caregivers. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 60, 269-272.