



GRANDPARENTING SERIES

2
OF
3

**A commitment that evolves
and remains a source of pleasure**



A few words from grandparents

Simone, 76 | "Try to be available as much as possible to listen to your children while respecting your established limits especially during times that are difficult for them... In other words, be flexible in your relationships with your children."

Andrew, 68 | "Grandchildren bring us closer to our adult children."

A wide variety of grandparenting roles

Successful grandparenting requires adaptability and flexibility in interactions with family members. But also in the ability to maintain a healthy balance between grandparenting and participating in other social activities. For some, their personal fulfillment depends mainly on their relationships with their children or grandchildren.

There are a variety of roles that can overlap and vary over time.



CENTRAL ROLE

Grandparents devote a great deal of time and energy to caring for their grandchildren, for example, by looking after them during their first years of life while their parents work. This role gives meaning to their lives and a deep sense of purpose. However, this role may take up more space than desired or may have been imposed, which can sometimes create an imbalance.

ROLE ADAPTED TO CIRCUMSTANCES

Grandparents play an essential role by adjusting to parents' needs while maintaining their own social activities. They are often there for their grandchildren, and adjust their availability according to family requirements, such as taking care of a sick child or looking after grandchildren during the summer vacations. They sometimes assume important parental responsibilities, but do not replace the parents. This role enables grandparents to remain active and involved, and to strengthen their social participation.

ROLE ON REQUEST

Delighted to learn of the imminent arrival of a new grandchild, these grandparents immediately set limits to preserve their independence and freedom. Visits from grandchildren are planned and integrated into an often busy schedule of work, volunteering and other social, leisure and travel activities, all of which are essential to their well-being.

CARETAKER ROLE

Parents are unable, for various reasons, to look after their children. The grandparents then take over, assuming responsibility for their upbringing and meeting all their needs. This role is demanding and can limit grandparents' social participation, but it is often necessary for the family's well-being.

SUBSTITUTE ROLE

Seniors become adoptive grandparents for young people in their family who are not their grandchildren, or for young children in their circle of acquaintances. It can also be an intergenerational volunteer activity organized by community organizations, where young people without grandparents are paired with seniors ready to take on this role.

This role enriches seniors' social participation by enabling them to support families in their community.

LIMITED ROLE

For all kinds of reasons, some people don't feel emotionally or physically capable of taking on this role. They are only occasionally involved with their grandchildren, but may at times contribute financially to their well-being.



A source of pleasure, but also of tension

Taking on the responsibility of looking after grandchildren can be a great source of joy and personal fulfillment. A three-generation household means we get to know each other better and help each other out on a daily basis. On the other hand, these two situations can also create tension and stress. They can also limit the social participation of grandparents.

Possible solutions:

- Self-care is very important if we want to give the best of ourselves to our grandchildren.
- Tensions are best discussed and resolved as they arise.
- It is important to establish shared rules of conduct.
- Having your own personal space.

Grandparents who live with their children and grandchildren can become over-invested in their role within the family, which can sometimes be detrimental to their own well-being and lead to feelings of social isolation. As a result, their participation in activities outside the home and their social integration may be limited. This is particularly true for women and recent immigrants who speak neither French nor English.

This project for active retirement is part of a larger project, the collective impact plan of Réseau Résilience Aîné.es Montréal (RRAM), which aims to promote the resilience, inclusion and social participation of seniors in the city of Montreal.