

# Tips for First-Time Grandparents

*Becoming a grandparent can be one of the most joyous times in life. If it's your first time as a grandparent, it can sometimes be overwhelming and a little frightening, and you may not know what to do and not to do. Here are some helpful tips for first time grandparents:*

## **Support the new parents**

Being involved in your grandchild's life is really exciting, however it's important to remember the new parents during this time. Remember boundaries, such as not turning up unannounced. Always wait to be invited or ask to visit first and while visiting it's extra helpful to offer to cook or clean up or maybe run errands. New parents are often tired and overwhelmed and doing these things will really help. Offering to babysit is also a great idea, as it can allow the new parents some reprieve or rest time, and you get quality time with your new grandchild.

## **Don't over indulge**

It might be tempting to go on a shopping spree when you have a grandchild on the way, but make sure you ask the parents what they need, what they already have and what they don't want.

Also as your grandchild gets older, don't over indulge them with sweet treats or gifts, otherwise visits to the grandparents become associated with sugar and few boundaries and they may happen less often.

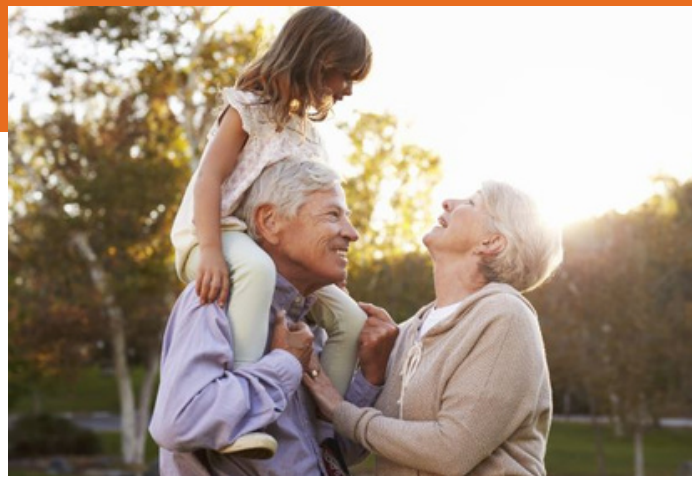
## **Don't give unwanted advice**

It's important not to continuously correct, criticise or judge the new parents, no matter how you feel about their choices or decisions. It's important to remember that it is highly likely that the new parents will do things different to you, as times have changed.

It's usually best to give advice if it is asked for, and when you do this try to make sure it is non-judgemental, non-critical, supportive advice. They will no doubt be getting advice from everywhere at this time, and won't need any extra pressure.

## **Don't compare**

New parents are usually feeling a lot of self-induced pressure to get things right. So mentioning and comparing other people's babies and how they sleep, feed well or gain weight isn't helpful. Even mentioning how your own children were when babies won't help. This may make them feel like you're judging them, even if you're just trying to help. Focussing on the positive things about the baby is the best way to communicate with new parents.



## **Make memories**

Remember to bring a camera or your phone with you when you visit, as no doubt you will want to capture all the amazing things they will do. Choose a method to record and store these memories so you can look back and reminisce in the future. Making your own digital or hard copy photo albums is also a great way to put your memories all together and show them off to your other family and friends.

## **Be prepared to share**

Remember that in the most families there are two or more sets of grandparents. Communicate with everyone involved when organising visits, gifts and things such as holidays and events. Allow for other family members wanting to help and spend time with the new bundle of joy.

## **Enjoy the best bits**

Treat your grandchild as your grandchild and not as your own child. Take a step back when or if necessary and appreciate that you can enjoy all the best bits of your grandchild, and then hand them back to their parents to deal with the midnight wake ups and dirty nappies, while you get a well-earned rest!

## **Don't do too much**

It may be important for you to be an involved and active grandparent, but don't run yourself into the ground in the process. Make sure you set boundaries and limits for yourself and don't let your life to be dictated by parental expectations or childcare. Remember you can also say no when necessary.

Sources:

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