

5 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN INTER-GENERATIONAL BONDS

WITH GRANDPARENTS' DAY FALLING ON 27 NOVEMBER, THERE'S NO BETTER TIME TO CELEBRATE THIS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP.

Grandparents have a lot to offer as positive role models to little ones. Studies suggest that children who have strong bonds with their grandparents have fewer emotional and behavioural problems, fewer difficulties with peers, and better communication and life skills. Seeing things from their grandparents' perspectives helps them develop empathy, care and kindness towards seniors. The interaction also benefits grandparents as it keeps them active and sharp. Here are some ways to create healthy grandparent-grandchild bonds.

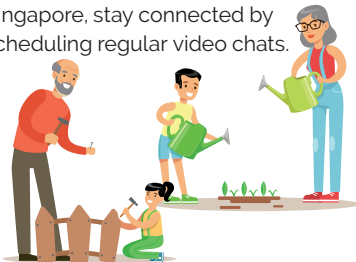


1 CREATE A MEMORY BOOK

A memory book is a photo album, memoir and time capsule rolled into one. Family members can fill it with 'wefies' and keepsakes such as a grandchild's drawing of his grandparents, ticket stubs for places they visited together, or birthday cards. Working on this project side by side with their grandchildren allows grandparents to naturally talk about family history, which helps the young ones connect with their roots and culture.

2 SCHEDULE REGULAR DATES

Set up weekly or monthly get-togethers with grandparents, such as Friday movie nights, Saturday brunches or Sundays at the park. Find a timing and activity that appeals to all so that everyone looks forward to spending that time together. Frequent, regular contact is essential to maintaining close ties. If grandparents do not live in Singapore, stay connected by scheduling regular video chats.



3 SHARE AN INTEREST

Grandparents can introduce games they used to play in their childhood or share their hobbies such as swimming or cooking. Playing together and passing on skills and knowledge, like a favourite family recipe, are valuable experiences that help children learn by doing as they spend time with their grandparents. Encouragement and affirmation from grandparents also support their grandchildren's social-emotional development.



4 GO ON A SLEEPOVER

Let children go on overnight stays at their grandparents' home. It gives grandparents a chance to spend one-on-one quality time with them and offers deeper insights into their personalities and preferences. The short separation from their parents also fosters independence and socialisation in children as they interact with adults other than their parents and teachers. For a successful sleepover, parents and grandparents should agree on basic rules for safe play, bedtime and permitted snacks and treats, to minimise disruption to children's routines.

5 WRITE A LETTER

Letters contain tangible expressions of love and affirmation. Encourage children and their grandparents to write little notes to each other to deepen emotional ties by expressing gratitude, appreciation or concern. Parents can also provide letter-writing prompts for children to communicate regularly with grandparents. For example, invite children to "write about your favourite activity in preschool today" or "write about one thing that made you happy today". Penning letters offers a bonus — it hones children's literacy skills as they learn to organise their thoughts, construct sentences with new words and practise handwriting.

