

5 TIPS TO BE A BETTER GRANDPARENT

HOW OLDER ADULTS CAN FOSTER CLOSE INTER-GENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS WITHIN FAMILIES.

Celebrating Our Grands' is an annual initiative by Families for Life that honours that special relationship across the generations. While the occasion fell on 7 October this year, every day is as good a time as any to cherish this unique bond.

Here are some things grandparents (or older extended family members, such as grandaunts and granduncles) can do to strengthen bonds and express their **love, care and concern, commitment** and **respect** towards the little ones in their families. Dr Daniel Fung, a mental health expert and a grandfather himself, offers a firsthand account.



4 BE MINDFUL OF BOUNDARIES, ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS

Honour your children's parenting style, even if it differs from your own. "Where there are disagreements about how to manage grandchildren, the parent's views should always be respected to maintain a harmonious family relationship," advises Dr Fung. "For instance, if the parents dictate screen times and sleeping habits, grandparents must follow the rules with the grandchildren."

5 BE AFFECTIONATE, NOT OVERINDULGENT

Jump at every opportunity to spend time with the grandchildren. "Having quality time playing, reading and doing things together is priceless," notes Dr Fung. "Show plenty of physical affection by kissing and cuddling your grandchildren. Praising efforts rather than outcomes will nurture a growth mindset that balances love without spoiling the grandchildren."

DR DANIEL FUNG, Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Mental Health, is a father of five and a grandparent of three. He is also a member of the Advisory Panel on Parenting, Ministry of Social and Family Development.

1 BE PRESENT AND PROACTIVE

Make the time and effort to connect with your grandchildren. Initiate regular interactions such as weekly family gatherings over meals or Zoom calls. "We have created play areas at home, for our grandchildren to play in whenever they visit," says Dr Fung. "This communicates a sense of safety and comfort, and allows the grandchildren to express themselves fully."

2 BE SUPPORTIVE OF ADULT CHILDREN

Cultivating a positive relationship between grandparent and parent influences the former's relationship with grandchildren. "Be aware of how you treat your children as fully responsible adults," says Dr Fung. "Allow their opinions to be heard and give advice only when asked."

3 BE THE SOURCE OF CULTURAL VALUES AND TRADITIONS

Help your grandchildren respect and preserve their cultural heritage. This is important, explains Dr Fung, as it provides the child with a sense of identity, meaning and purpose in the long term. "For instance, you can speak to your grandchildren the language of their ancestors. What better way to transmit culture and history?" he says.



COMING UP ROSES Parents, here's something your children can do to show how much they love and appreciate their grands! For a step-by-step tutorial to make a rosette personalised with a heartfelt message, go to [go.gov.sg/celebrating-our-grands-2023-rosette-craft](https://www.go.gov.sg/celebrating-our-grands-2023-rosette-craft). For more content on grandparenting and parenting, visit www.familiesforlife.sg/parenting.