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Recent Research Abstracts

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GRANDPARENTS

Gray, M; Misson, S; Hayes, A. (2005). Young children and their grandparents. *Family Matters*, 72 (Summer 2005), 10-17.

Grandparents have always played an important role in raising children and in family life in general. However, very little is known about the role that grandparents play in the lives of Australian children. With data from the Growing Up in Australia study, the authors provide estimates of the extent to which young children have contact with their grandparents including: living with grandparents; face-to-face contact; child-grandparent contact after parental separation; and regular care by grandparents. They find that there are very few children who have no face-to-face contact with at least one grandparent. The paper also explores the quality of relationships between children and grandparents and compares it to that between centre-based carers and the children in their care.

Orb. A; Davey, M. (2005). Grandparents parenting their grandchildren. *Australian Journal on Ageing*, 24 (3), 162-168.

This study aims to describe the perceptions of grandparents parenting their grandchildren on a full-time basis. The paper uses a descriptive qualitative approach to depict grandparents' parental experience. Seventeen grandparents, including four couples, were interviewed. Data were analysed and interpreted using content analysis. The findings indicated that grandparents parenting their grandchildren found that this unexpected role brought several emotional, social and financial problems into their lives. They actively looked for resources that could provide them with support to overcome the stressors of their parental role. Many expressed concerns about the future of their grandchildren and frustration when they were dealing with government institutions. A number of important areas are identified that have policy implications.

Bullock, K. (2005). Grandfathers and the impact of raising grandchildren. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 32 (1), 43-59.

Much of the literature on grandparents raising their grandchildren focuses on the experiences of grandmothers. This study therefore looks at the experiences and adjustments of older men in this role. Twenty-six men aged over 65 living in a rural community in North Carolina, who were taking care of at least one grandchild, were interviewed in a semi-structured manner. Eighty-one percent (N = 21) reported that their perception of powerlessness occurred either in the role transition or in the activities of daily parenting. Many expected to continue experiencing powerlessness throughout the parenting of the child. The article concludes that grandfathers' feelings of powerlessness have not been reported in the literature on grandmothers raising grandchildren. The results affirm the need to pay special attention to the needs of elderly men who take on the role of raising children.