Grandparents:
Becoming a Parent Again
**Getting Started**

Becoming a grandparent is one of the most exciting moments in your life. You waited a long time to have this special bond with grandchildren.

However, if you are one of the millions of grandparents caring for a grandchild full-time, then you know becoming a grandparent is overwhelming.

You may have fear and anxiety about providing the care your grandchild needs and deserves. You could be concerned with how that special bond will change as you take over the role of “parent”. Maybe you have a little bit of anger and frustration because your life is no longer your own, especially when you planned to relax & enjoy your retirement years.

ADRC of Brown County is here to help you and your family. Use this booklet as a guide to getting started on this journey. Reach out whenever you need help.

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Call **920-448-4300**

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
Or stop in at
300 S. Adams Street, Green Bay, WI

*Appointments are available before or after hours by prior arrangement.*

Check out the caregiver page on our website at: [www.adrcofbrowncounty.org](http://www.adrcofbrowncounty.org).
The 211 Community Services database: [www.get211.org](http://www.get211.org).

Like us on Facebook at: [adrcbrowncountywi](https://www.facebook.com/adrcbrowncountywi)
Five Tips for Caregivers

Start off on the right foot. Follow these simple tips to get organized so you can feel ready to take on the role of grandparenting.

Schedule a Family Meeting

This offers an opportunity for individuals, their families, and caregivers to communicate & work together to coordinate a plan. If any conflict exists, it may be helpful to bring a neutral party to the meeting, such as a social worker, counselor, or mediator. For more information about family meetings, visit ADRC’s website & search for “Holding a Family Meeting” booklet (www.adrcofbrowncounty.org).

Learn About Health Conditions

Knowing about your grandchild’s health condition helps you plan for the future. Many illness-specific organizations are available for information & support, such as the Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America, Childhood Leukemia Foundation, and the Epilepsy Foundation. A quick internet search will get you connected to these agencies and more.

Keep a Medical Log

This makes it easy to access your grandchild’s health information. Bring this to every medical appointment. Make sure to include a list of:

- Medications (prescribed, over-the-counter, and supplements)
- Questions & concerns for the doctor (plus notes from appointments)
- Changes you see in your grandchild

Exercise

Besides making you feel good (exercise releases natural endorphins), exercise can release stress. Be sure to check with your doctor before you begin an exercise program. You can bond with your grandchild by including him/her in your routine! Give these activities a try:

- Hiking— Include scavenger hunts for double the fun
- Tai Chi— Develop physical & mental harmony
- Golf— Putt in the backyard or make a trip to a miniature golf park
- Yoga— Relax your mind
- Exergaming— Use a fitness system, like Wii Fit

Connect & Get Support

You are not alone. Reach out to other grandparents, just like you, to form a support system. Connecting with someone going through your similar situation can help to reduce stress and improve your overall well-being. ADRC offers a Powerful Tools for Caregivers class throughout the year. Call ADRC to learn about an upcoming session (920-448-4300).
Handling Family Concerns & Challenges

As a grandparent, you are probably stepping in to raise your grandchildren during a crisis situation in your family. Learn how to cope with challenges while still providing care.

My grandchildren get upset by their parents coming in & out of their lives.

What should I do?

Consider your options and what you feel will work best for providing a stable environment for your grandchildren.

You may look to creating a schedule of visits with their parents as a way to set boundaries and provide stability. If scheduling times is a challenge, it may be beneficial to enlist the help of a trained mediator, faith professional, counselor, or family friend.

My grandchildren’s parents are addicted to alcohol or drugs.

Is there help for our family?

This can be stressful and lead to conflicts within the family, but there is help.

You and your grandchildren may find it helpful to join a support group, you may also consider counseling services, and/or exploring resources such as the Children of Alcoholics Foundation to help cope with these challenges.

My grandchildren’s parents are in jail.

Should I help my grandchildren stay in touch?

This is a significant loss not only for your grandchildren, but also for you.

Talk about the option of visiting, calling, or writing the parents with your grandchildren. If your grandchildren express interest, contact visitor services through the jail to help you identify the best way to contact the parents and plan your visit.

My grandchildren’s parents have died.

How can I help my grandchildren cope?

Take time to allow yourself and your grandchildren to grieve in your own way.

While providing support, a sense of security, and love, you may also want to inform your grandchildren’s teachers or other important figures in their life of the circumstances.

In addition, you may seek out counseling services and/or a grief support groups for you and your grandchildren.
Balancing Caregiving, Employment, and Finances

As a new grandparent caregiver, consider how you will support your grandchild financially.

Balancing Caregiving and Work:
You might need to change your work schedule, come in late/early, or alter your work-related travel to find time for caregiving responsibilities. Talk with your Human Resources department to see if your employer has an eldercare program, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or a more flexible work schedule. Child care subsidies may also be an option to pay for child care while you work. Contact the Bay Lake Consortium for eligibility guidelines (see page 6).

Returning To Work:
*If you need extra income to care for your grandchild, get assistance with your job search:*

**Job Center of Wisconsin** (701 Cherry St., Green Bay)
Provides job services, training, and employment assistance for individuals looking for work.

**Curative Connections Senior Service Program** (920-593-3557 or 800-636-1161, ext. 3557)
Provides participants, who are 55 years old or older, a position in a government or non-profit organization to gain experience and build career skills.

**Wisconsin Senior Employment (WISE) Program** (920-469-8858)
Provides participants, who are 55 years old or older, training for employment and part-time, paid work experience in community service organizations.

*Need to understand how working could affect your benefits, including retirement, FoodShare, and Medicaid? Speak with a Work Incentive Benefit Specialist at either of these locations:*

**Employment Resource, Inc.** (608-246-3444, [www.eri-wi.org](http://www.eri-wi.org))

**Options for Independent Living** (920-490-0500)

Financial Assistance:
Based on your grandchild’s income (e.g. trust fund or child support payments), you may be able to access benefit programs, such as: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for children with disabilities, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and/or the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

To access to some of these benefits, you do not need to have custody or guardianship of your grandchild. However, other benefits will require you to have a formal legal relationship with your grandchild. Contact a Benefit Specialist at ADRC for more information (920-448-4300). If you have custody of your grandchild, consider speaking with a family law lawyer about child support payments to help in raising your grandchild.
Financial Assistance, Benefits, and Legal Concerns

The following resources offer a variety of ways in which to learn about available benefits and assistance as someone raising a grandchild.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bay Lake Consortium</th>
<th>Child Care Assistance (WI SHARES Program) available to assist eligible working families in paying for child care.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>111 N. Jefferson St., Green Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contact:</strong></td>
<td>888-794-5747, <a href="http://www.access.wi.gov">www.access.wi.gov</a></td>
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<th>Brown County Child Support Agency</th>
<th>Child support payments may be available for grandparents raising grandchildren.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Note:</strong></td>
<td>Grandparents may want to first consult with a family law attorney.</td>
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<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>111 N. Jefferson St., Green Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contact:</strong></td>
<td>920-448-4090, <a href="http://www.co.brown.wi.us">www.co.brown.wi.us</a></td>
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<th>Brown County Health &amp; Human Services</th>
<th>Provides information, referral, support, and assistance for individuals who may be experiencing economic hardship, neglect, abuse, juvenile crime, or incapacities.</th>
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<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>111 N. Jefferson St., Green Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contact:</strong></td>
<td>920-448-6000, <a href="http://www.co.brown.wi.us">www.co.brown.wi.us</a></td>
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<th>Kinship Care</th>
<th>Offers assistance with transitioning into a relative caregiver role. Financial assistance through Kinship Care Grant may be available. Contact to discuss eligibility requirements and application process.</th>
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<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Contact:</strong></td>
<td>920-448-4144, <a href="http://www.co.brown.wi.us">www.co.brown.wi.us</a></td>
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<th>National Coalition of Grandparents</th>
<th>National coalition of grandparent caregivers who are working for legislation and policy changes in support of relative caregivers, with the goal of protecting &amp; ensuring inherent rights of grandparents, children, and their kin.</th>
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<td><strong>Location:</strong></td>
<td>137 Larkin St., Madison</td>
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<td><strong>Contact:</strong></td>
<td>608-238-8751</td>
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Education

The following educational resources offer learning opportunities for grandparents & grandchildren.

**Family & Childcare Resources of N.E.W.**

Equips adults with information, programming, and resources. Offers a drop-in play area and playgroups to support caregivers and promote child socialization.

- **Location:** 201 W. Walnut St., Suite 100, Green Bay
- **Contact:** 920-432-8899, [www.fcrnew.org](http://www.fcrnew.org)

**Head Start**

Free classes offered for children who will be three or four years old on September 1st. Families must meet income requirements (call for guidelines) and/or be working with foster care or kinship care. Program includes: medical & dental screenings, meals, snacks, transportation, bi-lingual programming for English Language Learners (Spanish), services for children with disabilities, and trainings for parents, guardians, and families.

- **Location:** 1420 Harvey St., Green Bay
- **Contact:** 920-448-2226, [www.headstart.gbaps.org](http://www.headstart.gbaps.org)

**Howe Community Resource Center**

Safe place for individuals and families to learn and grow, individually & together. Offers parenting classes, home visits, and reading tutoring to strengthen the individual and family unit. Provide information on community resources.

- **Location:** 526 S. Monroe Ave., Green Bay
- **Contact:** 920-448-7340, [www.howecommunityresourcecenter.org](http://www.howecommunityresourcecenter.org)

**HSHS Grandparent Class**

Discussion of changes that occur for grandparents transitioning into their role. This class is particularly helpful for first-time grandparents.

- **Location:** St. Vincent Hospital, 835 S. Van Buren St., Green Bay
**Need a Break? Find Childcare.**

Use these resources to find daycares near you, including those with sliding scale fee options. Also, check with your grandchild’s school to see if after-school care is offered.

**Family & Childcare Resource Center of NEW**

Staff can help in your search for childcare or after school care. Access their database of regulated child care in Brown County, plus learn about questions to ask when looking for child care options.

**Contact:** 920-432-8899 (800-738-8899), [www.fcrnew.org](http://www.fcrnew.org)
**Location:** 201 W. Walnut St., Suite 100, Green Bay

**Young Star**

This is Wisconsin’s Child Care Quality Rate & Improvement System. Use the database to search for quality childcare across the state. *(Family & Childcare Resource Center of NEW is the local YoungStar office.)*

**Contact:** [www.dcf.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dcf.wisconsin.gov)

**Health**

The following health resources can help promote your grandchild’s physical well-being & safety.

**Brown County Health & Human Services–Public Health Division**

Offers immunization clinics, car seat education & installation, hearing/vision screening for school-aged children, service coordination for children with special healthcare needs, information & referral to community resources, and home visits for assessment & education about parenting issues, growth, and development.

**Location:** 610 S. Broadway St., Green Bay
**Contact:** 920-448-6400, [www.co.brown.wi.us](http://www.co.brown.wi.us)

**De Pere Health Department**

Offers similar programs as the Brown County Health & Human Services–Public Health Division (listed above), but only for De Pere residents.

**Location:** 335 S. Broadway St., De Pere
**Contact:** 920-339-4054, [www.de-pere.org](http://www.de-pere.org)
Clothing & Furniture Assistance

The following resources offer options & assistance for getting basic items, such as clothing, furniture, and other household goods.

**Goodwill Industries**
Retail stores offering affordable clothing/household items. Need-based vouchers available for eligible individuals.

**Location:** 2814 S. Oneida St. & 1301 Brosig St., Green Bay
**Contact:** 920-498-0990 & 920-465-9601, [www.goodwillncw.org](http://www.goodwillncw.org)

**Love Life Ministry**
Assists low-income families in meeting basic infant needs under age 3; diapers and other baby items as available. 1 - 4 pm Thursdays except 5th Thursdays of the month. Must bring a photo ID, proof of address, proof of birth for children & WIC card if available.

**West Side Site**
The Hope Center
505 Clinton Street
Green Bay, WI 54303
920-497-1087

**East Side Site**
Central Church
831 Schoen Street
Green Bay, WI 54302

**St. Vincent de Paul Society & Store**
Retail store offering affordable clothing/household items. Need-based vouchers available for eligible individuals.

**Location:** 1529 Leo Frigo Way & 940 Hansen Rd., Green Bay
**Contact:** 920-435-4040, [www.svdpgb.org](http://www.svdpgb.org)

**Salvation Army Men’s Closet**
Free, work-appropriate clothing for men in need.

**Location:** 1125 W. Mason St., Green Bay

**YWCA Women’s Closet**
Free, work-appropriate clothing for women in need.

**Location:** 230 S. Madison St., Green Bay
Need to Talk with Someone? Get Support.

The following support resources can be used as a starting point to gain more information about services pertaining to grandparents raising grandchildren.

Brown County Human Services Department
Provides information, referral, support, and assistance for individuals who may be experiencing economic hardships, neglect, abuse, juvenile crime, or incapacities.

Location: 111 N. Jefferson St., Green Bay
Contact: 920-448-6000, www.co.brown.wi.us

Family Services of Northeast WI, Inc.
Offers various programs to support children and families, including: early childhood development, counseling/treatment services, and at-risk youth.

Location: 300 Crooks St., Green Bay
Contact: 920-436-6800, www.familyservicesnew.org

Crisis Center of Family Services
Provides 24/7, free, confidential, short-term counseling for persons of all ages in Brown County.

Location: 300 Crooks St., Green Bay
Contact: 920-436-8888

ADRC of Brown County
Information & Assistance and Benefits Specialists available by phone or appointment to discuss a wide variety of community resource options. Check-out books & DVDs through the ADRC Resource Room. Materials for grandparents raising grandchildren, adults, pre-teens, and children. Also, inquire about class availability for Powerful Tools for Caregivers.

Location: 300 S. Adams St., Green Bay
Contact: 920-448-4300, www.adrcofbrowncounty.org
Information is Power—Online Resources

Use the following state & national resources to get more information.

AARP: Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
Provides basic guide for individuals raising a grandchild (or another relative’s child). Guide includes the following information: getting started, support, legal issues, finances, work, housing & safety, health, education & child care, and family challenges.

Contact: www.grandfamilies.org

Brookdale Foundation Group: Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP)
Promotes the creation or expansion of services for grandparents & other relatives who have taken on the responsibility of surrogate parenting due to the abuse of the parents. Provides access to RAPP publications, helpful state & national links, and local & stage programs.

Contact: www.brookdalefoundation.net

Family Caregiver Alliance
Offers caregiver tips, information, policy issues, newsletters, online groups, and more resources.

Contact: www.caregiver.org

Grandfamilies State Law & Policy Resource Center
National collaborative, legal resource supporting grandfamilies in & outside of the child welfare system. Find a searchable database of laws & legislations applicable to grandfamilies, summaries and comparisons of laws & legislation, publications that support grandfamilies, and more.

Contact: www.grandfamilies.org

National Alliance for Caregiving
Offers reports, caregiving tips, publications, and more.

Contact: www.caregiving.org

UW-Extension: Grandparenting Today
“Through the Eyes of a Child” fact sheets give grandparents information about relationships & child development.

Contact: http://fyi.uwex.edu/grandparenting

WI Family Caregiver Support Program
Provides information for persons 55 or older and are a relative (grandparent) caring for a child or relative with a disability.

Contact: www.wisconsincaregiver.org