



Taking care of you and your family



Grandparents and other important relatives in a child's life

Becoming a grandparent can be an exciting and wonderful experience. You might also be an aunt, uncle or other relative who plays a big part in the life of a child. Being an important person in the life of a child is very rewarding but sometimes it can cause you to worry about things. Sometimes you might disagree with the child's parents about the decisions they make. Many parents rely on their family to help with children so that they get support and a rest. Whether you look after a child in the family a lot, or you live far away and offer advice and support, you can have an important role to play in helping to bring a child up.

Advice changes



You may be proud of the way your relative parents their child but you might not always agree about the best way to do things. It is important to recognise that advice about the best ways to look after children so that they develop and grow, changes over time as we discover more about what works and what matters. You can play an important role in reminding parents that they are doing a good job and in helping out when things get stressful. However, having a good relationship with the parent(s) bringing up the child may not always be easy for all kinds of reasons.

Remembering that you all want the best for the child you care about can help remind us of how important it is to get on with each other. If you are not sure about the decisions they are making about the way they are bringing up the child, whatever age from baby to teenager, try asking them to explain and be ready to listen. Sometimes balancing helping out with a child in the family with other responsibilities is difficult, and it is OK to let a parent know when you are too busy or tired to help.

Dealing with difficult things



Difficult circumstances like money worries, problems with the place where they live or things that are happening in the family can all make it more difficult for parents to cope. Many people manage to cope well under difficult circumstances but then something significant happens, like a bereavement or losing a job, which can make day-to-day life extra hard. If a parent has mental health issues or other things that they are struggling with, or if they are in a relationship that is not going well, this can all affect how well you feel they are coping with parenting. It can also be hard when a child has extra support needs or something is making them unhappy and affecting their behaviour.

At these times, parents may turn to you for extra help and support but sometimes you might not be in a position to help as much as they need or they might not be willing or able to listen to your advice or accept your support.



It's OK to talk about getting extra support

If you're worried about a child in your family, try talking to their parent(s) about getting some extra help and support. When coping with children gets difficult it can be hard to ask for help, parents might worry that they are being criticised or that nobody understands how hard they are trying.

Let them know that everybody needs help sometimes and that asking for help is the right thing to do. The earlier they ask for help the better but it is never too late to get help.



Getting support



Even if you can offer lots of help to a parent and their children in your family, there are times when everyone needs a little extra advice and support with things. You can let them know about the places they can go for support.

You can find information about places to go for advice and support, including services in your area here:
<https://gov.wales/parenting-give-it-time/support>

Additional support



Family Lives offers a confidential and free helpline service for families who can call on 0808 800 2222 for emotional support, information, advice and guidance on any aspect of parenting and family life. Their helpline service is open 9am – 9pm, Monday to Friday and 10am – 3pm Saturday and Sunday. Or you can email them on askus@familylives.org.uk

They also offer advice online for parents <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/> and for grandparents <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/grandparents/>

Parent Talk Cymru (Action for Children) also offers a free and confidential live chat with a parenting coach available in English and Welsh. Visit <https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/parent-talk-cymru>

If you're worried that an adult or child in your family is at risk of harm at home or in the community, help is available:

- **NSPCC Helpline:** Whatever your worry – you can phone for free on 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk Monday to Friday 9am – 6pm or 9am – 4pm at the weekends, or visit <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/our-services/nspcc-helpline/>
- **Live Fear Free 24/7 Helpline:** 0808 80 10 800 or email info@livefearfreehelpline.wales

Asking for help is not always easy but it can be the first step in making things better for you and your family.



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