

15 WAYS TO STAY CONNECTED with Your Grandchildren

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Much has been said about how COVID-19 affects the health of older generations, but family relationships are a concern too. **Many seniors feel cut off from one of their greatest joys in life, their grandchildren.**

Since the end of March 2020, 69% of grandparents haven't met their new grandchildren face to face. Another 76% haven't hugged or touched any of their grandchildren. That's according to a survey by the grandparenting organization Gransnet.

While sleep-over visits and hugging may be too risky for a while, **there are other ways to stay in touch.** Brush up on the modern rules for supporting healthy and safe relationships between grandparents and grandchildren.

Communication Tips for Modern Families:

1. **Explain the facts.** Your grandchildren probably miss you too, especially if they were used to seeing you frequently. Provide age appropriate information about why seniors have to take extra precautions.
2. **Set boundaries.** Family members may disagree about COVID-19 precautions. Coordinate boundaries with the parents.
3. **Create a schedule. Routines help us to cope with uncertainty.** Plan a weekly virtual gathering or a daily text with a riddle or a new vocabulary word.
4. **Show empathy.** Support each other through these difficult times. Maybe you

can offer practical assistance or help your grandchild to put their feelings into words.

5. **Explore resources.** It may help to talk with other grandparents in similar situations. Join an online forum where you can discuss common challenges and discover reliable sources of information and guidance.

Activities You Can Still Share with your Grandchildren:

1. **Make video calls.** Chat on Zoom and Facetime. Quick tutorials can walk you through the basics or ask another family member for help setting up an account.
2. **Write letters.** Old school communications still work. **Your grandchild will be excited to receive a letter or card addressed to them.**
3. **Share videos.** Create lasting memories with videos. Record yourself describing a story from your family history. Ask your children to capture some moments from your grandchild's day.
4. **Send gifts.** Presents can make staying at home more pleasant. Maybe your grandchild can use some educational items that will enrich their home learning. Maybe the whole family would appreciate a subscription with healthy ingredients for home cooked meals.
5. **Celebrate milestones.** What about holidays and birthdays? If it's too risky to gather indoors, you may still be able to have a party online or outside with distancing and masks.
6. **Give tours.** Put together a virtual tour to show your grandchildren what you're doing. Include footage of your summer vegetable garden and your indoor and

outdoor Christmas decorations.

7. Watch movies. Apps like Netflix party are the closest thing to sitting on the same couch. Pick a film the family will enjoy and discuss it afterwards.

8. Play games. You can also play video games online. Ask your grandchildren to teach you about their favorite titles.

9. Read stories. When is the last time you read to your grandchild? Schedule an evening video call to share a passage from a book they love. Even if your grandchild is too young to understand the words, they can become more familiar with your voice. Older children can take turns reading to you.

10. Eat together. Family meals can be virtual too. Teach your grandchildren how to make macaroni and cheese or chocolate chip pancakes. Pretend you're dining at the same table.

Talk with your doctor about your individual needs and keep up with local health and safety guidelines about family gatherings. The pandemic has changed our daily routines, but you can still shower your grandchildren with love and attention.