



# Grand Connections

Workshop 1A

Grandparents: The Cornerstone of Early Child Care



**ZERO TO THREE**  
Early connections last a lifetime

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## ABOUT ZERO TO THREE

ZERO TO THREE works to ensure all infants and toddlers benefit from the family and community connections critical to their well-being and development. Since 1977, the organization has advanced the proven power of nurturing relationships by transforming the science of early childhood into helpful resources, practical tools and responsive policies for millions of parents, professionals, and policymakers.

## OVERVIEW

The U.S. Census Bureau<sup>1</sup> reports that 1 out of 4 children under age 5 is cared for by a grandparent while parents work or go to school. Grandparents play a critical role in a fragile child care system in which formal care for children under the age of 5 is often unaffordable or unavailable. According to ZERO TO THREE's national survey of grandparents who provide regular child care for children age 5 and under<sup>2</sup>, most grandparents who care for their young grandchildren feel confident in their experience and ability to provide quality care. But many say they'd like to know more about child development and nearly half report some level of disagreement with their grandchild's parent over one or more aspects of care.

## LEARNING GOALS

Workshop participants will:

- 1** Connect with other grandparents providing care for young grandchildren.
- 2** Explore the joys and challenges of sharing child care between two generations.
- 3** Consider ways in which child-rearing advice has changed in the past two or three decades.

### **IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT THIS WORKSHOP:**

*The Grand Connections series of workshops is intended to help grandparents in a variety of caregiving situations understand and respond to the developmental needs of young children. Workshops 1 and 2 address issues specific to family circumstances, so we've prepared two versions of each: one for grandparents sharing the care and one for custodial grandparents acting in the role of a parent/guardian. Facilitators should choose the appropriate version for their population.*

***This version focuses on issues specific to grandparents who are providing regular child care for grandchildren (not full-time custodial care).***

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). Who's minding the kids? Child care arrangements: Spring 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-135.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> ZERO TO THREE, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2889-the-grand-plan-executive-summary>



## AGENDA

1. **Getting to Know You and Five Fast Facts** (15 minutes)
2. **Film Viewing and Discussion** (30 minutes)
3. **Old School/New School** (15 minutes)
4. **Shared Storytime** (30 minutes)

## MATERIALS

- Name tags and markers
- Chart paper
- Drawing paper, crayons, washable markers and stickers for the Shared Storytime activity, page 13.
- A copy of **Actual Size (Tamaño real)** by Steve Jenkins
- **Handout 1A.1: Old School/New School**

## PREPARATION

- Review PowerPoint slides and arrange for viewing.
- Preview three short grandparenting films found at <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2909-grandparent-films-a-peek-at-grandparent-caregivers-in-families>. Arrange a means for viewing.
- As background for the **Old School/New School** activity found on page 9, you may wish to review the Grandparent Guide handouts found at [www.zerotothree.org/grandparentguide](http://www.zerotothree.org/grandparentguide)
- Print **Handout 1A.1: Old School/New School**, one copy per participant.



*If delivering this course online, share handouts before the workshop. (Be prepared to email them at the beginning of the session to anyone who doesn't have them close at hand.) Note that all essential handout information is included in the PowerPoint slides, in case viewing and sharing of handouts are not possible.*

## WORKSHOP FACILITATION

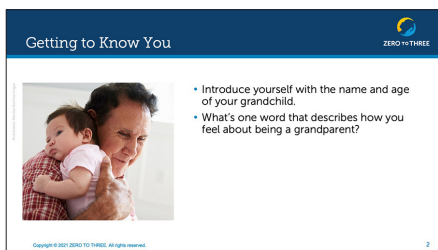
### Activity 1 | Getting to Know You and Five Fast Facts (15 minutes)

Invite grandparents to create a name tag with their name and their grandchildren's names underneath. If delivering this workshop in person, encourage grandparents to escort grandchildren to child care for the first portion of the meeting. If not offering child care, provide additional seating and offer children board books and other quiet toys (perhaps borrowed through your local library system) to use during the program.



#### Show Slide 1:

- **Introduce yourself and your co-facilitators** and describe your interest and experience in working with grandparents and young children.




#### Show Slide 2:

- **Open the meeting** by asking grandparents to introduce themselves and think of one word to describe how they feel about being a grandparent. Give each person a turn to share their response. Grandparents may wish to share additional information about themselves and their grandchildren as well: the names and ages of their grandchildren (and perhaps a photo).
- As each grandparent shares, **validate or comment on an aspect of their response**, note connections or themes across responses, and/or express appreciation for the grandparent's enthusiasm, honesty, etc.
- [Optional] **Ask participants to brainstorm** ground rules (or "agreements about how we'll treat one another during the workshop") (e.g., making space for differing opinions, allowing all participants to have a voice in each session, etc.) Write these down. You might suggest the following ground rules, if they have not been mentioned:
  1. Use "I" statements to describe how they feel or what they think.
  2. Commit to confidentiality.
  3. Be courageous and "Go out on a limb": a way to indicate that someone is feeling a bit unsure of sharing something but is trusting other participants to show compassion and support, and not judge.

**Note to facilitator:** Keep a copy or snap a photo of this list for use in future group meetings.

Goals



- Connect with other grandparents who provide care for young grandchildren.
- Explore the joys and challenges of sharing child care between two generations.
- Consider ways in which child-rearing advice has changed in the past two or three decades.

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Agenda



1. Getting to Know You and Five Fast Facts
2. Film Viewing and Discussion
3. Old School/New School
4. Shared Storytime

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Five Fast Facts



- 1 out of 4 children under the age of 5 is cared for by a grandparent while a parent works or goes to school.
- In a national survey, 98% of grandparents who share child care say they love being a grandparent.
- 70% say they're more patient than they were with their own kids.
- 65% say they have more time to spend with grandchildren than they did with their own kids.
- Caring for grandkids can be hard work. 41% of surveyed grandparents say looking after young grandchildren is tiring. 21% say it's stressful.

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## Show Slides 3 and 4:

- Share today's goals and agenda.

## Show Slide 5:

- Offer the following introduction:

*Grandparents are a cornerstone in the care of young children in this country. I'd like to share a few facts with you about just how important this care is.*

1. *In the U.S., 1 out of 4 children under the age of 5 is routinely cared for by a grandparent while their parent works or goes to school. This is about the same number of children —4.8 million— as are enrolled in formal child care programs.*
  2. *ZERO TO THREE, a nonprofit organization focused on the healthy development of young children, conducted a national survey of grandparents who provide regular care of grandchildren ages 5 and under. Not surprisingly, they found that 98% of surveyed grandparents who share the care say they love being a grandparent.*
  3. *70% of surveyed grandparents say they're more patient with their grandkids than they were with their own kids.*
  4. *65% of surveyed grandparents say they have more time to spend with grandchildren.*
  5. *For most grandparents, this role is a delight. But it's also hard work. 41% of surveyed grandparents say looking after young grandchildren is tiring. 21% say it's stressful.*
- Pause for a moment and **ask the group if they would agree with these statistics** —do they reflect their experiences as grandparents who provide care for their young grandchild? Take several responses.

We know you share your time, your love, and your experience with your children and grandchildren by providing care. This is a valuable service not just to your families, but to the whole community.

In this series of workshops, we'll talk about what it's like to be a grandparent today. We'll draw on your personal experiences as well as some of the latest research on the child-rearing issues you and your grandchild's parents face as you figure out how best to care for the little people you love. We also hope you'll have an opportunity to get to know and connect with other grandparents like you who are providing care for their grandchildren as well.

## Activity 2 | Film Viewing and Discussion (30 minutes)



### Show Slide 6:

- **Introduce the activity using scripting such as:**

We're pleased to share with you ZERO TO THREE's series of short films that tell the stories of three families sharing child care between two generations. You can re-watch these films whenever you'd like on their website [www.zerotothree.org/grandparents](http://www.zerotothree.org/grandparents).


1. In one (*Mom, Grandma & Me*), a grandmother moves to a new neighborhood to provide her daughter and grandson with a secure base for a fresh start.
2. In another (*Carrying on a Family Tradition*), a couple juggles two careers and a two-year-old, with assistance from his mom and her dad.
3. In a third (*Room for One More*), a grandfather moves in with his son, daughter-in-law, and two grandsons under difficult circumstances, and there are unexpected benefits for all.


After we view each video, we'll pause and discuss the approach each family has taken to sharing the care of young children—how it's working and how similar or different it may be to the approach your family has taken.

- **Show each video, pausing after each for an 7-8 minute discussion.** Suggested discussion questions follow below. If a film provokes lots of conversation, it's ok to abbreviate subsequent discussions or skip a film in the interest of time.



If delivering this workshop online, use the Share Screen feature for viewing the video together.

Film Viewing: *Mom, Grandma, and Me* 





- What's one thing you'll remember from this family's story?
- Is it easier or more difficult to share child care when grandparent and parent share the same space? Why?
- How did you see the mother and grandmother in this family show respect for one another?
- Where do you find support? How do you manage the stress of caring for little ones?

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## Show Slide 7: Play video - *Mom, Grandma, and Me* (3:00)

- Discussion Questions:
  1. *What's one thing that you'll remember from this family's story?*
  2. *Is it easier or more difficult to share child care when a grandparent and parent live in the same space? Why?*  
Note: ZERO TO THREE's national grandparent survey found that grandparents living in multi-generational households describe a more complex mix of emotions than those living apart. Among grandparents who participated, those in shared households were more likely to agree that caregiving is stressful, or that they don't have enough time to themselves. They were also more likely to report disagreements and found it harder to "bite their tongues."
  3. *How did you see the mother and grandmother in this family show respect for, and collaboration with, one another even as they share the same space?"*
  4. *Grandma Althea suggests a community "meet-up" for grandparents to help them form friendships and offer support to one another. Where do you find support? How do you manage the stress of caring for little ones?*

Film Viewing: *Carrying on a Family Tradition* 



- What struck you as you watched this family's story?
- In what ways do this family's child care arrangements work well? What personal qualities do you think parents and grandparents need to share the care of grandchildren?
- If you were designing classes for grandparents, what would be important to include?


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## Show Slide 8: Play video - *Carrying on a Family Tradition* (3:02)

- Discussion Questions:
  1. *What struck you as you watched this family's story?*
  2. *In what ways do this family's child care arrangements work well? What personal qualities do you think parents and grandparents need to share the care of grandchildren?*
  3. *What do you think of Jessica's suggestion of classes for grandparents? What can organizations do to make workshops such as this one engaging for grandparents?*



Film Viewing: *Room for One More*



- What felt familiar as you listened to this family's story?
- How do you and your grandchild's parent decide on your rules for caregiving?
- How do you manage conflicts that come up around caregiving? What advice would you give?

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## Show Slide 9: Play video - *Room for One More* (3:20)

- Discussion Questions:
  1. *What felt familiar as you listened to this family's story?*
  2. *The grandfather, José Sr., says that he's experienced in caring for young children and claims to be "old and set in his ways." In fact, nearly half the grandparent participants in ZERO TO THREE's survey said they sometimes disagreed with their grandchild's parents about issues like managing behavior, mealtimes, sleep, or screen time. What is your position on following your adult child's caregiving guidelines? How did you come to that decision?*
  3. *How do you manage conflicts that come up around caregiving? What advice would you give to a grandparent who is dealing similar issues?*

## Activity 3 | Old School/New School (15 minutes)

This activity is designed to give grandparents a preview of some of the workshop topics ahead. Grandparents may have experiences and opinions to share as time permits. Facilitators can validate that some advice has changed a lot in a generation or two and reassure grandparents that they will have many opportunities in the coming workshops to discuss these topics in more depth.

Old School/New School



- Discuss with a partner:
  - What was the best advice you received as a new parent?
  - What was the worst advice?

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### Show Slide 10:

- **Introduce the activity using scripting such as:**

*Parents get so much advice. Take a moment to find a partner and discuss the best and worst advice you received as a new parent. Allow 5 minutes; re-convene the group and ask for 3-5 volunteers to share their responses before moving on.*

Old School, New School, or Both?

Old School	New School
------------	------------

- Is this old-school advice, new advice, or has it remained unchanged for the past few decades?
- Fold your paper in half and show the answer you think is true. (Show both sides if the answer is "both.")

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### Show Slide 11:

- **Distribute Handout 1A.1: Old School, New School** to each participant. Note instructions to fold the handout in half so that the words are visible on the outside:
 


*Our next activity is designed to highlight some of the differences between current child-rearing advice from researchers and physicians today and the advice given to parents of a generation ago, as well as the advice that hasn't changed at all.*

*Here's how we'll play. I will read three statements. For each one, you'll decide if you think that advice is "old school" — hold up the*

*“old school” side of your handout; “new school” – hold up the “new school” side of your handout; or “both” – open your handout and show both sides.”*

- **Read each prompt aloud** and pause after each prompt to allow for voting.

Old School/New School ZERO TO THREE



- It's OK for kids to ride in cars without car seats.
  - Is this old-school advice, today's advice, or both?

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### Show Slide 12:

- **Say:** *It's ok for kids to ride in cars without car seats. Is this statement: Old-school, New-school, or both?*
- **After voting, explain:** *That is old-school advice. From today's perspective, it's hard to believe that riding without car seats was once the norm. Tennessee was the first state with a child restraint law in 1978, and it wasn't until 1985 that all states required car seats.*
- If desired, ask discussion questions such as: *Sometimes challenges come up with car seats – from installing them to toddlers who don't want to stay in them! Have you encountered any challenges, or do you have any advice to share?*

Old School/New School ZERO TO THREE



- A healthy breakfast always includes a cup of juice.
  - Is this old-school advice, today's advice, or both?

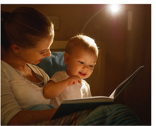
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### Show Slide 13:

- **Say:** *A healthy breakfast always includes a cup of juice. Is this statement: Old-school, New-school, or both?*
- **After voting, explain:** *That is old-school guidance. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no juice at all for babies under the age of one year, and recommends that juice servings are limited to 4 ounces per day in toddlers aged 1 to 3 years of age, and 4 to 6 ounces per day for children age 4 to 6.*

*Whole fruit is a healthier choice than juice. (For more information, see the following resource for more information: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1902-the-truth-about-juice>)*

Old School/New School ZERO TO THREE



- It's never too early to read to a child.
  - Is this old-school advice, today's advice, or both?

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### Show Slide 14:

- **Say:** *It's never too early to read aloud to a child. Is this statement: Old-school, New-school, or both?*
- **After voting, explain:** *Both old-school and new-school advice—adults have always been encouraged to read to children. There are all kinds of educational benefits to reading, and it's never too early to start. In fact, a well-known research study found that the amount of language a child is exposed to by their family and caregivers in the early years is directly related to the size of the child's vocabulary when they enter school. So one big way you*



### To encourage more online interaction:

- You may wish to ask each participant to share their response in the chat box.
- If your platform allows, you can turn the “old school/new school” question into a poll with suggested answers that participants can vote on, while also allowing participants to share other ideas via the chat box. Or, if you opt to provide hard copy handouts to grandparents, they can hold up their handout in front of the camera in response to each prompt, as explained above.
- Try capturing group sentiments in a word document or white board while the discussion is in progress. Participants can add new ideas or elaborate on the ideas already presented.

can help prepare your grandchild for school from day one is by reading, talking and singing together. (For more information, see the following resource for more information: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1985-the-grandparent-guide-what-s-new-what-s-the-same>)

### Conclude the activity:

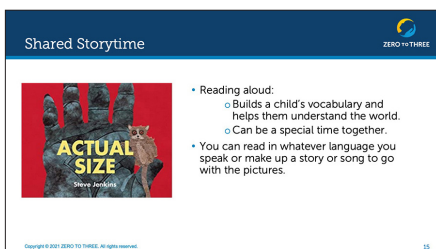
- **Ask:** Were any of these statements new or surprising? [Take several responses.]

**Continue:** If the latest child development advice surprises you, you’re not alone. While 71% of grandparents in the ZERO TO THREE survey said they feel confident in the parenting skills they acquired through their experience as moms and dads, 41% say knowing the latest research could help them better care for their grandchildren.

Nearly half of the grandparent survey respondents said they sometimes disagree with their grandchild’s parents over issues like managing behavior, mealtimes, sleeping, and screen time. When discussing rules and caregiving practices with your grandchild’s parents, it helps if you both begin from the same place. Understanding the current guidance is good starting point. In our next workshop, we’ll talk about what to do when parents and grandparents disagree.

## Activity 4 | Shared Storytime (30 minutes)

In this activity, grandparents and grandchildren participate in an interactive story time and follow-up art activity together. If child care has been provided in a separate room, have children rejoin their grandparents.



### Show Slide 15:

- **Ask:** How many of you read to your grandchildren? How often?
- **Introduce the activity using scripting such as:**

Reading aloud has great benefits at every age. It builds a child’s vocabulary and deepens their understanding of the world. It doesn’t matter how well you read or what language you read in. Sharing stories provides a special time together for just grandparent and grandchild.

Today, we will be reading a story titled *Actual Size (Tamaño real)* by Steve Jenkins, which is a great introduction to math concepts such as size comparisons like big and little.



If conducting this workshop online, review the instructions below with participants. Grandparents can incorporate the reading strategies and art project into their regular child care activities.

**Ask children:** *Can anyone tell me something that is very, very BIG? Now can anyone tell me something that is very, very LITTLE? That is what our story is all about.*

*In this book, the author shows us animals (and parts of animals) at their actual size. Some of the animals are very, very small. You can barely see them on the page. Some of the other animals are very, VERY BIG. Let's see if we can discover together which are big and which are little!*

- **Read the story aloud:** As you read, you can use some of the strategies below to engage the children in the story.
  - Use voices that suggest an animal's size: a high, squeaky voice for the tiny dwarf goby and a deep voice for the large eye of the giant squid.
  - On a few different pages, give children a turn to come up to the book and measure with their hands to discover how big or small each animal or animal body part is.
  - Ask children to compare the illustrations in the book to parts of their own bodies. Invite children to come up to the front and show you their teeth as compared to the shark's teeth. Their eyes vs. a giant squid's eye. Ask: *Which is bigger? Which is smaller?*
- **Ask questions about the story:** *Do you have any pets in your house? Are they big or little? In your family, who is the biggest/tallest? Who is the smallest?*



## Show Slide 16:

- **Invite families to move to the activity tables.** For the activity, give children the chance to think about "actual size" in relation to their own family. Distribute 2 pieces of white paper and some markers/crayons/stickers to each family. Ask the grandparent to trace one of the grandchild's hands on a piece of paper. Next to their grandchild's hand, the adult should trace one of their hands. (If there are preschoolers or school age children participating, they may want to take the lead on tracing.) Grandchildren can color in the hands and add stickers or other decoration.
- **Encourage the grandparents to talk about actual size:** *Whose hands are bigger or smaller?* Grandparents or children can label the tracings with their name and their grandchild's name. If desired, they can use the second piece of paper to repeat the activity by asking grandparents to trace their own and their grandchild's foot. Again, grandparents can help their grandchild make comparisons about big/little: *One big foot. One little foot.*
  - For grandparents of babies: Very young babies may not cooperate with tracing activities, though some may allow the grandparent to gently trace their hands. Grandparents can also compare hands directly, palm to palm: *My hand is*



*big, your hand is little.* Grandparents can walk around the room with babies and describe what they see other grandparent-grandchild pairs doing, using the words like *big* and *little*.

- o Grandparents of babies can also share the following rhyme/ fingerplay. While holding babies on their laps, facing them, grandparents say:

*This is big, big, big* (Hold baby's hands and open arms wide)

*This is small, small, small* (Hold baby's hands and bring them close together)

*This is short, short, short* (Hold baby's hands and pat them on their thighs)

*This is tall, tall, tall* (Hold baby's hands and hold them high in the air)

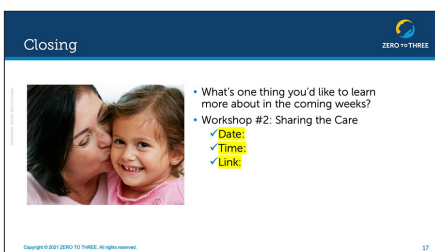
*This is yes, yes, yes* (Nod head "yes")

*This is no, no, no* (Shake head "no")

*This is fast, fast, fast* (Hold baby's hands and clap them quickly)

*This is slow, slow, slow* (Hold baby's hands and clap them slowly)

- **Begin clean up.** Ten minutes before the workshop's conclusion, note that it will soon be time to clean up. With five minutes to go, ask older children to help collect materials.



### Show Slide 17: Conclude the workshop

- When materials have been put away and you have everyone's attention, **ask participants to briefly share** one thing they hope to learn more about in the upcoming weeks.
- **Thank the group for coming** and announce the date, time, and topic for the next meeting.

## Handout 1A.1: Old School/New School

Fold paper in half. Show one side for "Old School," the other for "New School." Unfold to show both.

**New  
School**

**Old  
School**

## Folleto 1A.1: Tradiciones viejas /Tradiciones nuevas

Doble la hoja de papel por la mitad. En un lado, muestre “Tradiciones viejas” y, en el otro, “Tradiciones nuevas”. Abra la hoja para mostrar las dos tradiciones

**Tradiciones  
nuevas**

**Tradiciones  
viejas**