

This leaflet explains some of the ways the Grandparents Association and your local Family Mediation Service can assist family members to continue to see each other and support children to make adjustments in their young lives.



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Registered Charity No. 1074796



Working for children

The Grandparents Association

Mediation Project

The Grandparents Association

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Grandparents *and* Grandchildren

Is your relationship with your grandchild affected by divorce, separation or a family disagreement?



Grandparents in the UK play an important but often unrecognised role in the lives of their grandchildren. The questions below summarise some of the questions Grandparents and other relatives may want to address when their children are affected by conflict between adults in their family.

How can I help my grandchild cope with big changes in their life?

Children benefit from reassurance at times of change – that they are loved, that it is not their fault and that they have someone to talk to about their feelings. It is important to remember they may feel conflicting loyalties – listening without criticising either parent will help them to continue to talk about their feelings. Children may feel they are to blame for adult disagreements or bereavements within the family – a grandparent may help the children in their families understand the changes they are experiencing are not their fault.

I used to see my grandchild a lot but now I am not allowed to see her/him what rights do I have?

Grandparents have no automatic right to be part of a child's life but as a last resort the court can be approached to make an Order for contact with members of their wider family when it is in the best interest of the child and having given full consideration to the welfare checklist (CA 1989). The Grandparents Association can advise grandparents on contact issues and, if appropriate, may help with application forms to the court. Contact the advice line on 01279 444964. You may want to consider other approaches first such as writing a conciliatory letter gently requesting contact and re-assuring those involved with the child's care of your respect for the decisions they have made. Help with making initial contact requests is available from the Mediation Outreach Project on 0845 6120044.

What help can I get to talk to my grandchild's parents(s) about seeing my grandchild?

If you feel unable to contact the adults who care for your grandchild you may wish to approach a mediation service for help. Your local mediation service will work with you to explain the process of mediation and discuss the best way of inviting your relatives to participate in the process. The mediation service will also advise on the cost of mediation and whether you would be eligible for help with meeting those costs.

Can I insist my family participate in mediation?

Mediation is voluntary for all parties and can only be effective with willing participants. Mediation offers a safe space for families to make decisions in the best interests of children. Mediators are trained to enable participants to work towards shared decisions and plans for contact arrangements.

How can I find a Mediation Service in my area that works with Grandparents?

Grandparents are welcome at Mediation Services throughout the UK – contact details are available on the National Family Mediation website:

www.nfm.u-net.com

Or by phoning the National Office on

01392 271610

The parent(s) of my grandchildren are looking to me to look after my grandchildren full time and I'm looking for more information and support?

The Grandparents Association runs an advice line

0845 4349585

Operating Hours: Monday-Friday 10.00 – 4.00.
24 hour answering service takes messages to request call back with information & advice.