



A WORKBOOK BY GRANNY ACADEMY

THE PARENT + GRANDPARENT CONVERSATION STARTER

A printable guide for clearer expectations, stronger communication
and a family relationship that feels good on both sides.



LESS ASSUMING. MORE TALKING. STRONGER FAMILIES.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Complete this together.

This is not a rule book for grandparents or a test for parents. It is a place to talk about the things families often assume instead of discuss - before those assumptions become hurt feelings.

The goal is not perfect agreement. The goal is to understand what matters to each person, identify the true non-negotiables, find areas where flexibility is possible, and decide how you want to handle differences when they come up.

A FEW GROUND RULES

Helpful phrase: "I want us to have a relationship where we can talk about things before either of us becomes hurt or resentful."

- Answer from your own perspective. Avoid guessing what the other person thinks.
- Stay curious. Ask, "Can you help me understand why that matters to you?"
- Separate safety rules and boundaries from requests and preferences.
- Do not use this workbook as ammunition later. The purpose is connection, not winning.
- You do not need to finish everything in one sitting. A few good conversations are better than one exhausting one.

Who is completing this guide?

☐ Parent ☐ Grandparent ☐ Both

Names:

Date:

OUR SHARED VISION

Start with what you both want, rather than beginning with rules. Most parents and grandparents are trying to protect the same things: a loved child, a strong family and a meaningful relationship.

When we imagine a healthy parent-grandparent relationship, what do we hope it feels like?

What do we hope the child or children experience in this relationship?

What do grandparents hope their role will look like?

What do parents hope grandparents will bring to family life?

What are three words we want to describe our family relationship?



COMMUNICATION

Different generations often communicate differently. Decide how you want to raise concerns, give advice, ask for help and repair misunderstandings.

When something bothers us, how would we like the other person to bring it up?

When advice is wanted, what is the easiest way to ask for or offer it?

What tends to make either of us feel criticized, dismissed or defensive?

What helps each of us feel heard?

Try these phrases: "Do you want ideas or do you just want me to listen?" "Help me understand what this means to you." "I know you meant to help."



BOUNDARY, SAFETY RULE, REQUEST OR PREFERENCE?

Not every family decision belongs in the same category. Naming the issue accurately can make it much easier to know where firmness is needed and where compromise may be possible.

BOUNDARY	Protects a core need, value, privacy or consent. Example: do not post our child's photo publicly.
SAFETY RULE	Protects health or physical safety. Example: correct car-seat use.
REQUEST	Something you are asking another person to do. Example: please text before coming over.
PREFERENCE	The way you would ideally like something done. Example: exact pajamas at bedtime.

What are our true safety non-negotiables?

What are our true boundaries?

Where do we have preferences that could allow some flexibility?



VISITS, ACCESS AND TIME TOGETHER

Frequency and spontaneity can mean very different things to different families. Talk about expectations before someone interprets a scheduling decision as rejection.

How often would each of us ideally like to see one another?

Are drop-in visits comfortable, or should visits usually be arranged first?

How much notice is helpful?

What makes a visit feel supportive rather than stressful?

How should we handle times when grandparents want more contact than parents can manage?



BABYSITTING AND CAREGIVING

Grandparents need enough information to care for a child safely and confidently. Parents also need to decide which details truly matter and where a trusted grandparent can do things differently.

How often, if at all, do we expect grandparents to babysit or provide regular childcare?

What information must always be provided before caregiving?

Which caregiving decisions are non-negotiable?

Which things can Grandma or Grandpa reasonably do differently?

How should grandparents handle a situation not covered by the instructions?



FOOD, TREATS AND FEEDING

Food can become surprisingly emotional. Separate medical or safety needs from family values and from harmless grandparent fun.

Are there allergies, medical restrictions or choking hazards grandparents need to know?

What food rules or values matter most to the parents?

Where are treats or special grandparent traditions welcome?

What would cross the line from 'Grandma fun' into undermining a parent?



SLEEP AND ROUTINES

Talk about safe-sleep requirements separately from preferred schedules and routines. The goal is safety plus realistic expectations.

What safe-sleep practices must always be followed?

What parts of the nap or bedtime routine matter most?

How much flexibility is okay when the child is with grandparents?

If a routine goes completely off the rails, what should grandparents do?



DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR

Children benefit when adults understand the parents' general approach, but grandparents do not need to become exact replicas of the parents.

How do the parents generally respond to challenging behavior?

What discipline approaches are completely off-limits?

What house rules are grandparents allowed to set in their own home?

How should a grandparent respond if a child says, “Mom lets me” or “Dad said I could”?



SCREENS, PHOTOS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Technology creates family questions previous generations did not have to navigate. Be explicit rather than assuming everyone shares the same norms.

What are the family's expectations around TV, tablets, phones and games?

Can grandparents take photos and videos freely?

What can be posted publicly or shared in group chats?

Are there any photos, locations, school details or identifying information that should never be shared?



GIFTS, TOYS AND SPENDING

For some grandparents, giving is a major love language. For some parents, excess gifts create clutter or conflict with family values. Find a middle ground before birthdays and holidays.

How do parents feel about spontaneous gifts?

Are there categories or quantities of gifts parents would prefer grandparents avoid?

Could grandparents redirect some giving toward experiences, books, savings or a special toy basket at their house?

What gift traditions would feel special to everyone



HOLIDAYS AND TRADITIONS

Holiday conflict often begins with unspoken assumptions. Nobody automatically owns Christmas morning, Thanksgiving, birthdays or a particular tradition.

Which holidays or traditions feel most important to each person, and why?

How will time be divided between different sides of the family?

Which traditions do we want to preserve, change or create?

How much flexibility do we need around travel, naps, meals and young children?

How will we handle disappointment if plans change?



THE GRANDPARENT ROLE

A meaningful grandparent role does not require becoming another parent. Talk openly about what connection, support and involvement can look like.

Grandparents: what do you most hope to experience in this role?

Parents: what kind of grandparent relationship do you hope your child has?

What strengths, stories, traditions or experiences can grandparents uniquely bring?

What makes grandparents feel included and valued?

What makes parents feel supported rather than replaced or undermined



HELP, SUPPORT AND THE VILLAGE

Helping is only helpful when the person receiving it experiences it as help. Talk about the forms of support that actually make family life lighter.

What kind of practical help is genuinely useful?

☐ Meals ☐ Laundry ☐ Older kids ☐ Errands ☐ Babysitting

☐ School pickup ☐ Listening ☐ Other

What kinds of 'help' can accidentally create more work?

How can parents ask for help without feeling guilty?

How can grandparents offer help without feeling taken for granted?



WHEN WE DISAGREE

Disagreement is inevitable. Decide what repair looks like before emotions are high.

What should we NOT do during conflict?

What helps us cool down and come back to the conversation?

How will we handle an important rule being broken?

How will we handle a grandparent feeling excluded or unappreciated?

How will we handle a parent feeling criticized, undermined or ignored?

Repair language:

"I don't want this disagreement to become bigger than our relationship."

"I can see why that hurt you."

"My intention was _____. I can see the impact was _____."

"What would help us move forward?"



CONNECTION AND LITTLE TRADITIONS

Children often remember repetition more than extravagance. Small rituals can give grandparents a distinct, treasured place in a child's life.

What tiny traditions could grandparents create with the child?

What activities, places or interests could become 'their thing'?

For long-distance families, how will we create consistent connection?

What family stories, recipes, photos or history would we love grandparents to pass down?



THE PRACTICAL FAMILY INFORMATION PAGE

Complete this page before a grandparent is responsible for a child. Update it whenever important information changes.

Child/Children

Parent phone(s)

Home address

Pediatrician

Preferred hospital/urgent care

Allergies

Medications / instructions

Insurance / relevant medical notes

Emergency contact

Car-seat notes

Food / feeding notes

Sleep / safe-sleep notes

OUR FAMILY AGREEMENTS

Finish by turning the conversation into a small number of clear agreements. Keep them realistic. The goal is not to document every possible situation.

The safety rules we all agree are non-negotiable:

The boundaries we agree to respect:

The areas where we agree there can be flexibility:

The best way to bring up a concern:

The kind of relationship we are trying to build:



ONE LAST THING

You will not get every conversation right. A grandparent may overstep. A parent may overreact. Someone may give advice that lands badly. Someone may feel left out. Someone may make a decision the other person does not understand.

Strong families are not families that never disappoint one another. They are families that can talk, listen, repair and keep choosing the relationship.

Before you finish, each person completes these sentences:

One thing I appreciate about you in this family is...

One thing I want to do better is...

One thing I hope we protect as our family grows is...

GRANNY ACADEMY

Helping parents + grandparents become a team.

Educational resource only. This guide is not medical, legal or mental-health advice. For child safety, medical or developmental questions, follow current guidance from your child's qualified healthcare professionals and relevant safety authorities