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CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

The Grandmother Study

Newsletter



Dear Grandmothers,

We are now in the third year of our project and, in the process of collecting the second and third waves of data from you. We truly value your participation, and you are making an important contribution to understanding the way grandmothers make a difference in various types of families. Because we are still in the data collection stage, we are not able to share any findings just yet, but thought that you would enjoy learning a little bit about each other.

Who are our Grandmothers?

We have a total of 490 grandmothers enrolled in the study, ranging in age from 31 to 87 in our first year of data collection. Nearly half (47%) of our grandmothers work either full or part time, and 55% of grandmothers are married or have a significant other. Our grandmothers have an average of 3 grandchildren each, and the highest number of grandchildren is 31.

In terms of grandmothers' roles with their grandchildren, 40% of grandmothers in our study are the primary caretakers of one or more of their grandchildren, while 28% share a household with both grandchildren and their parents, and 32% of the grandmothers in our study live in a separate house from their grandchildren. Grandmothers who live in a separate home from some or all their grandchildren are often very involved in the lives of their children and grandchildren and stay in touch with phone calls, visits, and emails. We have also found that between our first two waves of our study, 40 grandmothers have reported a change in their household arrangements, with grandchildren and adult children moving in or out. Dr. Theresa Standing will contact some of these grandmothers for a telephone interview.

The women in our study come from 71 of the 88 counties in the state of Ohio. The map to the right highlights the counties in Ohio where our grandmothers live. Thank you again for your support!

Carol Musil

Dr. Carol Musil & The Grandmother Study Team



Grandmother participants live in the counties shown in yellow.

Interesting Grandparent Facts

- ◆ In the United States there are 5,771,671 grandparents living with their grandchildren and 2,426,730 grandparents are raising their grandchildren.
- ◆ In Ohio there are 185,443 grandparents living with their grandchildren and 86,009 grandparents raising their grandchildren.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2. Profile Selected social Characteristics:2000

A Grab Bag of Ideas

- ◆ Keep in touch with distant grandchildren by writing them a postcard! If they are too young to read then use the same sticker next to your signature each time that you write so that they form a bond with you. Kids love to receive mail!
- ◆ Send your voice! Whether by tape or email it is now very easy to send yourself to your grandchild. Record your voice as you read a favorite story or tell them your own family story.
- ◆ Whether near or far grandparents play an important role in their grandchild's life!



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Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do.
~Alex Haley

Dr. Standing's favorite cookie recipe:

Deluxe Sugar Cookies *(With thanks to Betty Crocker)*

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 ½ cups powdered sugar | ½ teaspoon almond extract |
| 1 cup butter or margarine, softened | 2 ½ cups all purpose flour |
| 1 egg | 1 teaspoon baking soda |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla | 1 teaspoon cream of tartar |

Mix well powdered sugar, margarine, egg, vanilla and almond extract. Stir in flour, baking soda and cream of tarter. Cover and refrigerate at least 3 hours.

Heat oven to 375°. Divide dough in half. Roll each half 3/16 inch thick on a lightly floured, cloth covered board. Cut into desired shapes with cookie cutters. Place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake until edges are just light brown, about 6-7 minutes. Sprinkle with colored sugars before baking or frost when cool.

About 5 dozen 2-inch cookies. Recipe can be doubled.



Team News



The Grandmother Study Team

Back row: Dr. Jaclene Zauszniewski, Dr. Theresa Standing, Ian Blevans, Jackie Russek, Michelle Forgach.
Front row: Dr. Carol Musil, Dr. Camille Warner, Alexandra Bohne.
Not Pictured: Dean May Wykle.

Ian Blevans

Ian joined the study in October. He is a freshman nursing student who returned to college after 8 years in the Navy and 4 years in industry. He lives in an intergenerational home with his mother and 2 children (ages 11 and 9).

Alexandra Bohne

Alexandra Bohne is a 4th year graduate student in Sociology and joined the study this past August. Her primary research interest is looking at how technology can be used to allow people to live independently into old age.

Michelle Forgach

An economics and psychology student, Michelle joined the study in February 2004. Michelle's household became an intergenerational one this past summer, when her grandparents moved back to Ohio from Florida.

Jackie Russek

Jackie is a PhD nursing student who has been working on the Grandmother Study for the past two years. She recently received a grant for her dissertation research project. Jackie will be studying the families of Army Reservists. She is a Major in the Army Reserves.