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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI  
**M** Extension  
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# Kindred *Spirits*

## Emotional challenges in grandfamilies

### Be a stable role model for your grands

#### Keeping the peace

Raising someone else's child, especially if it's your grandchild or niece or nephew, often creates emotional turmoil in the extended family.

To keep the peace in your grandfamily and help minimize stress, keep the lines of communication open by explaining what is happening and why certain decisions have been made.

Try to maintain celebrations, holidays and special occasions with extended family members so no one feels left out.

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Most "grandfamilies" are formed because of a crisis situation or chronic problems within the family. "A simple phrase I often use is that the child's parents are unfit or unwilling or unable to adequately fill the role of parent", says Diana Milne, MU Extension human development and family science specialist.

The most common reasons that parents cannot or do not care for their own children are: drug or alcohol addictions, untreated mental illness, and incarceration.

When serious issues like these arise in a family with minor children, we're likely to see grandparents, aunts or uncles step in to care for and raise those children—and the new "grandfamily" is formed! Ask any grandparent, aunt or uncle raising children or teenagers, and most will tell you that it can be emotionally, physically and financially challenging to start parenting again when you thought those years were behind you!

Sometimes the emotional challenges can be the hardest, because while you're doing your best to raise your grandchild or your niece/nephew; you may also

be dealing with the child's parent(s) and their on-going issues. It's up to you to set boundaries in order to provide safety and stability for the children you're raising.

Many kids want to spend time with their parents, but end up feeling let-down or rejected when their parents don't show up for visits or are unreliable. You are an important, stable role model in your grandchild's life, to be there and be dependable when others aren't.

When life is unstable, children can get scared, confused, angry or depressed. You may start seeing behavior problems, poor school performance or various mental health stresses as well.

It's important to remember that the children in your care need to come first now. Sometimes this means facing reality and admitting that you can't save another adult from making poor decisions, even if that person is your adult child and the parent of your grandchild!

# Apple picking for fun and health

## Make fruit dip with your grandchildren

Apple picking is a fun family activity with the added bonus of juicy, sweet fruit to bring home with you.

According to Linda Rellergert, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, "With proper handling and storage your freshly picked apples can keep for weeks."

In the orchard, pick apples from the tree not off the ground. Place gently in bags to avoid bruising.

Pick apples that are mature, full-sized, firm and crisp. Avoid picking apples which are soft or show any signs of bruising, insect damage or

decay.

Small quantities of apples are best stored in plastic bags with holes or perforations. The holes prevent excess moisture and ethylene gas build-up. Ethylene gas is a naturally occurring substance produced by apples which helps apples and other fruit to ripen. If allowed to build up it will cause decay.

Apples keep best in refrigerator temperatures of 30° to 40°F. Below 30°F apples will freeze and deteriorate rapidly.

If you have more than one bag of apples to store, be sure to leave some space for good air circulation between bags.

Apples may also be stored in a cellar that is humid and cool, where temperatures stay between 30° to 40°F.

Crisp, juicy apples are a great snack all by themselves. Or, add a creamy peanut butter fruit dip, and you have a real treat.

To make this simple, three-ingredient peanut butter dip, beat together:

- ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- ¼ cup thawed unsweetened orange juice concentrate
- ½ cup plain low-fat, unsweetened yogurt

Store leftover dip covered in the refrigerator.

### University of Missouri Extension

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Clay County	816.407.3490
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## Healthy hydration for grandkids

Did you know that what your grandchild drinks every day is just as important as what they eat?

So what should your grandchild be sipping on daily?

According to Kelsey Jeter, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, "The answer is simple. Stick to the basics such as water and low- or fat-free milk."

Kids can also have 100% fruit juice but be careful with this as it has added sugars and not as much fiber as a piece of fruit."

Children ages 1 to 6 should limit juice to 4 to 6 ounces per day. Try to avoid soda and other sugary drinks- these provide calories and sugar while they don't provide any nutrients your grandchild actually needs.

As a grandparent, your grandchildren look up to you. Set the example by drinking and serving water and milk with meals and snacks and kick that soda to the curb!