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Who Is Parenting The Children ...

Parenting (or child rearing) is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the aspects of raising a child aside from the biological relationship. (Bernstein)

GrandFamilies are families headed by grandparents and other relatives who share their homes with their grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and/or other related children. More than six and a half million children across the country live in households maintained by grandparents or other relatives. In about a third of these homes, no parents are present. (Generations United)

Growing up my mom and dad taught me that someday I was going to get married and become a parent. In doing my part the title that my parents held was changed to Grand Parent. This was the cycle that was to happen from generation to generation. I had passed this knowledge down to my children, as I desired the new title that was afforded generations before me. In 2010, I was informed that I have a grandchild on the way, but my child did not marry first. Well, that is OK as the times allow for it. I don't mind as my title is still coming! The day of the blessed event came and I was to receive my title Grandmother, but not in the way I thought it should be. I received my title from a Child Protective Services Worker. It would appear that care was not taken with the pregnancy of my grandchild and the parents' rights to raise this child have been jeopardized. I am now being asked to parent this child. For one fleeting moment, I had my title.

I have always been under the belief that when children were removed from their parents' home it was due to government interference in the lives of its people. Those problems should be

dealt with in the family structure as this is how my family dealt with issues. As I have entered into this new adventure, I felt all alone. There was no one other than me that was dealing with the issues of selfish children. Everyone I know is being allowed to receive their titles and spoil their grandchildren. As I go through this emotional time I begin to reach out, there must be more people that are going through what I am going through. Then I discover that “Across the United States, almost 7.8 million children are living in homes where grandparents or other relatives are the householders, with more than 5.8 million children living in grandparents’ homes and nearly 2 million children living in other relatives’ homes. These families are often called “GrandFamilies.” The grandparent and other relative caregivers and the children they are raising are often isolated. They lack information about the range of support services, resources, programs, benefits, laws and policies available to help them successfully fulfill their caregiving role. In addition, to sever better children, families and older adults, educators and program practitioners need access to information about these key resources. Policy makers also seek information and education about the issues facing these "GrandFamilies.” (AARP)

I too needed more information; I sought out support groups locally and online. I was unable to find anything locally, but I found Kinship support group online. The Kinship support group was a public group. Anyone anywhere can view and post within this group. Making it difficult to share, I needed to find a grandparents anonymous group. As it would be there are closed and secret groups on social media, I was invited into two such groups by someone I had met thru the kinship support group. I can now make statements without the threat of violation of my privacy. Anyone can say what is needed and get a direct response. What a great feeling to know that I now have true social support. When planning this paper I chose to do a pole within the two closed groups that I belong to and find out why GrandFamilies are? The results were

very interesting and varied yet are the same. The following are the results:

Question #1: Why are grandparents raising grandchildren?

Drug/Alcohol	60
Abandonment	39
Mental Health	41
Abuse/Neglect	22
Incarceration (Jail)	11
Death of Parents	5

Question #2: Briefly describe in the comment area how this has impacted your life:

I had 76 responses to this question; this is a few of these responses: Most of the responses offered more of the stories of the grandchildren's struggles or the horrors that they live thru with the Bio parents. A few responses stood out, such as:

“Physically it takes a huge toll on me and husband. He works 6-7 days a week which leaves the house and child rearing mostly on me. But mentally it has been a positive impact because we get to enjoy the things we missed as parents.”

Another Grandparent stated, "And please don't get me started on our lack of government support or dead beat parents.”

Another states “Financially ruined us, hard to keep up with them, housework and cooking and such...bone tired by the end of the day EVERY day!”

“I took a two month leave of absence from both jobs, unpaid, to get these babies on the right path. My savings and any other resources are completely depleted, and I am at 8 on the level 10 stressometer! I rest easy at night knowing these kids are sleeping with sweet, quiet dreams. Well! Mostly”

“Issue I encountered over the years socially is that "fitting" anywhere was difficult. If it were parents of the children our kid's age...there was hesitancy on their end. If it was a group of people our ages...then there were issues because we had children to bring with us, or to tend to. There were some lonely times, therefore, socially. There were those who "informed us" that we should not have stepped in---that that is WHY children's services exist...and those who felt that we should have been blocked from taking the boys in---because, "obviously you failed to do the job right with raising your daughter, or children's services would not have intervened---and now they are giving you the opportunity to screw up two more kids?"

“It changed our world completely but we love her and could not imagine her anywhere else!!”

“This is absolutely the hardest and most difficult thing I've ever been thru in all aspects of my life. At least I can sleep at night knowing that they are safe and not growing up in crazy town.”

The statement that resonated with me the most was:

“Finding our State laws need to be changed to truly be for the best interest of the child's future!”

Is there a national standard to Best interest of the child? According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. All States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have statutes requiring that the child's best interests be considered whenever specified types of decisions are made regarding a child's custody, placement, or other critical life issues. (USDHHS) However there is not an Iron clad definition to Best interest of the child.

What is the most important aspect to determining the permanency for children in foster care? According to Donna Tomas a DHS Case certifier for the State of Oregon the first determining factor is the safety of the children not just physically, but also emotionally. The second factor is relative placement and availability. I asked, why relatives? Donna quickly responded, "Placement with known family members causes less mental trauma to the children, the bond between relatives is a very strong bond. As the child grows they feel more grounded with a sense of belonging. Not just on the emotional side but also they look like those around them." She also stated that it has been proven that children that have been put through trauma need that family connection so they do not feel abandoned.

Does the title matter? Supporting the emotional and physical wellbeing of the upcoming generations are all that matter. That does not matter if you are the primary caregiver or the

supporter to the primary caregiver. I also believe that more needs to be done to nationalize the best interest of the child. Today I can say I am a proud Grandma that is called Mama every day!

All of the Poll question 2 responses

- 1) Because their mother loves drugs more than them
- 2) Were taken away from parents because of a drug addiction
- 3) I don't know what this country is going to do if they can't get the drugs under control
- 4) A pilot project in Vermont in 2013 indicated the primary reason children were not in their home of origin was parental substance abuse...spending time getting to know the parents in each test case gave perspective to the disease...each of them loved their children more than the drugs they were addicted to but once the brain and body are compromised the way it is in an opiate addiction, it requires specialized care to overcome..., I don't think this country can get the drugs under control but we can get the treatment options and opportunities enhanced in every state. As a relative caregiver, we must advocate in many circles: kinship, mental health, substance abuse, corrections, education (at a minimum) if this country is going to be able to meet the needs of the next generation we are working so hard to nurture in their parents absence
- 5) Drug addiction in my son's case, but now there is a problem with yet another generation. The children that were originally abandoned struggle with their own emotional problems. Something must be done regarding drugs in this country.... this problem will only continue to get worse if we stand by and do nothing.
- 6) Parents on drugs
- 7) His mom was an addict now on methadone maintenance treatment 5 months.
- 8) Drugs, alcohol, mental health, and low IQs . Also a great big system failure. My Son was tossed about the system and by age 5 had been adopted twice and we were his 8th foster placement that time around. BM was never protected' she was raised by an alcoholic mother and whatever alcoholic boyfriend she brought home. My grandson is the NEXT next generation
- 9) Because their mothers chose drugs over them. And because our love overflows for them babies who only want love and stability.
- 10) Heroin addiction. Bio egg donor's rights terminated & our recovering addict so gave us legal guardianship. Good thing as he ended up in prison for almost 2 years. Drugs seem to be the common theme.
- 11) it has impacted our lives because I had to quit my job of 12 1/2 years.
- 12) Basic issues with both bio parents are laziness and selfishness. Just from simple observations and opinion. Seems to me that all other factors are added to this mix and not the cause of their personal failures.

- 13) Parents don't want to work, they feel as though this world owes them and they shouldn't have to support their offspring.
- 14) Checked both death and abandonment; our daughter died from leukemia 7 yrs ago; son-in-law could not handle the responsibility and signed kids over to us; he still sees kids weekly; before signing away rights he remarried a very young girl (age 19) who ...
- 15) I checked drugs & jail. Plus other. The other is our grandchild was born with cleft lip & palate. Her parents could not deal with her extensive medical needs so they signed over custody to us.
- 16) Drug and alcohol addiction. Both parents. Which led to neglect. Mom used while pregnant. Both have developmental delay issues. Youngest has seizure activity and cannot speak at age 2. Neither parent get themselves clean.
- 17) EXTREME NEGLECT, DRUGS
- 18) Our kids struggle with reactive attachment disorder because children's services ripped them out of their home during the early critical development phase. We think...that as mom was out working to provide for the family...that dad or? had an anger management problem...and could not handle the crying of a very colicky infant.
- 19) Physically it takes a huge toll on myself and husband. He works 6-7 days a week which leaves the house and child rearing mostly on myself. But mentally it has been a positive impact because we get to enjoy the things we missed as parents.
- 20) Definitely drug abuse by parents
- 21) Mine have issues also..... But I find out new horrors regularly that the children endured while IN the neglectful care of their parents. Wish you all the best. It's a tough job trying to mend the broken.
- 22) My granddaughters mother is on drugs and chose to abandon her. She is young and selfish. I am lucky my son has taken responsibility and is helping raise her. He works 3rd shift and well that's where I come in. I have been both grandma and mommy from day...
- 23) Our daughter just walked out on her baby girl when she was 5 1/2 months old.
- 24) Well, if I had read the entire thing I would have done this right the first time. I retired to raise a newborn so we have been impacted financially. Of course my grandson has been damaged so we have special needs . We have no social life and run around to get him to all of his therapies, school etc. We have no help since we can't drop him at grandmas when we need help, that's us so we never go anywhere together . All of our children have a problem with this. One because we " took his kids away" and the rest because we are raising HIS kid at our age.
- 25) My husband and I both adopted him. My husband then divorced me. I guess he didn't like how much time I had to invest in "C". My "social" life stopped. It put a strain on my whole family. I can no longer be the grandma I would like to be to my other grandchildren. "C", on the other hand, no longer has a grandma. And I am no longer close to my grown children.

- 26) Being GRG's affects the entire family. Alone time for hubby and I is almost never but precious are the times we do get. Friends are gone because our lives have nothing in common with them. Retirement in 3 years for hubby is not going to be as fun filled as he had dreamed for. And please don't get me started on our lack of government support or dead beat parents.
- 27) Our Bio, was old enough to know better, she had him at age 33 but she had been on drugs since she was 13. Heroin her choice and was known as a garbage can junky, trying anything that might come out. She mixed it with booze. Picked twice in two weeks for drugs. Last pickup they found an outstanding warrant for failure to appear, that landed her in prison for the drugs, being in possession of stolen property which she hocked, forgery, 7 felonies were charged, she went into special course through the prison system, and came out on formal parole for 3 years, the court then dropped all charges, she attended a 19 month rehab course one on one with peers, and psych help M-F we provided a place for her to live for those months bought her a car and thought she was on her way to be free of drugs, after the court dropped her case two weeks later she took off with a drip and was back on drugs. That is when we kicked her out for the second time. She by then had another child and she went with her at 19 months old, her son remained with us and is still with us turning 22 next month. Her rehab cost us 50,000 down the tubes. You can save the child but not the parent in almost every case. The drugs are much more powerful than their love for their children, she is not clean to this day at 55 she is off Heroin, however is on over the counter drugs, and often takes Actifed and backs it with about 12 cups of coffee for a cheap high. I have seen her take 100 pills in less than 72 hours. We gave up on her but have maintained communications for the welfare of her daughter.
- 28) Your story reminds me of my niece, little brother's only daughter. 24 years old has 2 boys by different men been on drugs I have no idea when that started, both of the fathers have their boys, think that is the only good thing that has come from her life, she just got picked up for drugs, did 30 days in Orange County, they transferred her to L A on a warrant and got released, oldest boy's uncle ran into her shortly after she got out, on the streets again and high. I guess I can picture her following in your granddaughter's footsteps. Only daughter with 5 brothers. Like I said only good thing was that the fathers have the boys, I connect with them all the time, just glad the boys are taken care of. It's just too bad that these women end up this way.
- 29) Our granddaughter now adopted daughter was abandoned. Bio mom left for a pack of cigarettes and never returned. Bio dad (my husband's son) was never part of her life. Now we are raising my 2 great nieces. Their parents are on drugs. They were living in a hoarder house with no a/c in Florida. I brought them to Wyoming. Mom couldn't follow our rules. We've had guardianship for 2 years.
- 30) With #4 - I can easily say parenting a grandchild hurts financially but it has done nothing to enhance my life socially. In fact, when he was younger, my social life became non-existent. It's only as he's gotten older and more self-reliant has my ability to socialize

with my friends increased. Since I can only apply half that statement, I didn't choose it at all.

- 31) My daughter did heroin while pregnant, her excuse was the baby dad passed away. Found this out after she had the baby. Detoxed her, put her in treatment, told her if she used again I would kick her out and keep the baby. She got out of treatment, starting drinking/drugs the day she got out. Clean house, and kicked her out. I have had my grandson pretty much since birth. So this is the only home he has ever know. So I hired an attorney, and got full sole physical legal custody of him. But I should say, that was my daughters fourth round of treatment. He is a happy eight month old. Knows nothing else. I told CPS, I would always protect him and keep him safe. I am going to add on here, my daughter also is bi-polar. So she struggles with mental health issues
- 32) Our daughter also was using and didn't stop. Grandson was born addicted to Drugs/Alcohol, the drugs did a number on him. He has paid dearly for his parents life style. There are times I could ring her neck. Like your daughter she went through 3 Meth rehab programs, and one 19 month one on one and picked the drugs up again in less then two weeks. That time she landed outside of our home we had furnish for her. a 2 bedroom fully furnished, I sincerely hope the drugs don't cause your grand problems ours started to show up at 13 months old and continue to jump up at 22. School was one huge nigh mare. I was told it would be but they never said how much of a nightmare it would be. His showed in ADHD, to IBS, to learning delays, that involved coordination and memory problems, Sensory problems and Auditory & Visual Integration processing problems. Was a joy in high school & has caused problems in college. He still doesn't do cursive, has a unusual grasp on his pencils. Has a hyper extended thumb. Math is out of the question. He is happy but has taken him double to triple the time to learn most anything with swimming being the longest at 7 years. Driving a close second with 18 hours of drivers training school & 75 hours with us. He is happy and takes it in stride. It in a way it help him as he doesn't smoke, drink or do drugs.
- 33) My granddaughter has been with us her whole life. Bio father never claimed her and bio mother just was not ready to be a mother. Very sad. Mother said one time she did not have the patience or the capacity to be a mother. Said she wanted us to take her and raise her. If you ask most bios, they will tell different stories than what those who are raising the children. Revision of stories to make themselves feel better.
- 34) We adopted our granddaughter when she was one yr old so now she is our daughter. She is now 14 and we have always done what we how was the best thing for her.
- 35) Our daughter was/is somewhat mentally challenged. She dropped out of school in the 9th grade after struggling for school her entire life. She was constantly in trouble. We tried every intervention we could think of to stop her self destructive behavior. I knew she smoked weed but I could never prove it or catch her in the act. When she turned 17 she pulled the "I'm an adult and can do what I want" card and moved out. A little while later she found out she was pregnant and asked if she could move back home and have her bf

move in. Foolishly, we allowed that because of the pregnancy. We then discovered how much of a loser her bf was and how psychotic his family is. They lived here during the entire pregnancy. I took her to every single appointment. Was there for her every step of the way. She did everything right while pregnant. We just knew she was going to be a wonderful mother. The day she had her daughter something happened. I don't know what but I watched her as she laid eyes on her child for the first time and I saw something "break" in my daughter. She wouldn't even hold her in the beginning. By night 2 she wouldn't hold her or feed her so I had to. They came home from the hospital and basically had very little interaction with the baby. The baby slept in our room every night. When she was in her mothers room she ended up getting hurt mysteriously....falling off their bed from them not watching her. When her druggy bf was tired of paying rent here and following our rules they left our home and moved to his family's home. And they took the baby. I then found out the baby was still being neglected and left in a pack and play all day screaming. I told my daughter I was bringing the baby back home with me. She was 6 months old and we have had her ever since. We talked to our daughter about custody so that we could make responsible decisions for the baby and that she just wasn't ready to be a mother. My daughter and baby's father broke up. My daughter moved back in but had absolutely ZERO to do with her daughter. We hired an attorney to seek custody. "G" (my grand) is now 3 and 1/2. Her bio father hasn't seen her since she was 6 months old. He has never contributed to her care. My daughter is now with another man and they have a 10 month old daughter together. My daughter would go months without seeing "G". She does not offer support in any form either. We are seeking termination of parental rights of the father and we have thought about doing the same with our daughter. At one point we thought we were going to end up with her 2nd daughter as well but so far they have done much better with her child rearing. Although my daughter does tend to push that baby off on other family members every chance she gets. When I asked my daughter why she never bonded with her first daughter she said, "she reminds me of my crappy relationship with "R" (babys father). We (and the court) have made guidelines that my daughter must complete if she ever wants to get her daughter back. That was 2 years ago and she has done NONE of the requirements. I love my daughter but she is a very selfish "girl". All she cares about is her "me time" as she calls it. As I tried to explain to her..."me time" pretty much ceases to exist once you become a parent.

36) bio mom is my daughter and has not fought for custody since the Children's Aid Society apprehended my GS from bio dad's care for mental instability issues. It has made it very hard for me to watch the GS love his mom dearly and not be able to live with her and her to now have a newborn daughter that lives with her. it infuriates me to watch the bios hurt this dear 4 yr old with their actions. the bio dad wants custody as he doesn't see his own issues..... bio mom is basicly starting over with her new family. This has impacted me mostly with added stress and fulltime caregiving when I should be getting ready to retire

and enjoy travelling or whatever. Instead I am struggling financial and battling in court with the bio dad....

- 37) my son was given guidelines to get his 2 youngest back, that was 12 years ago, and I still have them. so don't get your hopes up, At "G" age, I would just go for adoption and give her stability.
- 38) Another issue I encountered over the years socially is that "fitting" anywhere was difficult. If it were parents of the children our kids age...there was hesitancy on their end. If it was a group of people our ages...then there were issues because we had children to bring with us, or to tend to. There were some lonely times therefore, socially. There were those who "informed us" that we should not have stepped in---that that is WHY children's services exist...and those who felt that we should have been blocked from taking the boys in---because, "obviously you failed to do the job right with raising your daughter, or children's services would not have intervened---and now they are giving you the opportunity to screw up two more kids?"
- 39) Been there, done that Mable...lost a lot of friends as we were in our mid forties when our Granddaughters came to live with us...Their kids were grown and able to take care of themselves, getting ready to or already in college...here we were taking on a 3 and 1 1/2 yr old starting all over...While our friends wanted to do things, we weren't able to because we had little ones.
- 40) the boys parents were given guidelines to have their children returned to them. They complied with them all to the letter, TWICE. In the end, the judge said she was just not sure that the children were "in the dad's correct priority order," and that since the children were, after 2+ years more bonded to the grandmother than to them, she deemed it in the children's best interest to allow them to continue with the grandparents.
- 41) well after a few years with us I assumed if he had followed the guidelines, it would have been the same way, they had bonded with my husband and I, and it just wasn't going to happen, but about once a year my son would threaten that he was going to get his kids back. well "D" will be 22 in June, "KV" is 15 and "K" is 12, Don't think that its possible at this point, unless the kids decided they wanted too, "D" can't he is specialneeds and is in waiver home and I have guardianship of him as an adult, KV could make that decision, but he won't because he won't leave his sister. Its just myself and the younger 2 now since we lost my husband 4 years ago, but we are family.
- 42) Financially ruined us, hard to keep up with them, housework and cooking and such...bone tired by the end of the day EVERY day!
- 43) Im a single gran raising my granddaughter who was first abandoned by mum -for a man , then she was left with maternal nana who abused her. Then went back to mum who abused her and re abandoned her. Shes been with me for two years, was recently just diagnosed as an epilepsy sufferer, was kidnapped xmas eve, is back now tho and we have been working through all the berating /faulse promises and lies shes had to endure. The anger this has raised in her. I love her so much, she doesnt deserve to be dragged into

their brainless games. I worry just what effect all this is going to have on the children of the future, as it is so much across the board.

- 44) Would you be willing to post your paper once it is written and marked. I would be interested in reading your synopsis of all that you take from here. It is definitely a growing and wide spread issue with a generation that abandons their offspring for no specific reasons as well as the stories that involve the addictions to alcohol and drugs. My story has no issues with addictions, some minor mental issues, but mostly my daughter was 19 yrs old and "ready to settle down" when she got pregnant on purpose. She was immature, dating a guy who was charged with domestic violence when she was 5 months pregnant, she had no job, didn't finish high school and was living at home with me. I was a single mom (now a single grandma) and her boyfriend (the bio) was 22 yrs her senior (5yrs my junior)! Like, what is that but pure unadulterated selfishness and irresponsibility. The GS takes a backseat to boyfriends, jobs, and now her new daughter.... it is a crying shame for sure.
- 45) I'm am stronger and now have a focus in life.
- 46) Not the easiest thing to take on 3 grands as a single parent at this stage in life, but I wouldn't change it for the world
- 47) I had just turned 39 when I got custody of my granddaughter who was 21 months. My "baby" was 13 so I was starting all over. It was hard at first but I got back in the groove. Yeah, it can be a hassle some days when we're having to pack extra clothes a backpack full of toys to keep her occupied, and chasing her around at ball games.....but I'd do it all over again 100 times if I had to.
- 48) Because I could not sit by and do nothing.
- 49) We gotta echo *****. It got to the point where we were waking in the middle of the night, usually together, worried sick about what he was being subjected to.
- 50) Yes, the worry was constant and overwhelming.
- 51) I can sleep
- 52) Ditto about the waking in the night. Ugh I feel sick remembering those days. My daughter is a 24 yr old heroin addict, I took my grandson at 18 mos. I have full custody. He is 2 and a half now.
- 53) I am raising T due to the mental health/drug abuse issues of his mother. I knew from the very beginning that it would be this way and that it was a matter of time before I had him full time.
- 54) Mother's mental health (total denial of bipolar disorder) and father's suicide.
- 55) what is it about their denial of this condition. My daughter too.
- 56) My daughter is ignorant of the issues I checked. She doesn't feel she has done anything wrong.
- 57) mothers mental health, substance abuse, neglect, and abandonment. Father was uninterested in being involved, but supported guardianship/adoption by us. It has taken our lives and the lives of our other children & grands and turned it upside down.

Financially, emotionally, physically. But I would do it all again just to know he was safe and happy.

- 58) My daughter (bio Mom) has Bipolar with severe depression coupled with a 32 bag a day, heroin addiction! Bio Dud, just released from prison for drugs! Had my grands 10 yrs! I'm 49!
- 59) We have the gs because mom has ADHD to the point she can't function without meds. And of course she smokes weed instead of taking meds. We have partial custody of gd because mom works all the time and parties on most of her days off. Both bio moms love to drink and smoke and are irresponsible. Bio dads have disappeared as time went on. I'm 55 and have had "A" 10 years.
- 60) Wow- the strength of all of you has me in tears! I had my youngest grand straight from release from the hospital birth, as well as her then 4year old sister. Their brother, then 2yr, went to other grandparents. For meth and domestic violence. They returned home to parents on Jan 20, 2013. On Jan 20, 2014 I was contacted at work, by our local small town police dept. To tell me I may want to be at my daughters home very shortly. And the saga continues. I now have all 3 grands and the brother has issues beyond anything. I've ever dealt with. I took a two month leave of absence from both jobs, unpaid, to get these babies on the right path. My savings and any other resources are completely depleted and I am at 8 on the level 10 stressometer! I rest easy at night knowing these kids are sleeping with sweet, quiet dreams. Well! Mostly lol Godspeed to us all.
- 61) I am 54. My first go round with this. I was, of course, 53. Divorced and single. Have been for 5 years and haven't dated at all. Was just focusing on getting my life back on track. WELL HELLO LIFE! WELCOME
- 62) How has this impacted us? Well, we have given up on early retirement, we had a food concession and ran the fair and festival circuits and had to sell that, can't bring a child to sit in a tent all weekend every weekend. Also, the relationship that we were hanging on to with our daughter was ruined by all the drama and court actions. But all in all, we did what we believed to be right and we would do it all over again. There is always pain when you get a child, so yes it was painful but at least we have him and he is safe, loved and taken care of
- 63) I got my lo straight from hospital, his stool tested positive for thc. My daughter (bm) was allowed to stay in my home with lo for 6 weeks supervised. The other grand would supervise while I worked. A couple of days before time was up, she decided to just go home since she just had to get used to it. lo is six now and as time goes by contact is less and less. This past thanksgiving, Christmas, and even birthday was missed for first time. Lo is now 6
- 64) My husband is 62 and I am 59. Enjoyed our peaceful life. Our son and daughter in law decided doing meth labs was more important than a baby obviously. Were arrested in July 2013 and we have had our precious granddaughter since. Yep, it changed our world completely but we love her and could not imagine her anywhere else!!

- 65) Just too immature to really be a mom. Impact: My husband and I had our children early in our marriage so that when we were done raising them we would still be young enough to enjoy vacations and travel, with definitely more disposable cash. Obviously that didn't happen. Instead at age 60 I am running all over the city dropping grand off at different activities. I figure in 2 years when she turns 18 I will be completely exhausted and ready for a very long nap not interrupted by nightmares of the bad things that "could" happen.
- 66) My life has been impacted only in positive ways by my granddaughter and I would do this all over again. It's dealing with addict bio that has turned my life upside down and inside out and caused stress beyond measure.
- 67) Our life changed radically @ 56 when we took the girls, very steep learning curve (I had to become a whole different kind of parent), terrible stresses from their teenage years, totally proud now that they are 23/20. One of the most wonderful experiences in our lives.
- 68) At first, we thought we were only "babysitting" until the bio parents grew up or woke up from their stupor. Neither has ever done both at the same time. Now, I would die before giving this boy back. We are tired, but it is as God planned.
- 69) We did it the other way . We accepted custody of K with the understanding that we were going to be her parents, NOT her babysitters. She had been neglected and abused by the time she was 4, and she badly needed parents.
- 70) I went from working / traveling nurse to not working and raising 2 grandsons (10 & 11) ; my daughter (bio mom) walked out on them - left them with me - drinking was more important - bio dad has never had contact with them - he is in another state.. so I went from well over a thousand dollars a week to live on comfortably to just over a thousand dollars a month for all 3 of us ! we run out of food at the end of the month - bills always late - my credit is ruined - stressed ! I am lucky in the sense the boys are fabulous ! they are 3 grade levels above other students and we work well as a team .. I sleep good at night knowing they are safe and healthy .. yes I would do it again .. it is only a shame that the system will not work with us grands !
- 71) B had never been abused, but I suspect there was some neglect. It all escalated very fast. There was a four month period that the mother wouldn't let us see him. That was just torturous. Later, she was very sorry, and realized she didn't have what it takes to be a mother. Left him with us, and signed off custody to our son. We had both bio and B here for months with bio helping with B. I would come home from work and bio would be asleep and B running around on his own. That didn't last long. Rest is history.
- 72) Mine was the 'babysitting' scenario too - finally, after raising her for years I said enough of sitting on the sidelines of her mothers' life waiting, got custody, and moved on. I should say too that unlike a lot of grandparents, I had not yet experienced the 'empty nest' phase of my life, so raising J just felt like a continuation of my life and very natural.
- 73) All the stories, so many are echos of each other. Mine does not consider herself mentally ill either. Diagnosed with Bi-Polar, Personality Disorder, OCD, and brain damage due to

inhalents but she is trying to get disability due to former blood clots in her leg. SMH Our little man is growing up fast, my last kiddo, (hopefully) and I hope I can do him proud. I cant fix it all but I can give him some happy memories and a new outlook on things. I cant imagine our live without him now.

- 74) Isn't that the truth - I couldn't imagine my life without J and her happy little self either
- 75) My daughter has been classified disabled since 18 she was sexually assaulted at 12 started PTSD and Bi-Polar this lead to eating disorders to Borderline Personality Disorders to Co-dependent Disorder to Sexual Addiction think I got them all!!! She has her kids now since April of last year; she can not think for herself but all you need in Nebraska is a doctor saying you could try this or that drug and she could be a functioning person! (If she took med's) funny if you saw or talked to her she is a beautiful plant person only those family mbers know her mental illness side
- 76) K's mother is bi-polar, S's mother is degenerate, and their father (our son) was egotistical, promiscuous and a wanderer. The stories we tell all have so much in common, and yet when we started this adventure we thought we were all alone: no idea that there are so many of us!
- 77) We have several things to offer each other in this group. Sympathy and understanding when things go wrong; a feeling of family and togetherness; the discovery that there is always someone with more problems than we have, and the ability to offer useful advice and support.
- 78) Ok peeps, I am now in tears again. You are ALL AWESOME-
- 79) all Impact statement: the irresponsibility of my daughter has caused a multitude of problems for me and my grands. I was 45 when I first became a grandparent. 46 when the second one came and 49 when the third one came. The bio fathers avoided paying child support whenever possible and bio mom thought she was entitled to have a reduction in her support when she became pregnant for the fourth time. At one time her support amounted to \$1.09 per child per day! She has damaged the souls of my grands so badly that one of them stated that he hates our church for baptizing her 5th child born out of wedlock. She miscarried the 4th one. My financial debt is close to \$200,000.00. I don't think I will ever see daylight. I have had to give up my medicines, skip meals and spend most of my time at home due to the high cost of gas. I had to trade in my small car for something older and bigger that takes more gas and is in constant need of repair. When bio mother visits, she just shows up unannounced and upsets the household. We are not allowed to see the new baby and the kids wonder why she kept this one but none of them . My health is faltering because I cannot afford my own medical care. Haven't seen a dentist for about 3 years. I have no money in the bank to fall back on and there are no services in the county I live in. I was told I did not allow the neglect to get bad enough for them to step in to help! I have been alienated by most of my family due to lies my daughter has told them. My father rejected my grandkids because of their race. My oldest grand has anger issues, my middle grand has RAD and possible FAS. My youngest grand

goes through phases when he sees his friends with their fathers and wonders why he can't have the same kind of relationship with his dad. What really blows my mind is that the bios take no responsibility for what they have done or the damages they have caused. They have lied, tried to con the children into coming to live with them, and then disappear again for weeks at a time with no contact.

- 80) I think you hit the nail on the head when you said --- the bios take NO responsibility !! not a one of us would be here if they did
- 81) When my 2 were 6 & 2, they and their mother (my older daughter) moved in with me & my younger daughter. It quickly became evident that my daughter was severely depressed and experiencing severe PTSD. Her husband (the kids' sperm donor "father") was extremely abusive, psychologically and emotionally, and probably sexually, to both my daughter and my gs. She has never spoken of or dealt with the abuse that I know of. She was pretty much non-functional when they came to us. The kids were in survival mode with the 2 yr old (the more functional of the kids) taking care of herself and her brother. She has attachment and abandonment issues, while he has adjustment disorder, ptsd, and social skills deficits. They are now 18 & 14 and each one has made tremendous progress in their lives. I'm VERY proud of them and love them so much! Part of the reason for their success, I believe, is because we haven't had any contact whatsoever with my daughter in almost 6 years. She left when they refused to go and live with her. My life, of course, was turned upside down when we started on this journey. This is absolutely the hardest and most difficult thing I've ever been thru in all aspects of my life. At least I can sleep at night knowing that they are safe and not growing up in crazy town.
- 82) We got both of our grands a few days after birth. Bio mom was a meth addict also used marijuana. Bio did (my stepson) was just a lazy piece of crap that didn't want any responsibility.
- 83) Mine were subjected to severe domestic violence for years before I got them!!! Along with alcoholism, drugs, neglect, filth absolutely horrible!!! Took 3 years of calling DCS repeatedly to finally get a caseworker that cared!!! She removed my Grands immediately!!! Went to other grandmother for about a month and then to me. Been here for almost 4 years
- 84) Finding our State laws need to be changed to truly be for the best interest of the child's future!

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