

## Grandparents role during COVID-19 pandemic

Studies show that when grandparents are actively involved in their grandchildren's lives, children have fewer emotional and behavioural problems and so it is important that this involvement continues during these challenging times. Here are some suggestions to help you stay connected:

### Write letters

This is an exciting way to send news on what you are both doing, express emotions and make plans for fun activities after the pandemic. Children can send drawings and cards and grandparents can use their creative talents to make letters colourful and interesting. Letters can be kept and re-read to remind us of the connection and love you share.

### Social media

If you use social media this is a good way to keep in touch and see what your family are up to. You can also share messages, photos and videos for your family to see what you are up to and how you are keeping.

### Family dinners

In many families meal times provide an opportunity for everyone to talk about their day and share family news. Set up family dinners via Skype or another video calling platform. Arrange a time for everyone to sit down for dinner in their respective homes and share virtual family time.

### Phone calls

Phone calls can alleviate feelings of isolation and anxiety about family members health and well-being so use these if technology is not possible.

### Bedtime stories

Record yourself reading a short bedtime story for younger grandchildren and send it to be played at bedtime. This will create a bedtime routine and help your grandchild know that you are thinking of them.

### Family trees

It can be challenging to find an activity that interests teenagers. This is a perfect opportunity to ask for their help to capture family history and stories and will provide ample opportunities for communication and connection and instill a sense of belonging in them.

### Technology

While some grandparents may struggle to understand and use technology, for children and young people technology is their natural communication tool. Ask them to give you guidance on how to download apps and use social media. This is a perfect opportunity to bond and also to build their self esteem.

Engaging through video calling platforms allows grandparents and the child to see each other and know they everyone is safe and well. Family scavenger hunts or a quiz allows the whole family to take part. Choose a time that suits everyone as this will provide routine to the child's day.

