

Abstracts

Marie-Claude Mietkiewicz, Benoît Schneider, *"New Grandparents" and Grandparenthood: between normative limitations and a new openness*

Young, more numerous, socially active, with a newly positive image, increasingly involved in games of family solidarity, and having a close relationship with their grandchildren in a framework of new bonds of affection: these are some of the features of the new portrait of grandparenthood. In reality, the range is quite wide since the art of being grandparents, and the way in which grandparents play their role, for different reasons, can vary. This article invites us to ask ourselves about the social, cultural and psychological conditions that favour and hinder both the construction of the grandparents' identity, and how they perform their functions in a transforming society. In this work, grandparenthood is considered as: a) a challenge between generations, with regard to which we investigate the principle of keeping a "good distance" as the normative rule; b) a stage in life that implies a new definition of gender identities and attributions of roles within the couple, with regard to which we specifically dwell on the figure of the grandfather.

Giuseppe Zanniello, *The Educational Role of Grandparents*

The essay illustrates the content of Family Empowerment Courses for the educational training of grandparents. After a brief resumé of the recent social changes in the role of grandparents in family life, the article examines the permanent dimensions of their role as the grandchildren's educators. Particular stress is placed on grandparents' ability to actively pay attention to the stories their grandchildren tell. The older generation can contribute dramatically to their children and grandchildren's happiness when they dedicate themselves to the education of the younger generations. In the essay we give some examples of the contributions that grandparents can make to their grandchildren's education.

Massimiliano Stramaglia, *Grandparenthood from the Male Gender Perspective*

The great importance that grandparents have today for families today concerns not only concerns the economic subsidiarity support or the protection and care of the exercise of the function of protection and custody of children, but involves, in educational terms, it also involves the relationship between genders and generations. Several national and international scientific research projects dwell on the grandparents' specificity of the contribution of grandparents to the welfare of young families, but fail to deal tackle, with the necessary clarity, the issue of the substantial diversity that characterizes difference between the grandmother's action, especially particularly maternal action, compared to that of the grandfather's, mostly paternal role. Rather Instead, the research focuses on the figures of grandparents figures as if they were asexual, often subtending with the word "«grandparents»" implying the analysis of the grandmother or the reference to the playful or post-parental function of the grandfather. There are few studies that allow a good explanation of the typical education model embodied by grandfathers. Far from a naively adopting of the stereotyped concept of maleness and femaleness, this article tries to focus on the male model that characterizes the grandfathers' affection of grandfathers towards their grandchildren, with particular attention to primary school age (from 6-7 to 11 years of lifeold).

Rossella Certini, *Grandparents: begin to educate to History*

The essay addresses the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren, not as a comparison between generations but as a process of mutual growth which is mainly based on the narrative. Grandparents are the first historians of the family and through the narration of their memories they offer to their grandchildren a first approach to the historical time. Grandparents transmit information to the younger generations about their past, but also on the social history of the past and for this reason they help them to know the worlds long gone. Grandparents, through the emotions of the narrative, make it more real and alive the concept of "History" and this informal method of addressing the story could help the traditional teaching to fascinate most younger people in this discipline often considered far from the interests of children and boys.

Daniela Sarsini, *Being Grandparents today: a Pedagogical Glance*

The article analyzes the grandparent-grandchild relationship from the side as a pedagogical model of education based on the peculiar feeling of “cure” and the playful dimension. In the care of grandchildren grandparents recover his past and gain an impulse into the future. The reflexive reinterpretation of childhood allows grandparents reading a benevolent needs of grandchildren. The grandparents of today are more open and more receptive than their predecessors, and this facilitates the relationship with their grandchildren. This reciprocity of exchanges between generations also promotes generational continuity, creating the feeling of community and solidarity that is based precisely on the pleasure for the discovery and curiosity about the world.

Sonia Iozzelli, *Being Grandparents, a Caring Presence*

The article describes the affectionate virtues of the family bonds involving grandparents. Today, regardless of the different directions that individual lives can take, grandparents are grouped together by a single sentiment: a great joy, a growing enthusiasm that leads them towards a generous and unconditional closeness to their grandchildren. Grandparents are a very significant presence in the first phase of childhood, precisely due to their willingness and commitment to be a firm and reliable point of reference for the new family, as the event of a child's birth requires and seeks attention and support from the family network. The article then goes on to examine the relationship dynamics between parents and grandparents. Complex in their own way, they need to be dealt with consciously and within the harmony of positive feelings, for the sake of the children's good upbringing. The last reflection is dedicated to immigrant families in educational contexts, showing that the vicinity and solidarity that can be provided by the school community is a highly valuable resource for these families.

Lilia Bottigli, *Stories of Grandfathers and Grandmothers*

That one of the family education programmes is dedicated to grandfathers and grandmothers is the result of the needs expressed both by the parents taking part in the parents' meetings and by the grandparents themselves, who, as we met them taking and picking up their grand-

children from the nursery and infant school every day, asked for a more structured opportunity to express and exchange their views. For both – parents/children and grandparents/parents – it appears necessary to define the new balances in the network of family bonds, in which the birth of a child can (re)activate more or less hidden dynamics of conflict.

Elena Di Sandro, *Grandparents and Grandchildren today*

The grandparents-grandchildren relationship shows new features today, determined by economical, social and cultural changes, which have radically transformed family institution for the last decades. This essay illustrates some results of a research performed around the Empoli-Valdelsa area through a questionnaire addressed to primary school children's grandparents. In particular, the article examines specific dimensions of grandparenthood, such as how to take care of grandchildren, the educational task and the meanings grandparents attribute to their role. From the analysis a substantially positive picture of the relationship with grandchildren is pointed out, marked by the grandparents' awareness of the differences between their role and the parents' one, the clearness about their transmission intents and the intensive role's satisfaction, which discloses new perspectives for appreciating the third age and, more generally, for promoting intergenerational relationships outside the family context.

Giorgio Macario, *When a Child is born... also born Four Grandparents*

The profound juridical and cultural transformations undergone by the institution family in our era pose grandparents faced with new challenges and new tasks. If the role of wise men went incidental, from a financial point of view grandparents are now a considerable resource that can support so important to the economy of a family clan. Moreover, the conditions for greater prosperity and the elongation of the average provide grandparents capacity of care, labor and assistance to be given to children and grandchildren. The author focuses on the role of grandparents in the adoptive family by showing how important is their involvement in the paths of expectation in order to make themselves protagonists of adoptive choice. The article refers to the experiences of national training of operators of international adoptions carried out by the Istituto degli Innocenti in Florence.