

The Concept of Grandparenting

The role of Grandparents



The active and present Grandparent plays an important role in moulding the personality of their grandchildren.

We gain knowledge:-

- don't cut the grass in the wet
- oil the lawnmower before putting away for the winter
- aida fabric is measured in squares per inch
- self raising flour is plain flour with baking powder added
- How many rolls of wallpaper do I need

We learn skills:-

- mowing the lawn
- how to repair gardening tools
- cross stitch
- baking scones

But we also learn philosophies:-

- Everyday's a school day, you should never stop learning
- Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves
- There is joy to be had in sharing what you have, time, food, space
- Mend and make do
- If a job's worth doing it's worth doing well

We learn through Grandparents in different ways depending on grandparent availability and the age of the child. Grandparents come into their own once retired and have time to indulge in sharing. Grandparents hold less responsibility for feeding, clothing, disciplining and can support at a distance.

Sharing experience

Observing, talking, trying, questioning and sampling

“Why do you do that?”

“My Dad doesn't do that”

“Can I do that too?”

”Can I help?”

Becoming independent

Trying out, picking and choosing the best bits, blending of values and attitudes, modifying with lifestyle and environment.

“come show me.....”

“what do I need to buy.....”

“where will I get.....”

“What do you think.....”

“this is how I do it.....”

Some practitioners just “GET IT”, by this we mean, understand autism at an emotional level. (GP, bus escort, teacher, psychiatrist)

They are able to respond spontaneously to the needs of people with autism with understanding that represents more than knowledge, and even more than knowledge and skills together.

We will meet the needs of people with autism better if more people “GET IT”

Priority goal 4 – capacity and awareness building in mainstream services to ensure people with ASD are met with recognition and understanding of autism

What is “IT”

Trying to describe **IT** is like catching a butterfly, we see **IT** we can get close to **IT** but as soon as we reach out to hold **IT**, **IT** flies off and disappears.

In Scotland, we have many practitioners who “GET IT”, for the people with autism this represents the most valuable and precious resource.

The infrastructure doesn’t exist to make best use of this resource to nurture service development.

We are not using our Grandparents to best advantage in shaping the implementation of the Autism Strategy.

Adopting an overarching philosophy of Grandparenting, creating freedom and time to flexibly offer support to developing services would be of benefit across the entire spectrum of autism.