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Ann Czondzina

RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

Due to circumstances beyond our control, my husband Lewis and I now find ourselves helping my daughter, Sara, raise her two little ones who cannot yet care for themselves. Most of the time I enjoy the role, but other times I would rather be in Philadelphia. Nevertheless, I am in love with and committed to my daughter and grandchildren and intend to fulfill this very important role to the best of my abilities.

As we have set up our roles in this important duty, we have come to recognize that self-care must be the number one priority. Not only does this mean eating right and getting the right amount of exercise (most of the time), but it also means taking time out for what each person wants and needs. And when things get too out of balance, someone generally calls a family meeting, where we gather around our large table and listen to each others' perspectives. By putting our heads together, we always seem to come up with good solutions.

And when we all need time alone at the same time, we hire a babysitter whom the kids enjoy. At all times, however, we consciously consider the children's development, knowing that if a child has loving people caretaking with patience and kindness, he or she is more likely to grow up strong in every level of their being. On the other hand, if a child is overly scolded and criticized, it is likely he or she will grow up weak and unsure.

I know childhood is just a fleeting moment in our time together, and I want to honor my grandchildren being in my home with as much as my awareness will allow. On the plus side, each day I get to see and feel the wonderment as I watch them grow from babyhood into fine young adults. As I write this, a Bob Dylan's refrain plays through my mind, "Time is a jet plane, it moves too fast; Oh, but what a shame that what we share can't last."

— Toni Gilbert, RN, MA, HNC, Jefferson, Ore. (www.tonigilbert.com)