

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for January 31, 2022
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about the important role of grandfathers, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

As I reflect on my own children's childhoods, I am thankful for the time spent with their grandfather, my dad. From crossing the country on an Amtrak train to visiting the birthplace of each President from Ohio, there are memories of special trips and events. There have also been plenty of regular days spent working on projects in the woodshop or baking in the kitchen.

Jim Bates is our field specialist for family wellness with OSU Extension. He has spent much of his professional career studying the important role of grandparents, especially grandfathers.

Bates has written a series of fact sheets about nurturant grandfathering. He defines grandfatherwork as "the effort, energy, time, and resources grandfathers put forth to care for, serve, meet the developmental needs of, and maintain relationships with their descendants."

Research is showing that grandparents and grandchildren reap a lot of benefits from a relationship with one another. A study by Sara Moorman and Jeffrey Stokes found that children who grow up with greater emotional closeness to their grandparents are less likely to be depressed as adults. For grandparents, a close relationship with their grandchildren can boost brain function, protect against depression, and increase their lifespan.

Bates says that simply being a grandfather does not take much effort. However, grandfathering is more than being a passive observer. It implies action and engagement. Grandfathering makes a conscious commitment to be present and participate actively in his grandchildren's lives.

There are seven key ways that grandfathers show an interest in establishing and guiding the next generation. As I read through these it struck me that most are not complicated at all. There are many suggested activities for grandfathers to do with their grandchildren in each of these areas. I've picked out just a handful of ideas to share with you today.

Lineage work: Share memories with grandchildren and tell them stories about their ancestors. Also share family photos and important documents with grandchildren.

Mentoring work: Share hobbies with grandchildren and allow them to participate according to their abilities. As they get older, discuss current events with your grandchildren and how these events might affect them.

Spiritual work: This influences his grandchild's friendliness, composure and flexibility, family ideals and values, work ethic, and beliefs about education and morality. A key part of this can be listening, without giving unsolicited advice, as grandchildren voice concerns about life. There can also be times to reassure grandchildren with meaningful advice or counsel.

Character work: Help grandchildren become reliable and trustworthy by giving them age-appropriate tasks and encouraging them to complete the tasks.

Recreation work: There are so many things you can do together. Play board games, strategy games, or puzzles. Go exploring around the farm or garden. Go fishing, stargazing, camping, or geocaching together.

Family identity work: Make foods with grandchildren that reflect the family's culture or ethnicity. This makes me think of my friend and colleague, Janet Smith, who regularly shares about the ways in which her dad shares his heritage with her children, especially with perogies and potato dumplings.

Investment work: This is all about a focus on the future. Grandfathers can financially assist grandchildren according to values held about money and money management.

The role of a grandfather is special and important, and an active and caring grandfather is certainly a treasure for their grandchildren.

And now let's look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. Have you ever thought about making food in your home to sell directly from your home or maybe at the Farmers Market or another retail location? I will be teaching a Cottage Foods Rules and Labeling class on March 15 from 6:30-8:00 pm. You can find details about this program and future programs related to financial wellness, food preservation, diabetes, and more at our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!