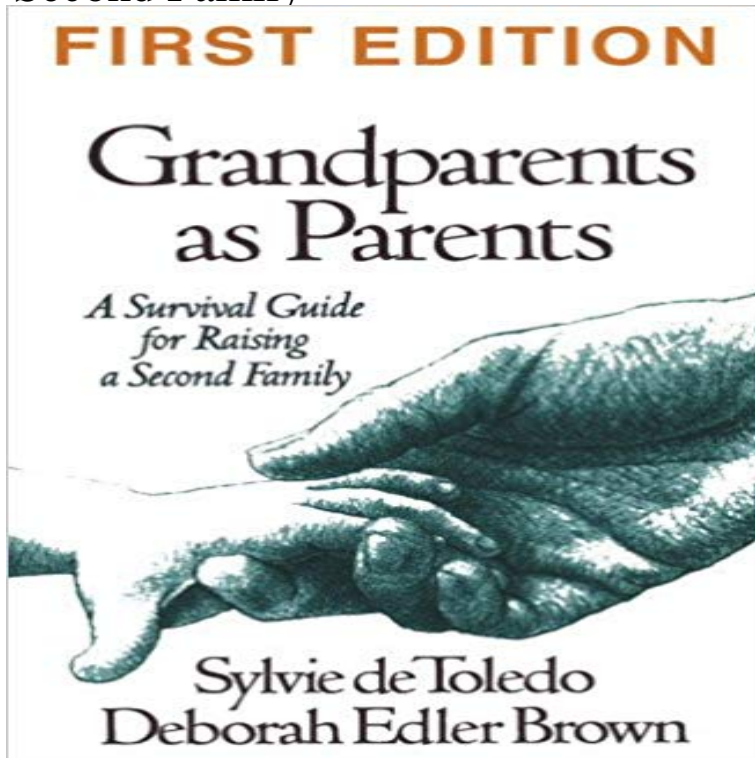


Grandparents as Parents, First Edition: A Survival Guide for Raising a Second Family



Emily Petersen knew her pregnant daughter-in-law, Sheila, was a drug addict. She knew the young woman was using drugs throughout her pregnancy, and she was prepared to see the effects in her newborn granddaughter--the stiff body, the frantic eyes, the shakes. What Emily was not prepared for was becoming a mother again at 59. But when she and her husband, Carter, arrived at the hospital to see the baby, they found a social worker and two bodyguards outside the hospital room. Sheila had been arrested on drug charges, and the baby was being removed. The social worker asked Emily if she would be willing to take the child. I came in to visit a baby, Emily told her. I didnt come to take a baby home. But her son was in tears, begging them not to send Amanda into foster care, and neither Emily nor Carter could stand the idea of not knowing where their granddaughter was. A week later they filed for custody. More than a million American grandparents today are the sole caregivers for their grandchildren, thrust into unplanned second parenthood by tragedies such as drug abuse, crime, physical abuse, divorce, abandonment, and the untimely death of their own children. At a time when they should be enjoying themselves, they find their lives changed, their finances challenged, and their parenting techniques antiquated and ineffective with this new, and often traumatized, generation they must suddenly raise. Offering compassion, encouragement, and fact-filled advice, Grandparents as Parents covers everything a grandparent in this situation needs to know in order to cope with the practical, day-to-day needs of raising a child today. Cowritten by the founder of the national support group Grandparents as Parents (GAP) and a veteran journalist, and covering the broad range of issues associated with the personal and social aspects of raising grandchildren, the book

is also an important resource for all mental health professionals who work with this burgeoning population. A highly practical handbook, *Grandparents as Parents* will equip readers with the knowledge they need to immediately take control of their lives, explaining how to:

- * Navigate the legal maze*
- * Obtain financial aid//m-//including lists of what to take to the welfare office*
- * Arrange for medical care*
- * Kick a disruptive adult child out of the house*
- * Enroll grandchildren in schools and advocate for special education*
- * Cope with the special demands of drug-exposed children and identify signs of potential drug use in teenagers*
- * Consider counseling for emotionally disturbed children*
- * Start a peer support group*
- * Become an activist for grandparents rights

Divided into three sections, the first part of the book discusses the changes, feelings, and problems of grandparents, adult children, grandchildren, and family in general. These chapters debunk many of the myths associated with the phenomenon of grandparents as parents and the crises that lead to it. The authors offer invaluable advice on how to overcome the feelings of isolation, grief, anger, guilt, fear, and doubt that many grandparents in this situation experience. Relating powerfully moving, highly personal, and often inspirational stories, the volume lets readers know they are not alone, while also pointing out the incomparable rewards to be gained from raising ones grandchildren. Section II addresses the bureaucracy involved in raising grandchildren. Readers will learn how to get through the alphabet soup of AFDC, IEP, WIC, and CPS, deal with court proceedings, and obtain other services for grandchildren. In Section III, the book turns its focus to the larger community of grandparents as parents, examining the changing definition of family and the political arena in which it is being redefined. This section provides invaluable information on how grandparents can find and/or start peer support groups as well as organize for political change. Throughout the book are

point-by-point lists of how to cope in a variety of family situations. An extremely useful appendix features lists of resources for grandparents and relative caregivers, including who to call to find support groups. For those starting a group, suggested topics of conversation are provided. Readers will also find information about additional parenting resource groups, recommended reading lists, and addresses (some with phone numbers) of legal organizations and associations and political action groups. Topical, comprehensive, and filled with essential information, this book is a must for all grandparents who are taking on the challenge of raising a new generation of children. Mental health professionals who work with this population--including psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors, physicians, teachers, attorneys, and family advocates--will find *Grandparents as Parents* an invaluable reference as well as an ideal resource for client assignment. It is also a useful supplementary text for courses in social work, psychology, gerontology, and family sociology.

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