



Grandparent Support is Needed in Education

By Educator Barnes - September 8, 2019

National Grandparents Day takes place each year on the first Sunday following Labor Day weekend. If you are like me, you wonder where your parents went once you became a parent. The rules I had to follow apparently no longer apply to my children. My children can have dessert before dinner according to my parents. My parents never let me do that. Even though I am low-key giving the side-eye to the privileges my children have with my parents that I didn't

have, I know the time spent with my parents helps build a special bond. That connection should not be overlooked. It should be leveraged to help children in our schools.

I strongly believe in the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child." As much as possible, my parents and parents-in-law are involved in my sons' education. First, they are all listed as contacts at school. Yes, that includes my father-in-law who lives in Mississippi. He does come to visit during the school year, and we want to make sure he is able to be involved when he is in town. We also have our parents complete school background checks. This allows them to volunteer or attend field trips. Many times grandparents have more flexibility in their schedule than their adult children. Maybe mom and dad can't be there, but grandparents can show support.

Next, keep grandparents in the loop about grades and struggles in school. They can be a positive encourager when you might be going off on your children at home for their poor choices. I'm not suggesting that parents should snap on their children, but the reality is parents do get to the end of their rope when grades don't improve or behavior doesn't change. A neutral party like grandparents can allow the child to express more background they might not share with parents because they are in trouble at home.

Grandparents' presence at school is not only positive for their grandchildren, but it also benefits all children. As a teacher who had grandparents volunteer, I noticed how my students would act differently when another student's grandparent came to volunteer. A few students wanted to share an update on how they had progressed in class since the last time the grandparent visited. Some schools use grandparents to read to classes or complete other tasks to support the school.

Yes, grandparents have already raised their kids. No, I'm not suggesting they raise their grandchildren but on National Grandparents Day, I think we need to consider how we can get more grandparents involved in the school setting. Remember, grandparents will do extra for their grandkids even if they didn't do it for their kids.