

Raising Grandkids: Inside Skip-Generation Families

Gary Garrison

University of Regina Press (Aug 4, 2018)

Softcover \$14.95 (250pp)

978-0-88977-554-1

Grandparents who are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren live incredibly complex lives. Their beautiful tapestry of self-sacrifice is laced with legal difficulties, children's mental and emotional challenges, guilt and resentment regarding the absent parent(s), financial strain, and a lack of time and energy to preserve the grandparents' health and well-being.

It's a world Gary Garrison knows well: he is helping to raise his partner's grandchildren. In *Raising Grandkids*, he shares his own experiences and gives voice to the situations of a wide swath of grandparents who are also the caregivers for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He met many of his interview subjects through CANGRANDS camp, a place for skip-generation families in Canada to connect with each other.

With vibrant real-life examples, the book offers vital practical help to grandparents who are fighting for custody; who are worrying that the grandchildren they love will be taken away; who are supporting grandchildren with mental and neurological problems, including fetal alcohol spectrum disorder; and for grandparents from indigenous cultures who face racism along with everything else. Feelings of caring, support, and connection carry through, offering these caregivers what they desperately need: a community that understands.

The book's narratives brim with heart and candor; Garrison is at once journalistic and engaged. His book demonstrates a keen understanding of the tensions between people and bureaucracies, and how children and caregivers suffer at the hands of legal systems.

Raising Grandkids is an empathetic and knowledgeable book that shows grandparents they're not alone in the challenges they face while raising their grandchildren.

MELISSA WUSKE (University Press 2018)

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