



The Commission on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren asked grandparents raising grandchildren across the state this question: What do you know NOW that you wish you knew THEN? The following is a list of responses:

- I wish I had known how difficult this was going to be.
- I had to learn to take a day/some time for myself, to breathe. I needed that.
- I wish I had more support from my family.
- I wish I had known about financial resources sooner. It would have made such a difference.
- I was not really prepared or informed.
- Lots of times I have said “I wish I knew that.”
- I wish I had figured out sooner which services would help us.
- I wish I knew to speak up and advocate for my grandchild in school and got him the help he needed sooner.
- I have done things that I never thought was possible – I sometimes shake my head and think “I can’t believe this happening and that I survived this.”



*○ I learned that I do not need to be on an island going through this alone.*

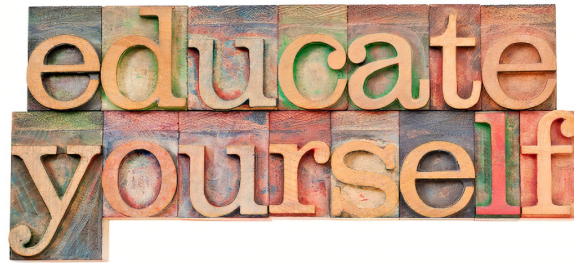
- The relationship with my adult child changed completely and became adversarial. I never would have thought that would happen.
- So much information all at once, so much to do in the beginning. It was overwhelming. I needed to get organized and do it fast.
- It took me a long time to realize I didn't need to do all of it.
- I wish I had figured out what supports were best for me and my family sooner and that I gave up the not so good ones sooner.
- Keep a log, a journal, a notebook – keep good notes.
- I didn't anticipate all the people that would be involved and all the work to do, the paperwork/forms, meetings, visits, court, etc. I really didn't understand and was very overwhelmed.
- Everyone's situation is different, it's hard to find good reliable information.



*○ Make sure you have an outlet for you. I let that go and I wish I had not.*

- I wish I had joined a support group sooner. Once I did join, I was mad I hadn't started going sooner.
- Knowledge is power – there is a lot to learn in a short period of time.
- You have to keep going to support groups- don't just go once. Keep going.
- I admire my grandchildren for being so brave and resilient.
- Parents have more rights than children. That was a hard pill to swallow.
- When we take our grandchildren, we do not realize that we are taking on all of the stress that comes with the biological parents too. It is hard to separate those issues and feelings.
- You don't know what you don't know. You don't even know the questions to ask.
- Remember, it's not your fault.

- If DCF is involved, let them do the visits with biological parents and the kids. It is too much for you to take on.



○ *Educate yourself as much as possible.*

- I wish I had taken my grandchildren sooner to spare them from further abuse and neglect and trauma.
- I wish there was someone there, day or night, to be there for me. I felt alone at times. Eventually I found support and I encourage others to do the same.
- We are not responsible for our children's mistakes.
- Be willing to say "I can not do that."
- Being involved with DCF was good and bad. I wish there was better communication, I wish I knew what was going on and how decisions were being made."
- I am glad I found a support group. It has been good to meet others going through the same things.
- Do not work harder at reunification than the biological parents.
- A word of caution, not all support groups are the same. Keep looking until you find the right one for you.
- I wish there was someone out there to walk me through all of this step by step. Instead I had to find out things on my own and many times it was years later.

○ *If someone offers help – take it! Don't try to do it all alone.*

