



Celebrating Grandparents (and Grandfriends) Day

In 1978, Congress passed legislation to recognize the first Sunday after Labor Day as Grandparents Day. President Jimmy Carter signed the proclamation. Today, many families, schools and other organizations celebrate these special relationships.

There are many ways to celebrate Grandparents Day, whether it be on the actual day or during September, which is Intergenerational Awareness Month. The activities can happen at youth-oriented locations like schools and community centers OR at places where adults aged 60+ gather. (But do remember that there are many grandparents under the age of 60!)

Some Tips for a Successful Event

- Broaden the term to include “grandfriends” – recognizing other elders in our circles of love such as great-aunts and -uncles, neighbors or close family friends.
- Whenever possible, group people together beyond family units so that children or elders who do not have someone visiting can still participate. For example, in a classroom, have four groups of students with their grand-people. In an assisted living facility, have three or four residents with their relatives and friends.
- Begin with ice breakers. Check out our [Recipe for Intergenerational Success](#) all about ice breakers.
- Towards the end of the event, consider serving some type of refreshments.
- Before leaving, give people the opportunity to reflect on the event by creating a card for someone who came or an “I want to remember sheet,” a piece of paper where they can write or draw about their experience.

As far as what you will do when you are together:

- There are many [Recipes for Intergenerational Success – One Time Events](#) on the Bridges Together website.
- If you want to be creative, use our [Steps to Create an Intergenerational Program in Your Community](#) to plan a one-time event. Begin with a theme which might include:
 - Family Trees. We offer a worksheet on a traditional [genealogical family tree](#) and a [tree of love](#). A wonderful related book is *The Family Tree* by David McPhail.
 - Favorite childhood books where every person brings their top pick.
 - Favorite childhood games, again with time to play some different games.

- Dances from different decades like the bunny hop, YMCA, Macarena, Gangnam Style and more!
- If you are in a school setting, choose a “grand-guest” to begin the day as her teacher would have done when she was a child.
- Celebrate with a Grand Career Panel inviting grand-guests to come and share about their careers. Remember: Being a homemaker/stay-at-home parent is a career!
- Make history come alive by inviting grand-guests to share about their life experiences during different parts of history.
- Set up games at different tables and invite families to rotate around and play them. Suggestions include Scrabble, Twister, Yahtzee and card games.
- Divide all of the attendees into intergenerational teams and play a game. Do a spelling or geography bee. Consider Family Feud, Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader? or charades. You can get these games as apps on mobile devices or even create your own versions. What about Name that Tune with songs from different generations or Jeopardy with questions from each decade? An outdoor game such as kickball or softball would work as well. Make sure that everyone can participate – for example, if someone is on crutches or uses a walker, perhaps they can be a referee.
- Decorate a picture frame and take a picture of each “family” unit or groups of friends. Make sure each participant get a copy of the photo.



***This Recipe for Intergenerational
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