Jewish Grandparents Network



JEWISH GRANDPARENTING IN A CHANGING WORLD

Findings from the 2026 National Study of Jewish Grandparents, and a look at how Jewish grandparenting has evolved since 2018

NOVEMBER 2026

A report from the Jewish Grandparents Network.
Research conducted by ImpactNPO.

ImpactNPO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The 2026 National Study of Jewish Grandparents updates the landmark study conducted in 2018. Since then, the world in which Jewish grandparents nurture their families has changed significantly, shaped by COVID, the October 7, 2023 attacks, the rise of antisemitism, growing interest in Jewish ritual and connection, and dramatic shifts in how families communicate.

The new study provides up-to-date data from a representative sample of U.S. Jewish grandparents and their families. It also identifies the attitudes, behaviors, and unmet needs of distinct groups of grandparents, highlighting opportunities for Jewish organizations to respond to their diverse interests and priorities. A random national sample of 689 grandparents age 50+ who self-identify as Jewish completed the online survey in June and July 2026.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Grandparenting remains a profound source of joy, and most Jewish grandparents want to pass Jewish values, heritage, and identity on to their grandchildren. Yet the families they nurture, and the pressures they face, have changed. Among the key findings and changes since 2018 are:

- **Joy endures —** 95% say being a grandparent is a joyful experience, virtually unchanged since 2018.
- **Multi-heritage families are the norm —** 57% of the adult children studied have a non-Jewish spouse or partner (up from 53% in 2018), and 59% of families include a non-Jewish co-grandparent.*
- **Jewish identity is up; synagogue attendance is down —** More grandparents consider themselves spiritual (63% vs. 51%) or religious (39% vs. 30%), yet fewer attended synagogue services with their grandchildren in the past year (19% vs. 26%).



- **Aspirations outpace experience —** 72% wish they could be more involved in their grandchildren's everyday lives, and 51% wish they could be more Jewishly involved.
- **Fewer live far away —** 29% of grandparents live more than five hours from their grandchildren, down from 39%, as more families relocate to be closer.
- **New pressures are front and center —** 82% are concerned about antisemitism's impact on their grandchildren, and more than a quarter feel a growing gap with their families over Israel or politics.*
- **A new generation is arriving —** Gen X grandparents (ages 50–61; 15%) are more Jewishly engaged and more hands-on, but also more strained.*
- **Grandparenting resources are under the radar —** 92% of grandparents cannot name an organization or resource they turn to for Jewish grandparenting guidance.*

**New measure added in 2026*

The report that follows explores these findings in greater detail and outlines opportunities for the Jewish Grandparents Network (JGN) and the broader Jewish community to respond to the changing needs of Jewish grandparents.

FIVE GRANDPARENTING MINDSETS

The research identified five distinct segments or grandparenting mindsets, depicted on the map below. The five mindsets differ primarily along two dimensions: the importance grandparents place on **Jewish continuity** (horizontal axis) and their **perceived ability** to fulfill their ideal grandparenting role (vertical axis).

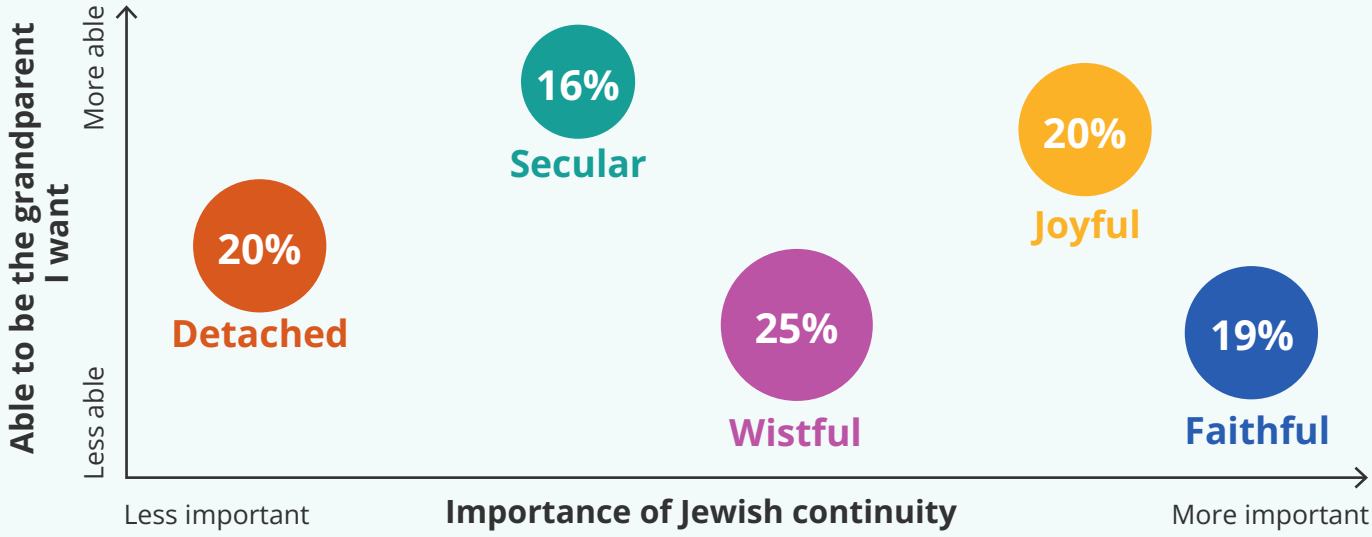
The five mindsets are:

- **Joyful (20%):** Grandparents and their families value Judaism and often celebrate Jewish holidays together.
- **Faithful (19%):** Strong Jewish commitment across the family, but distance and health limit time together.
- **Secular (16%):** A deep desire to pass on Jewish values and heritage, though not expressed religiously.



- **Wistful (25%):** Want closer relationships and stronger Jewish connections, but health and family differences get in the way.
- **Detached (20%):** Engaged grandparents, but Judaism plays only a marginal role for them and their families.

MAPPING THE FIVE GRANDPARENTING MINDSETS



DISTINCT NEEDS

Each mindset brings different strengths, constraints, and priorities to their grandparenting:

- **Joyful** grandparents and their families already share frequent, Jewishly rich experiences, and want help doing more of what works.
- **Faithful** grandparents are deeply committed to Jewish continuity but are the most likely to live far away; they need ways to share Jewish life across distance.
- **Secular** grandparents are fulfilled and involved, and care about Jewish heritage and values more than their children do; their families respond to heritage, stories, and shared experiences rather than religious observance.
- **Wistful** grandparents, the largest group, want to be more involved in their grandchildren's lives but face health limitations, complicated family dynamics, and/or intergenerational differences. They need help navigating these barriers.
- **Detached** grandparents are joyful and involved, but Judaism is peripheral to them and their families; low-barrier, relationship-centered entry points hold the most promise.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The findings point to significant opportunities for organizations that serve Jewish families. With few grandparents able to identify a go-to resource for Jewish grandparenting, and needs varying widely by mindset, there is considerable room to strengthen the field. JGN and partner organizations could consider the following approaches:

- Start with the grandparent-grandchild relationship, not with Jewish content alone.
- Consider mindsets alongside demographics and family circumstances.
- Support connection both in person and across distance, using the technology grandparents already use (e.g., Zoom).
- Welcome the whole family, including non-Jewish co-grandparents (*machatunim*).
- Help families navigate new pressures, from antisemitism to differences over Israel and politics, while staying connected.
- Support grandparents as their grandchildren grow from young children into teens and young adults.
- Expand access to Jewish grandparenting resources and strengthen awareness of the support already available.



ABOUT THE STUDY

WHY REVISIT JEWISH GRANDPARENTING NOW?

When JGN conducted the original study in late 2018, Baby Boomers (then ages 54 to 72) were coming of age as grandparents, expectations of the grandparent role were evolving, and Jewish identity and continuity across generations were shifting. Since then, the context for Jewish grandparenting has changed profoundly:

- **COVID-19 reshaped how families connect and where they live**
- **Video calls and messaging became ubiquitous**
- **Gen X began entering grandparenthood**
- **The October 7 attacks and heightened antisemitism touched Jewish families everywhere**
- **Jewish identity and family life continued to evolve, with more multifaith and multi-heritage families**

HOW THE STUDY WAS CONDUCTED

The 2026 National Study of Jewish Grandparents was designed, conducted, and analyzed by ImpactNPO, an independent research firm. A random national sample of 689 U.S. Jewish grandparents, age 50 and older, completed the online survey between June 8 and July 6, 2026. Respondents were drawn from five national online panels.

The survey explored grandparents' demographics, family relationships, Jewish identity and continuity, needs and challenges, and interest in various programs and resources. Grandparents responded to 30 attitudinal statements about grandparenting, family dynamics, and Jewish continuity.

> *A note on the data: The margin of error for the full sample (n=689) is ±3.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error are larger for individual mindsets. Differences between mindsets and other subgroups noted in this report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.*

KEY DIFFERENCES VS. 2018

The 2026 study focused on grandchildren within one family, rather than on one randomly selected grandchild (2018). The sample included a broader age range and a higher proportion of women. The 2026 questionnaire also introduced new measures addressing antisemitism, Israel and Zionism, intergenerational political differences, relationships with non-Jewish co-grandparents, competing family responsibilities, and awareness of Jewish grandparenting resources. Because of these differences, comparisons with 2018 should be viewed as broad indicators of change rather than precise measures of trends.

DIFFERENCE

	2018	2026
Respondent age range	55–80	50+
Respondent gender	52% F / 48% M	63% F / 37% M
# completed surveys	1,017	689
Focus of questions	One randomly selected grandchild	Family of the youngest adult child with grandchildren <18

TODAY'S JEWISH GRANDPARENTS

A SURPRISING FIRST FINDING

Before respondents answered a single substantive question, the study revealed an unexpected finding. In 2018, 35% of those screened qualified for the survey. In 2026, just 11% did, requiring more than twice as many people to be screened (6,328 vs. 2,922) to reach a smaller sample. While changes in panel composition, recruitment, and screening may have contributed to the lower incidence, reluctance to identify as Jewish or share family information, rising antisemitism, and demographic shifts may also be factors.

Today's Jewish grandparents nurture their families in a landscape that looks quite different from the one observed in 2018. Their families are more likely to include multiple faiths and heritages, fewer live far from their grandchildren, and they rely on a wider range of tools to stay connected.

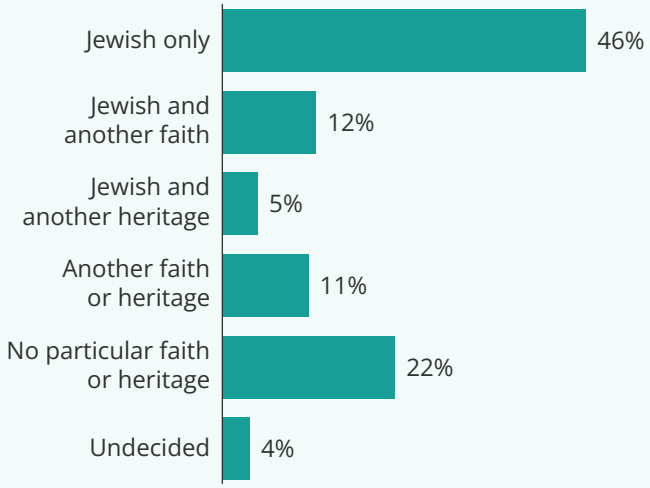
NAVIGATING MULTI-HERITAGE FAMILIES

For most Jewish grandparents, grandparenting takes place within multi-heritage family systems. 57% of the adult children studied have a non-Jewish spouse or partner, up from 53% in 2018, and 59% of families include at least one non-Jewish co-grandparent.

Just under half of grandchildren (46%) are being raised Jewish only, while another 17% are being raised Jewish alongside another faith (12%) or heritage (5%). Although the wording changed, an estimated 65% were being raised with some Jewish faith or heritage in 2018, compared with 63% today.

Navigating these family relationships can be delicate. Among grandparents with non-Jewish family members, nearly half (49%) say they are uneasy about pushing Jewish customs or practices on their adult child's family.

HOW GRANDCHILDREN ARE BEING RAISED



MULTI-HERITAGE FAMILIES

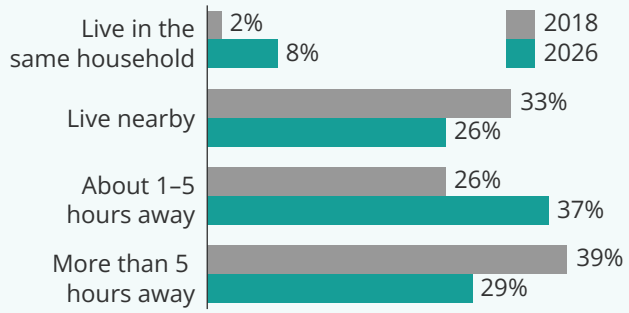


*Asked only of grandparents with non-Jewish family members

CLOSING THE DISTANCE

Families live closer together today than they did in 2018, a shift that coincided with significant relocation during and after the COVID pandemic and the rise of remote work. Only 29% of grandparents now live more than five hours from their grandchildren, down from 39%, and the share living in the same household has risen from 2% to 8%.

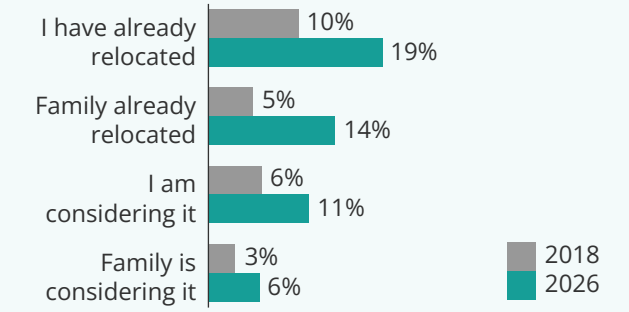
DISTANCE FROM GRANDCHILDREN*



*Assumes travel by car, bus, or train.

Relocation is part of the story: 19% of grandparents have relocated, or are relocating, to be closer to their grandchildren (vs. 10% in 2018), and 14% say their adult child's family has done so to be closer to them (vs. 5%). Another 11% are considering a move.

RELOCATION TO LIVE CLOSER TO FAMILY*



*2026 includes those in the process of relocating.

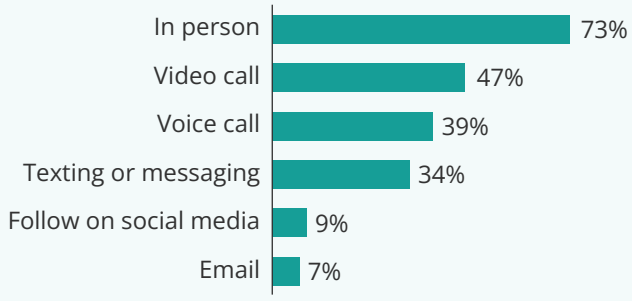
STAYING CONNECTED

Nearly half of grandparents (47%) had contact with their grandchildren at least weekly over the past year, whether in person, by video, phone, text, or email. Three in ten (30%) saw them in person weekly or more, up from 23% in 2018. Still, 40% saw their grandchildren in person only occasionally or not at all in the past year, compared with 46% in 2018.

PAST-YEAR CONTACT	Any interaction	In person interaction
Weekly or more often	47%	30%
A few times a month	23%	17%
About once a month	12%	14%
A few times a year	13%	36%
Not at all	4%	4%

Beyond in-person visits, video calls (47%) are the most common way grandparents connect with their grandchildren, followed by voice calls (39%) and texting or messaging (34%). Distance changes how grandparents connect, but not necessarily whether they connect.

HOW GRANDPARENTS TYPICALLY CONNECT*



*Not asked in 2018

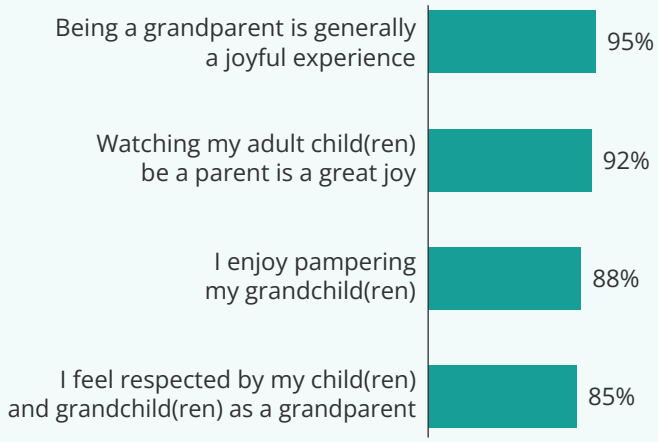
THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES OF GRANDPARENTING

Grandparenting remains overwhelmingly a source of joy. Nearly all (95%) say being a grandparent is generally joyful, 92% say watching their adult children parent brings great joy, and 85% feel respected in their role as grandparents. Most also want to pass on Jewish life: 78% say being Jewish is an important part of their lives, 77% want to transmit Jewish values, and 75% want to teach their grandchildren about their Jewish heritage.

Yet many wish they could be more involved in their grandchildren's lives. 72% would like greater involvement, but health limits 39% from being as active as they'd like, and 33% say differences over child-rearing create conflict. Although 51% wish they could be more Jewishly involved with their grandchildren, 31% did not participate in any in-person Jewish activities with them in the past year.

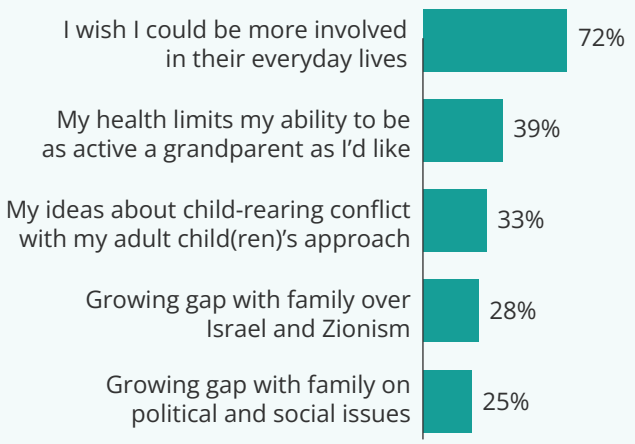
A SOURCE OF JOY...

% agree strongly/somewhat



...AND CHALLENGES

% agree strongly/somewhat





WHAT HAS — AND HASN'T — CHANGED

Comparing the two studies reveals a portrait of both continuity and change. Grandparenting remains an overwhelming joy, everyday togetherness remains strong, and friction over parenting styles persists at similar levels. Fewer than four in ten (39%) feel it is important for their grandchildren to marry a Jewish partner, just as in 2018.

At the same time, grandparents' own Jewish identification has grown stronger. The share who consider themselves spiritual rose from 51% to 63%, and the share who consider themselves religious rose from 30% to 39%. Their desire to transmit Jewish values and heritage is also somewhat higher.

But Jewish institutional engagement with grandchildren has softened. Fewer grandparents attended synagogue services (19% vs. 26%) or synagogue programs (17% vs. 24%) with their grandchildren, or took part in a JCC program together (9% vs. 13%). This suggests that much of today's Jewish grandparenting happens at home, online, and outside institutional walls.

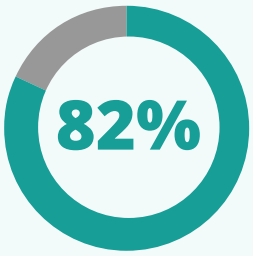


SELECTED FINDINGS*	2018	2026
Being a grandparent is generally a joyful experience	94%	95%
My ideas about child-rearing conflict with my adult child(ren)'s approach to parenting	30%	33%
Being Jewish is an important part of my life	75%	78%
I consider myself a spiritual person	51%	**63%**
I consider myself a religious person	30%	**39%**
It is important to me to transmit Jewish values to my grandchildren	71%	**77%**
It is important to me to teach them about their Jewish heritage	70%	**75%**
It is important to me that they marry a Jewish partner	38%	39%
Attended synagogue services together	26%	**19%**
Attended synagogue programs together	24%	**17%**
Attended a JCC program together	13%	**9%**

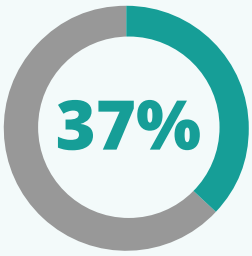
*Attitudes: % agree strongly/somewhat. Activities: past year. Bold values indicate a significant change vs. 2018.

ANTISEMITISM AND JEWISH IDENTITY

For the first time, the study asked about antisemitism, Zionism, and intergenerational friction over Israel and politics. Concern about antisemitism is quite high: 82% of grandparents worry about its impact on their grandchildren, including 95% of Joyful and 93% of Faithful grandparents. Grandparents' connection to Israel is far more varied, however. Overall, 37% consider themselves Zionists, ranging from 55% of Faithful grandparents to just 7% of Detached grandparents.



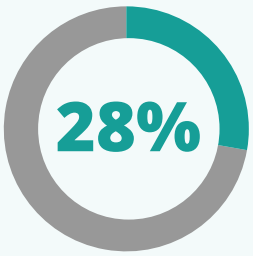
concerned about antisemitism's impact on their grandchildren



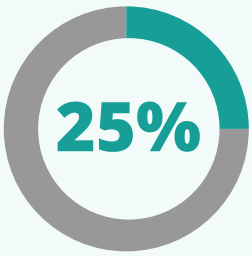
consider themselves a Zionist

INTERGENERATIONAL TENSIONS

About a quarter of grandparents feel a growing gap with their adult children and grandchildren regarding Israel and Zionism (28%) or political and social issues (25%). These tensions are concentrated among Wistful grandparents, more than half of whom feel these gaps (55% and 51%, respectively), roughly twice the rate of any other mindset. For them, these differences represent a particular strain on family relationships rather than general disengagement.



feel a growing gap with family over Israel and Zionism



feel a growing gap with family on political and social issues

The following section explores the five grandparenting mindsets in greater depth, including the different aspirations, experiences, and challenges that characterize each.

FIVE GRANDPARENTING MINDSETS

Grandparents are not all alike. Demographics tell us who grandparents are. Segmentation helps us understand how they think and feel about grandparenting and their role in nurturing Jewish values, heritage, and identity.

To identify these differences, multivariate segmentation analysis grouped grandparents based on patterns across 30 attitudes about grandparenting, family dynamics, and Jewish continuity.

Grandparents did not choose their segments; the analysis determined membership statistically. Although the analysis did not seek to replicate the 2018 segments, it identified five groups that closely parallel them. We call these groups *mindsets* because each reflects a distinct way of thinking about the grandparent role.

The 30 attitudes cluster into six broader themes: Jewish identity and continuity, grandparenting fulfillment, grandparenting aspirations, limits on involvement, financial responsibility, and concern about antisemitism. Together, they reveal two underlying dimensions that distinguish the mindsets (see chart on page 3):

- **Importance of Jewish continuity:** the importance grandparents place on Jewish values, heritage, and identity
- **Ability to be the grandparent I want:** the extent to which they feel able to fulfill the role they want, given factors such as health, physical distance, and emotional distance

A detailed summary of each mindset's distinguishing characteristics follows, along with suggestions for better engaging them.



JOYFUL *20% of grandparents*

Joyful grandparents don't just want Jewish connection; their families do, too. They want to share Jewish life and they have the relationships and opportunities to do so.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Deeply fulfilled as grandparents.** 100% call grandparenting joyful and 97% feel respected. Health is far less of a limitation than for most other mindsets.
- **Unusually strong access.** 72% interact with their grandchildren weekly or more, the highest of any mindset, and 44% see them in person weekly.
- **Jewishly aligned families.** 76% have grandchildren being raised Jewish only, and 69% have an adult child with a Jewish spouse or partner, both among the highest of any mindset.
- **Jewish aspirations become shared experiences.** They lead every mindset in celebrating a Jewish holiday at home (77%), cooking Jewish holiday food (61%), celebrating Shabbat (38%), and attending services together (38%).

"Being a grandparent brings me enormous joy, and sharing our Jewish values and heritage together is part of that joy."*

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Close family relationships, frequent contact, and shared Jewish experiences provide a strong foundation. Joyful grandparents already value Jewish continuity; they want help doing more of what works. They show the strongest interest in celebrating Jewish holidays and rituals (81% very interested), knowing their family's story (84%), and transmitting Jewish values and identity (53%). Synagogues are a natural channel, but resources should also support the Jewish experiences already happening at home and online.



*Illustrative first-person statements summarize each mindset; they are not actual quotations from respondents.

FAITHFUL *19% of grandparents*

Faithful grandparents' commitment to Jewish continuity is exceptionally strong, but distance and other constraints limit their opportunities to act on it. Lower day-to-day involvement reflects fewer chances to be together, not less interest.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Jewish continuity is a defining priority.** 96% say being Jewish is important in their lives, 92% want their grandchildren to have a strong connection to Judaism, and 93% want to pass on Jewish values.
- **Their family is strongly Jewishly aligned.** 66% have grandchildren being raised Jewish only, and 60% have an adult child with a Jewish spouse or partner, second only to Joyful.
- **Distance and health limit involvement.** 49% live more than five hours away, among the highest of any mindset, and only 8% see their grandchildren in person weekly. Yet 87% wish they could be more involved in their everyday lives, and 49% say health limits their involvement.
- **Already bridging the distance.** 60% connect with their grandchildren through video calls, among the highest of any mindset.

> ***"Our family shares a strong Jewish identity. I want to stay involved in my grandchildren's Jewish lives, even though we live far apart."***

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Distance and other barriers need not stand in the way of meaningful Jewish experiences. One promising approach is connecting Jewish values to everyday life (64% very interested). Many also want help strengthening relationships with grandchildren who live far away (40%) and using technology more efficiently to connect meaningfully (34%). Sharing Jewish stories, holiday rituals, family history, cooking, and books by video, phone, and text can turn remote contact into Jewish connection.



SECULAR *16% of grandparents*

Secular grandparents are confident, involved grandparents who are less religiously oriented. In 2026, what stands out is how deeply many care about Jewish heritage and values, even when the next generation doesn't share that attachment as strongly.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Exceptionally fulfilled as grandparents.** 100% call grandparenting joyful and 100% feel respected. 58% interact with their grandchildren weekly or more, second only to Joyful.
- **Their Jewish attachment is real, but less religious.** 90% want to pass on Jewish values, 88% want to teach Jewish heritage, and 74% want their grandchildren to have a strong connection to Judaism.
- **Jewish priorities differ across generations.** 77% wish their adult children had a greater appreciation for their Jewish heritage, and 58% say their grandchildren participate in Jewish activities only because doing so matters to their grandparents — the highest of any mindset. Only 16% have an adult child with a Jewish partner.

> ***"Jewish heritage matters to me, even if it matters less to my children. But that doesn't diminish my joy as a grandparent."***

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Heritage, values, and shared experiences matter more to them than religious observance. They show interest in sharing family stories and history (55% very interested), creative activities with grandchildren (50%), bringing Jewish holidays to life (45%), sharing stories of the Jewish people (43%), and using technology to connect meaningfully (42%). Family history, stories, culture, and creative shared experiences can make Jewishness relevant within an already strong relationship.



WISTFUL *25% of grandparents*

Wistful grandparents' story isn't primarily about Judaism. Health, competing demands, and family strain make closeness hard to achieve, and the difficulty extends well beyond Jewish involvement.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Involved, but not always in the ways they want.** They are among the most likely to provide regular childcare (25%), sleepovers (24%), and transportation (26%), and 28% say their adult child's family has moved, or is considering moving, closer to them. Yet only 46% rate their relationship with their adult child as very good (vs. 72% overall).
- **Practical constraints are unusually heavy.** 65% say health limits their grandparenting, and 52% struggle to balance it with other demands, both the highest of any mindset.
- **Intergenerational differences deepen the wistfulness.** 57% report conflict over child-rearing, 55% feel a growing gap over Israel and Zionism, and 51% over politics. 73% wish their adult children valued their Jewish heritage more.

"I want to be more involved in my grandchildren's lives — including Jewishly — but health and family circumstances get in the way."

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Navigating complex family relationships is their central challenge, and shared experiences can help. Their interests include improving family communication (35% very interested), navigating strained in-law relationships (30%), and managing complex family dynamics (29%). They also show the strongest interest in peer support (21%). Shared experiences, such as Jewish heritage trips (29%) and grandparent-grandchild retreats at Jewish camp (26%), may help strengthen family bonds.



DETACHED *20% of grandparents*

Detached grandparents remain engaged in their grandchildren's lives, but Jewish identity and continuity play a relatively minor role in their families, both for themselves and for the next generation.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Grandparenting itself is rewarding.** 100% call it joyful and 93% feel respected. 45% interact with grandchildren weekly or more, and 23% have relocated, or are relocating, to be closer.
- **Jewish continuity is where they diverge.** Only 31% say being Jewish is important, 18% want their grandchildren strongly connected to Judaism, and 34% want to pass on Jewish values.
- **Jewishness is less central across the family.** Just 15% have grandchildren raised Jewish only, and 14% have an adult child with a Jewish partner. Only 30% wish their children appreciated their Jewish heritage more, unlike Secular grandparents (77%).
- **Connected through everyday life.** 79% did activities at their grandchild's home, 79% celebrated a birthday, and 50% attended a performance or sporting event. However, 55% did no Jewish activities.

"I love being a grandparent and being involved in their lives, but Judaism doesn't play a key role in the relationship."

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The grandparent-grandchild relationship is the starting point, with accessible ways to explore Jewish culture, values, and family history. Overt messages about Jewish continuity have little appeal, but knowing their family's story (39% very interested), creative activities (24%), and using technology meaningfully (23%) offer openings. As PJ Library has shown, books, stories, culture, values, and family conversation can convey Jewish meaning without requiring prior Jewish engagement.



THE MINDSETS AT A GLANCE

The five mindsets reflect different combinations of Jewish commitment, family relationships, and levels of involvement in grandparenting. As the table below illustrates, a strong desire to transmit Jewish identity does not always translate into shared experiences, and close family relationships do not necessarily mean that Judaism plays a central role.

Together, these patterns reinforce the importance of understanding not only what grandparents value, but also the circumstances that shape their experiences.

SELECTED MEASURES*	Total	Joyful	Faithful	Secular	Wistful	Detached
Share of total respondents	100%	20%	19%	16%	25%	20%
JEWISH IDENTITY & CONTINUITY						
Being Jewish is an important part of my life	78%	**98%**	**96%**	85%	79%	31%
It is important to me to transmit Jewish values to my grandchildren	77%	**96%**	**93%**	**90%**	75%	34%
I want my grandchildren to have a strong connection to Judaism	67%	**96%**	**92%**	74%	59%	18%
Celebrated a Jewish holiday together in the past 12 months at their home or mine	50%	**77%**	50%	51%	40%	32%
My grandchildren are being raised Jewish only	46%	**76%**	**66%**	25%	46%	15%
CONNECTION & ACCESS						
Interact with grandchildren weekly or more	47%	**72%**	27%	58%	38%	45%
See my grandchildren in person weekly or more	30%	**44%**	8%	28%	38%	30%
Live more than 5 hours away from my grandchildren	29%	20%	**49%**	**39%**	14%	29%
RELATIONSHIPS & BARRIERS						
I feel respected by my child(ren) and grandchild(ren) in my role as a grandparent	85%	**97%**	85%	**100%**	59%	**93%**
I wish I could be more Jewishly involved with my grandchildren	51%	40%	**69%**	**67%**	**68%**	12%
My health limits my ability to be as active a grandparent as I'd like to be	39%	14%	49%	10%	**65%**	45%
My ideas about child-rearing conflict with my adult child(ren)'s approach to parenting	33%	17%	29%	29%	**57%**	27%
I struggle to balance grandparenting with the other demands in my life	22%	11%	11%	4%	**52%**	19%
Relationship with my adult child is very good	72%	**83%**	69%	**88%**	46%	**85%**

**Bold values are significantly higher than those of at least two other mindsets (95% confidence level).*

HOW THE MINDSETS HAVE EVOLVED SINCE 2018

The five mindset names carried forward from 2018, but our understanding of several has shifted or become clearer. Both studies identified mindsets through patterns in grandparents' attitudes. The 2026 findings also illuminate how family circumstances — including health, distance, and intergenerational differences — shape their grandparenting experiences.

Mindset	2018 share	What characterized them in 2018	What characterized them in 2026
Joyful 20%	20%	Strong Jewish identity attitudes: wanting to pass on values, teach heritage, feeling spiritual	Strong Jewish commitment is matched by shared Jewish experiences: highest weekly contact and most likely to have grandchildren raised Jewish only
Faithful 19%	16%	Strong Jewish commitment across the whole family: high synagogue involvement, children marrying Jewish	Jewish commitment remains strong across the family, but distance and health limit time together: lowest weekly in-person contact (8%)
Secular 16%	23%	Fulfilled, confident grandparents with low religious or spiritual identification	Their desire to pass on Jewish values and heritage (88–90%) is now clearly visible, just not religiously expressed
Wistful 25%	20%	Relational friction, including child-rearing conflicts and feeling underappreciated as a grandparent	Health limitations (65%), competing demands (52%), and family tensions over child-rearing (57%), politics (51%), and Israel/Zionism (55%) strain relationships
Detached 20%	21%	Low interest in Jewish continuity among grandparents and their families	Jewish continuity remains a low priority, with limited interest in Jewish ritual or observance across the family

The Joyful, Faithful, and Detached mindsets account for broadly similar shares in both studies. Secular declined from 23% to 16%, a shift that coincides with a broader period of renewed Jewish engagement, connection, and identity exploration following the October 7 attacks — what the Jewish Federations of North America calls "the Surge." Wistful increased from 20% to 25%, a shift influenced by the inclusion of Gen X grandparents (ages 50–61): half are Wistful, compared with 20% among those age 62+, matching the overall Wistful share in 2018. Gen X grandparents also report wider family gaps over Israel and politics. Differences in the samples and attitudes used to identify the mindsets mean these comparisons suggest broad patterns of change rather than precise trends.

INTEREST IN PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

Grandparents' strongest interests center on values and family history: leading an ethical and moral life (76% very interested) and knowing their family's story (63%). But interests vary by mindset. Peer support appeals to just 10% overall, compared with 21% of Wistful grandparents. Joyful grandparents favor Jewish content, while Wistful grandparents seek help with family relationships.

% VERY INTERESTED*	Total	Joyful	Faithful	Secular	Wistful	Detached
Leading an ethical and moral life	76%	**90%**	**89%**	**85%**	56%	69%
Knowing your family's story	63%	**84%**	**79%**	**74%**	45%	39%
Celebrating Jewish holidays and rituals	51%	**81%**	67%	56%	39%	14%
Connecting Jewish values to everyday life	45%	**69%**	**64%**	45%	39%	7%
Sharing your family's stories/history with grandchildren	44%	**60%**	48%	**55%**	36%	22%
Creative activities with grandchildren	37%	**49%**	31%	**50%**	32%	24%
Bringing Jewish holidays to life for grandchildren	33%	**54%**	33%	**45%**	30%	8%
Strengthening relationships with grandchildren far away	33%	28%	**40%**	37%	35%	24%
Using technology to connect meaningfully	33%	37%	34%	**42%**	30%	23%
Improving communication with adult children/grandchildren	30%	29%	34%	29%	35%	22%
Navigating multi-heritage or multifaith families	22%	26%	24%	31%	28%	3%
Multigenerational holiday programs	20%	**30%**	16%	21%	**30%**	3%
Peer support group with other grandparents	10%	7%	4%	12%	**21%**	2%

**Bold values are significantly higher than those of at least two other mindsets (95% confidence level).*

THE SAME PROGRAMS CAN MEET DIFFERENT NEEDS

Programs can appeal to different mindsets for different reasons. The matrix highlights where selected ideas align with each mindset's needs and interests.

SELECTED PROGRAM IDEAS*	Joyful	Faithful	Secular	Wistful	Detached
Share family stories/history	●	●	●		●
Bring Jewish holidays to life	●	●	●	●	
Provide creative activities with grandchildren	●	●	●	●	●
Strengthen relationships across distance		●	●	●	
Improve family communication		●		●	
Navigate multi-heritage/multifaith families	●	●	●	●	
Peer support/local meet-ups with grandparents				●	
Multigenerational holiday programs	●		●	●	

**Dots indicate strategic fit based on needs and relative interest.*

A NEW GENERATION OF GRANDPARENTS

Today's Gen X grandparents (ages 50–61, n=104) make up 15% of respondents; Baby Boomers and older grandparents (age 62+, n=585) comprise 85%. Half of Gen X grandparents work full-time (vs. 14% of Boomers), 35% have one grandchild (vs. 15%), and 10% care for an aging parent or in-law (vs. 3%). More identify as Orthodox (20% vs. 5%). These differences may reflect life stage, family composition, and generation.

MORE JEWISHLY ENGAGED FAMILIES

Gen X grandparents' families are more Jewishly aligned: more grandchildren are being raised Jewish only, and more adult children have Jewish partners (57% vs. 39%). The grandparents themselves more often describe themselves as religious. They also more often celebrated Shabbat (31% vs. 20%), attended services (35% vs. 16%), and cooked Jewish holiday food (48% vs. 34%) with grandchildren. And although institutional engagement has softened overall since 2018, Gen X grandparents were far more likely to attend JCC programs (27% vs. 6%) and PJ Library events (14% vs. 2%) together. Celebrating Jewish holidays at home was similarly common.

CLOSER, MORE INVOLVED, AND MORE STRAINED

Gen X grandparents live closer — 23% live in the same household as their grandchildren (vs. 5%), and only 12% live more than five hours away (vs. 32%) — and report more frequent contact and regular childcare. Yet they also report greater difficulty balancing grandparenting with other demands, more child-rearing conflict (47% vs. 30%), and wider gaps over Israel and politics. These tensions are consistent with the finding that half of Gen X grandparents fall into the Wistful mindset, compared with just 20% of Boomers. That said, grandparenting remains joyful for both groups, and adult-child relationship ratings do not differ significantly.

SELECTED FINDINGS	Gen X	Boomers*
Grandchildren being raised Jewish only	63%	43%
Consider themselves religious	68%	34%
Interact with grandchildren weekly or more	62%	45%
Provide regular daytime childcare	28%	13%
Struggle to balance grandparenting with other demands	42%	18%
Growing gap with family over Israel and Zionism	52%	24%
Growing gap with family on political and social issues	43%	21%
Wistful mindset	50%	20%

**For readability, this report refers to Baby Boomers and older respondents collectively as 'Boomers.'*
All differences shown are significant at the 95% confidence level.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION AND SUPPORT

Gen X grandparents express greater interest in multigenerational holiday programs (44% very interested vs. 16%), Jewish camp retreats (39% vs. 9%), local intergenerational Shabbat dinners (32% vs. 11%), and peer support (28% vs. 7%). More can name a go-to Jewish grandparenting resource (20% vs. 6%). Shared Jewish experiences paired with relationship support may resonate particularly well.
Among Gen X grandparents with non-Jewish co-grandparents, 38% think those co-grandparents would welcome Jewish ritual resources (vs. 9% of Boomers), though this finding is based on a small number of respondents.

DO YOUNGER BOOMERS RESEMBLE GEN X GRANDPARENTS?

Although younger Boomers (ages 62–67) and Gen X grandparents (ages 50–61) may share similar life circumstances, younger Boomers generally resemble older respondents (age 68+). The exceptions: they are more likely to live with their grandchildren (11% vs. 4%) and to strongly feel a gap over Israel and Zionism (19% vs. 6%).

GRANDCHILDREN'S LIFE STAGES

Grandchildren's ages also shape grandparenting. Grandparents of preschoolers place greater importance on Jewish continuity: 44% strongly agree that they want their grandchildren to have a strong connection to Judaism (vs. 32% without preschoolers). Those with teen grandchildren are more likely to strongly agree that they are concerned about antisemitism than those whose grandchildren are all younger (60% vs. 50%). However, gaps over Israel and politics do not differ significantly by grandchildren's ages, suggesting these tensions may center more on relationships with adult children.



KEY INSIGHTS & IMPLICATIONS

Most Jewish grandparents find deep joy in grandparenting and want to pass on Jewish values, heritage, and identity, yet their aspirations and unmet needs vary widely by mindset. The findings reveal ample opportunities for Jewish organizations and institutions to better serve Jewish grandparents and their families.

SHARED PRIORITIES

- **The relationship comes first.** Grandparenting is a joyful experience for most, and Jewish connection is only one part of that relationship. Books, stories, culture, values, and shared activities can engage grandparents across all five mindsets, even those for whom Judaism is less central.
- **Mindsets matter as much as demographics.** Grandparents of the same age and background can approach the role very differently. Programs that address each mindset's goals and barriers may resonate more strongly.
- **Needs change as grandchildren grow.** Those grandparents with preschool-age grandchildren are especially interested in bringing Jewish holidays to life (42%) and strengthening relationships with grandchildren far away (38%), while those with teen and young adult grandchildren are more interested in deepening ties with them (36%).
- **Connections happen both in person and online.** Distance shapes how grandparents connect, but need not diminish those connections. Technology is already part of many relationships and can be a platform for meaningful shared Jewish experiences.
- **The *machatunim* are part of the picture, too.** With multi-heritage families now the norm, programs can intentionally welcome non-Jewish co-grandparents and other family members. Among Jewish grandparents asked about these relationships, 12% believe their co-grandparents would be interested in Jewish resources, while 30% are unsure. Hearing from non-Jewish family members directly would help clarify their interests.
- **Families need help talking across differences.** Concern about antisemitism is widespread and differences over Israel, Zionism, and politics strain some families. Resources that help grandparents discuss antisemitism in age-appropriate ways and stay connected across differences may be especially valuable.
- **The field of Jewish grandparenting is still underdeveloped.** With 92% unable to name a go-to resource, there is considerable opportunity to expand access to programs and support that meet the distinct needs of each mindset.
- **Awareness of the Jewish Grandparents Network is limited.** Only 17% of respondents overall are familiar with JGN, compared with 35% of Wistful grandparents, who face significant relationship challenges. Increased partnerships and expanded media outreach could help JGN reach more grandparents seeking support.

MINDSET-SPECIFIC IMPLICATIONS

- **Joyful (20%):** Their access and enthusiasm create openings for resources on celebrating Jewish holidays and rituals (81% very interested) and modeling Jewish values and identity (53%).
- **Faithful (19%):** Distance is the main barrier. Connecting Jewish values to everyday life (64%) and strengthening long-distance relationships (40%) can help bridge it.
- **Secular (16%):** Heritage, values, and connection resonate more than religious observance, especially sharing family stories and history (55%) and creative activities (50%).
- **Wistful (25%):** Relationship barriers come first. Help with family communication (35%) and peer support from other grandparents (21%), paired with shared family experiences, may ease these barriers.
- **Detached (20%):** Grandparenting, not Jewish continuity, is the way in. Low-barrier entry points, such as knowing their family's story (39%) and doing creative activities together (24%), can spark interest.



By engaging grandparents as essential partners and meeting them where they are, JGN and its partners across the Jewish community can help grandparents create meaningful, joyful Jewish connections with their grandchildren and strengthen Jewish families for generations to come.



The Jewish Grandparents Network inspires and supports grandparents to create meaningful and joyful Jewish connections with their grandchildren. As a national organization, JGN educates, connects, and supports grandparents as essential partners in enriching Jewish life across generations.

JGN envisions a world in which grandparents inspire vibrant Jewish families and communities, nurture Jewish pride and joy, and confidently model a love of Jewish heritage and values.

Richard N. Bernstein, President

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Terry S. Kaye, Associate Director

More information at jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org

ImpactNPO designed, fielded, and analyzed both the 2018 and 2026 editions of the National Study of Jewish Grandparents. This research, evaluation, and strategy consultancy helps nonprofit and educational organizations use data and insights to better understand the constituencies they serve and maximize their impact.

Karen Radkowsky, CEO & Founder

More information at impactNPO.com



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