
What Grandparents Told Us

The National Study of Jewish Grandparents concluded with an open-ended question asking grandparents to share their feedback and thoughts. The following represents a very small sample of the responses we received.

- "I love the time I spend with my granddaughter and am so lucky to see and take care of her. She sleeps over at my house every Saturday and we love her so much. Being a grandma is the best part of my life."
- "I wish I had a relationship with my grandchildren, but their mother is not interested in having a relationship with us. We feel alone in this world as far as my family is concerned, my daughter does not honor her mother or father."
- "My son's family is Shomer Shabbat (Sabbath observant), keep kosher and is immersed in Jewish life. My daughter, who lives near me, wants nothing to do with anything Jewish. They have a Christmas tree and light Chanukah candles (without saying any blessings). I am not permitted to bring my grandson to my temple. I was in the past and he loved it. But, no longer. It's quite challenging."
- "Late in life, I deeply regret the opportunities I missed or overlooked when it came to becoming more involved in a faith-based life because by not participating, my children as well turned away from our religion."
- "As grandparents, my husband and I have been the major Jewish influence in our grandchildren's lives. My son chose to marry a non-Jewish woman and so she has no Jewish background and is not interested in taking classes together."
- "My married daughter, her husband, and two boys live 25 minutes from us. We have belonged to Orthodox, Conservative, and now a Reform congregation. We pay tuition for our older grandson to attend religious school. We also pay for their synagogue membership. We make the Seders. We host Rosh ha Shanah meals and Yom Kippur break fast or they go to my son in law's family. I am disabled; if I wasn't I would do even more."
- "Our grandchildren know that we are Jewish and that their father/mother is but that their other parent isn't. None are participating in any formal religion which is better in my mind than being Christian and rejecting Judaism."
- "My wife is not Jewish but is a full member of our shul, has created with me a Jewish home, raised our kids as active and knowledgeable Jews, is well-versed in Jewish values, rituals, and services. She is not alone in this. A scientist, she is an atheist, yet values Jewish traditions and values. But she has not become officially Jewish because she thinks her atheism would make that dishonest. Yet our family is more fully Jewish than most."
- "I grew up in a household where my father taught Comparative Religions, and I thought Judaism was all about inquiry in a quest for seeking truth. From this I've come to believe that the Judeo-Christian ethic has significant shortfalls — connection to the Earth and all life that creates broad and deep relationships; and commitment to future generations. As a religion we must bear some of the responsibility for the mess our world in."
- "Day schools, consistency with practice at home, good after school Talmud tutors, summer camp, after high school yeshivas in Israel and in America, ability to be flexible with practices at home, giving the kids the freedom to develop on their own, good luck and Besiyata Dishmaya (the help of heaven) made it work for us...so far."
- "Though we did everything that is considered by Steven Cohen to be 'right'; day school education, belonging to and attending services with them, celebrating Judaism as a family sincerely and joyously, even living in Israel for 3 years — all 4 intermarried! It broke my heart."
- "We relocated across the country so our entire small family could live near each other. We are ALL extremely involved in one another's lives and are all Jewish. Family is our #1 priority."
- "Our granddaughter lives 1,500 miles from us. We only see her twice a year."
- "We are not religious Jews by design and have no intention of becoming religious. We do intend to educate our grand-daughter in Jewish history, culture and traditions as she gets older."
- "Transmitting Jewish values, belief in G-d and love of Israel and the Jewish people is extremely important to us. Having the resources to travel to see them and give them the ability to travel to see us, to enable them to get a formal Jewish education and go to camp and on trips, is a challenge. We play a significant role on a financial level and pray to have the ability to continue to do so. Trying to balance the needs of children and grandchildren with the needs of elderly parents leaves little personal time and self-attention."
- "I am estranged from my children—it is excruciatingly painful."
- "Bring a grandparent is a dream come true and the most wonderful thing in the world... I am utterly besotted with my granddaughter. I feel she has given me a kind of immortality! (Selfish, I guess, but true!) she delights and fascinates and fills me with joy."

