

Jennifer Lonergan

## Chapter 1 Activity B #2

Learning Objective #7 Gain knowledge about the role of culture and diversity in growth and development, expand appreciation of the range of differences and similarities between people.

### Not Your Mother's Discipline

For many years there's been a natural tension between the generations. The grandmother is ready and willing to share her wisdom, but the new mother doesn't need or want a supervisor around correcting her. A new mother wants to feel validated and appreciated for what she is doing. On top of that, times have changed. What might have worked for grandma 30 years ago can seem outdated or even dangerous to moms today. The result is disagreements over the best way to soothe a crying baby, put her to sleep, feed her, bathe her and provide discipline. As if caring for a new baby weren't a challenge already.

A recent survey showed that the number one area of disagreement between moms and grandmas is discipline. The majority of grandparents think that their daughter's style of discipline is too inconsistent or permissive. Grandmas may have overemphasized power with spanking or a firm look. While today's moms tend to overemphasize negotiating and discussing their child's behavior.

Sleep is another point of contention. For most grandmas putting a baby to sleep on their back is hard sell. In the 1960's they thought that putting babies to sleep on their backs was dangerous because they could choke. Co-sleeping is another thing that troubles many grandmothers. They think that it's potentially dangerous and children won't learn to sleep by themselves.

A survey showed that a third of today's moms feed their infants differently than they did when grandma was doing it and this leaves a lot of room for disagreements. The one thing that moms and grandmas can agree on is that breastfeeding is best if it's not a struggle. That's where the similarities end. Grandmas stuck to scheduled feedings and rice cereal at six weeks. Today more moms are feeding on cue and not starting cereal until six months.

Another issue is playtime. When we were young we might have taken one dance class a week and had a cabinet full of toys. It's not unusual for today's kids to take several classes a week and have a room full of toys. Most grandmas think that their grandkids are spoiled and the main reason is too many toys. Grandparents also believe that kids who are surrounded by so many toys and that are rushed from class to class won't learn how to find their own things to do and entertain themselves, experts agree. Research shows that between 1981 and 1986, kids free play dropped 25 percent and outdoor playtime dropped 50 percent, while time spent in structured activities doubled. They also say that kids need time

to just be kids and recommend limiting them to two classes a week and making sure that they get plenty of down time in between.

Whether grandma is bugging you to breastfeed, bottle feed, slip baby some rice cereal before four months or if she is critical of your style of discipline it's important to listen to what they have to say and make it your own, even if you chose to ignore her actual advice.

I really enjoyed doing this assignment. It was fun to read how much things have changed in just a short amount of time. I was thinking back to when I was growing up and we didn't think wearing seatbelt was a big deal. My brother used to sit on my lap when we in my dad's truck and as crazy as that sounds to me now, that just goes to show how times and parenting styles have changed. As a mother to two little girls I know very well how eager grandma is to help. While I know that she always means well, sometimes you just want to do what you think is best for your kids.

#### References:

American Baby Magazine 2005

Parents Magazine 2009

