



# Navigations



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## Long Distance Grandparenting

Often when we look at our coworkers we think of them as just that, the person with whom we work, eat lunch, or share an office. We often forget that our coworkers wear many hats, such as, parents, friends, spouses, siblings, and for many, what is their most fulfilling role, grandparents. The unique bond that forms between a grandchild and a grandparent is one like no other. Unfortunately, for so many of grandparents, the joyous events of birthday parties, school plays, holiday celebrations and special events may not always be right in their own backyards. Grandchildren may live a short drive away or they may live clear across the globe.

Building and maintaining a meaningful and fulfilling relationship with grandchildren, despite distances can be a difficult task, but it can be done. When grandchildren live far away, visits become very important and often intensive experiences. During visits, it is easy to feel like the energizer bunny, the only difference is, the grandchildren will keep going and going, and the grandparents might need to take a break. In the end, when activities are jammed packed on top of one another, everyone comes away feeling exhausted. Take heart! There is a way that grandparents can still play an important role in the lives of their grandchildren, without feeling like everything has to be experienced in one 3-day weekend. It takes a bit of effort, but it's well worth it! Here are some tips to help you stay connected.

## Staying Connected

### Establishing a Connection

- Send a photo of yourself to your grandchildren. Ask the parents to place the photo at a height where even an infant can see it. Photos in magnetic frames can be placed low enough on a refrigerator for a small child to see them.
- Tape yourself reading stories or singing songs so the children become familiar with your voice. Talk to them on the phone even if they can't respond yet.
- For older children, start a make-believe story and encourage them to add to the story or finish it.

## EVENTS SCHEDULE

*Click on links for flyers or resources lists (available one week prior to event). Please note that the dates and locations of events listed below are subject to change. Videotapes of seminars will be made available on the Web site after the event.*

### January

- Jan 23 Prostate Cancer Discussion Group Informational Meeting, Bldg. 3, RM. 4527 1:00 - 2:00 [TO VIEW FLYER](#)
- Jan. 24 Diabetes Discussion Group Informational Meeting, Bldg. 3, RM. 4527 1:00 - 2:00 [TO VIEW FLYER](#)
- Jan. 30 Nutrition Seminar, Bldg. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room 1:00 - 2:00 [TO VIEW FLYER](#)

### February

- Feb. 5, 26 Summer Camp Resource Fair, Bldg. 3, Cafeteria 11:30 - 1:30 [TO VIEW RESOURCE LIST](#)
- Feb. 12 Alzheimer's Seminar, Bldg. 3, RM. 4527 1:00 - 2:00 [TO VIEW FLYER](#)
- Feb. 19 Breast Cancer Discussion Group Informational Meeting, Bldg. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room 1:00 - 2:00 [TO VIEW FLYER](#)

**You've asked, we're responding. Discussion groups now forming on:**

**Alzheimer's Disease    Chronic Illness**  
**Weight Management    Special Needs Children**

*Please contact the Worklife Center at 1-866-NOAAWLC if you are interested in participating.*

## Need Worklife information fast?

*E-mail or call in your questions to your Worklife Advisor on:*

- ❖ Parenting and Child Care
- ❖ Aging and Elder Care
- ❖ Balancing Work & Family
- ❖ Health and Wellness
- ❖ Plus much more!

**(866) NOAAWLC**

**TDD: 301-713-9470**

**Worklife.Center@noaa.gov**

# ASTHMA QUIZ

- 1) Asthma only occurs in children.
  - a) True
  - b) False
- 2) Asthma attacks can be triggered by:
  - a) Stress
  - b) Smoking
  - c) Changes in weather
  - d) Medications/foods
  - e) All of the above
- 3) Asthma is curable.
  - a) True
  - b) False
- 4) Effective management of asthma includes:
  - a) Learning to recognize early warning signs of an asthma attack
  - b) Reducing or eliminating exposure to known allergens and triggers
  - c) Knowing when to seek emergency medical treatment
  - d) None of the above
  - e) All of the above

See page 3 for answers and explanations.

## Long Distance Grandparenting (cont.)

### Activities

- Partake in long distance gardening. When you plant your garden, send the children a few of the seeds you used. Encourage them to start their own garden. Then ask how their garden is growing and share stories of yours.
- Playing games can be an enjoyable pastime when you are with the children. Ask them about their favorite games and if they can teach them to you. Or teach them a game you enjoy.
- Learn about their favorite activities, so you can talk with them about their successes and difficulties.
- Read together. If you live far from your grandchildren, find out what they read. By reading the same books or stories, you can engage them in conversation, and they will be thrilled that you like the same things they do.

For more information about grandparenting, please visit the following Web sites: <http://www.grandparenting.org> and <http://www.cyberparent.com/gran>.

*The information in this article was taken from Web site of the American Association of Retired Persons, <http://www.aarp.org>.*

## Looking For a New Year's Resolution You Can Keep? Read on...

Here's a suggestion for a New Year's resolution that's easy to keep and can make 2002 a great year for you and your family:

Resolve to visit the health professional with the training and experience to help put you on the path to better nutrition and well-being all year long -- a registered dietitian.

Not only are RDs the best sources of reliable and up-to-date food and nutrition information, they have the skills and knowledge to translate nutrition science into practical food choices.

And as more and more links are established between nutrition and health and reduced risk of chronic disease, dietetics professionals can help virtually all individuals and families to improve and maintain their health. From obesity, diabetes and food safety to meal planning, healthful cooking and packing the kids' school lunch -- count on a dietetics professional for trusted, accurate, timely and practical advice.

To locate a registered dietitian in your area, visit the American Dietetic Association at [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) and enter your zip code in the "Find a Dietitian" box on the left side of the screen. To learn more about eating right, come to the nutrition seminar January 30<sup>th</sup> or borrow the video that will be available shortly there after.

## Feeling Lonely?

Statistically speaking, it should be impossible to be lonely on planet earth. After all, there are more than 6 billion of us roaming around on this big rock. But many of us are lonely and experience feelings like despair, emptiness, hopeless and longing.

If you feel you are lonely and want to relieve your loneliness, you may want to take some action to create this change. Mary Ellen Copeland, M.S., M.A. suggests you read and consider each of the following ideas and start working on those that sound right to you.

1. **Work on liking yourself.** If you don't like yourself, it is hard to feel that others will like you. This often makes it difficult to reach out to others.
2. **Plan ahead.** If you feel lonely much of the time, it may be because you don't enjoy spending time alone. People who don't like to spend time alone are often so desperate to be with others that their neediness causes other people to turn away from them. To resolve this situation, make plans in advance for time you know you will need to spend alone.
3. **Join a support group.** Support groups are one of the best places to make good friends. It can be any kind of a support group – a group of people who are working on similar issues, a men's or women's group, a group for single parents, exercisers, dog lovers, etc. The list goes on and on.
4. **Go to meetings, lectures, concerts, readings and other events and activities in your community.** Check the newspaper for listings of events that sound interesting to you. Then go.

*(cont.)*

## Lonely (cont.)

5. **Volunteer.** Work for a worthy organization or cause that you feel strongly about. You will meet others who share your passion, and perhaps make some new friends in the process.
6. **Reconnect with old friends.** Most people can think of friends they had in the past that they enjoyed, but with whom they have lost touch over the years. If you can think of one or several people like that, give them a call, drop them a note or send them an e-mail.
7. **Strengthen your connections with family members.** Connections with family members are important to almost everyone. However, due to difficult family issues and lack of time and attention, these relationships may be distant or non-existent. Renewing and strengthening these connections, if it feels right to you to do so, can enhance and enrich your life.
8. **Make sure that the relationships you have with others are mutual**  
Relationships often diminish and disappear if one person is doing all the giving and one is doing all the receiving.

## Answers to the Asthma Quiz...

1. **False.** Asthma can occur at any age. Though asthma occurs more commonly in children, people of all ages suffer from asthma and asthma-related illnesses.
2. **E.** All of the factors listed can cause an asthma attack in susceptible people. Other stimuli that can cause or worsen asthma attacks include pollution, ozone, pet dander, viral infections, reflux disease and anxiety.
3. **False.** Asthma is not curable. However, asthma can be treated effectively with good medical management and therapy.
4. **E.** Effective asthma management includes all of these steps!

## We are Where You Are...Service to NOAA Employees

- ❖ Many NOAA employees have been to the center looking for career development support. While the center does not offer career counseling, we have several resources available in the center to employees. Some hot Web sites employees found useful include:  
<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>;  
<http://www.jobsfed.com> and,  
<http://www.careersingovernment.com>.
- ❖ Summer Camps! You don't need to think about them for a while, right? Wrong! Spaces fill up quickly. Look for the upcoming Summer Camp Resource Fair and to our Web site for information on tips for finding the perfect summer camps. In the meantime, check out this great Web site: <http://www.acacamps.org/> for national camp listings.

## Responding to the Needs of NOAA Employees: Elder Care and Alzheimer's Disease

NOAA employees from near and far have spoken and the NOAA Employee Worklife Center is responding. Over the past months, many employees from California to the District of Columbia have requested information about elder care resources. This very sensitive topic can present many emotions if you are a caregiver or simply a child, grandchild or friend of an elder parent or loved one.

The task of being a caregiver is great and the NOAA Employee Worklife Center is here to help ease the load. The emotional and physical stress of caring for an aging parent or relative can be overwhelming. With so much to learn and the emotional strain on you and your loved ones, many are faced with the question, how can I do it and still deal with my own personal day to day life without going crazy?

One of the first steps to easing the stress associated with caregiving is realizing that no one can do it alone. There are several resources that can help in all aspects of caregiving, from community resources like home delivered meals to organizations that help you determine housing option, to financial and legal planners to health care providers. The key is to understand what resources are available so you can get the best care for your aging parent, relative or friend while still tending to the other important aspects of your life.

There are many concerns being conveyed by caregivers. One main concern that NOAA employees have expressed is learning more about Alzheimer's Disease, often known as AD.

Alzheimer's Disease is the most common cause of dementia in older people. AD affects the parts of the brain that control thought, memory, and language. An estimated 4 million people in the United States suffer from AD. Usually starting after age 65, the risk of AD goes up with age. Unfortunately, no treatment can stop AD; however, for some people in the early and middle stages of the disease, the drug tacrine (also known as THA or Cognex) may alleviate some cognitive symptoms.

Help is here! Look to the following resources for information and resources on Alzheimer's and other Elder Care related issues:

- **Alzheimer's Association** - is a volunteer organization that sponsors a public education program and offers supportive services to patients and families who are coping with AD. The toll free number, 800-272-3900 is operated 24 hours a day. You can also visit the association's Web site, [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).
- **ADEAR (Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral)** - to obtain a list of the centers you can contact ADEAR, P.O. Box 8250, Silver Spring, MD, 20907-8250.
- **The National Institute on Aging** - this is the Federal Government's lead agency for AD research, it also funds the Alzheimer's Disease Centers located throughout the United States.
- **Eldercare Locator** - this resource is sponsored by the National Association of Area Agencies and Aging, 1112 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC, 20036, 800-677-1116.

The NOAA Employee Worklife Center is here to help you through all of life's challenges. On February 12, 2002, the WLC is hosting an Alzheimer's Seminar, from 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., Building 3, Room 4527 (4<sup>th</sup> floor). For more information on Alzheimer's Disease or other eldercare information and resources, please contact the Worklife Advisor at 301-713-9456, 866-662-2952, TDD 301-713-9470 or by e-mail [worklife.center@noaa.gov](mailto:worklife.center@noaa.gov). Remember, we are where you are!

*The information in the above article were facts taken out of an Alzheimer's pamphlet published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Transportation, Connections publication, May 2001.*