

# 10 STEPS FOR GRANDPARENTS-IN-STEP

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Downloaded 17 February 2008 from The Stepfamily Foundation  
[http://www.stepfamily.org/ten\\_steps\\_for\\_grandparents\\_stepfamilies.htm](http://www.stepfamily.org/ten_steps_for_grandparents_stepfamilies.htm)

**Step 1. Recognize the Dynamics of Step:** The stepfamily has its own special state of dynamics and behaviors. Once learned, the behaviors can become predictable and positive. DO NOT try to overlay the expectations and dynamics of the intact and natural family onto the stepfamily. To learn more about step, literature is available.

**Step 2. Give yourself time to grieve over the loss of the biological family:** A stepfamily comes about upon a death or divorce in a nuclear family. Grandparents need to mourn the loss of that relationship before they can become a part of the stepfamily. Anger, resentment and fears are normal.

**Step 3. Value yourself as a grandparent:** Grandparents and stepparents are wonderful resource people. You have a lot to offer, such as unconditional love, family history and your life experience. Share!

**Step 4. Reserve judgments:** Negative judgments with a child can serve to increase the child's sense of confusion, conflict of loyalties and impact his self-esteem.

**Step 5. There are no ex-grandparents, only ex-spouses:** If you feel that you are not being treated fairly as a grandparent, find a way to establish your rights through a family conference, a grand parenting organization or legal means, if necessary.

**Step 6. Step-grand parenting:** Go slow and see where your grand parenting skills are needed. Be prepared for the conflicts of biological and step feelings in you if there is more than one set of children in a household.

**Step 7. Holidays, traditions and rituals:** Maintain family rituals in your home as you wish them to remain. Adapt to new traditions in the stepfamily as they develop.

**Step 8. Wills, family heirlooms:** Money generally follows biological family. Don't be hasty to reassign family heirlooms or assets. Consult your attorney for legal matters.

**Step 9. Listen: Be an impartial sounding board to your grandchildren or step grandchildren.** At times they might need someone just to listen.

**Step 10. Guard your sense of humour and use it:** The step situation is filled with the unexpected. Sometimes we don't know whether to laugh or cry. Try humour . . .