



# Long Distance Grandparenting

*By Patricia Danflous*

Remember when you could start a conversation with the grandparent generation by asking, “how many grandchildren do you have?” That’s not the question these days. Breaking the ice in the 21st century usually starts with “how far away do your grandchildren live?”

As the world gets smaller and opportunities attract the younger generation to global careers, grandchildren are living further and further away. How frustrating not to be able to enjoy those first steps, first words and follow athletic endeavors up close in person. Thanks to old-fashioned pen and paper and modern technology however, you can maintain quality long-distance relationships, which create life-long memories for you and your grandchildren.


Handwritten notes may seem like Neanderthal communication to your grandchildren, and probably your children as well, but is there anything better than receiving a card, a letter, or a funny postcard in the mail? Keep your messages simple and entertaining, send an interactive, recordable greeting card, use contemporary commemorative postage, or go over the top and send your grandchild a glitter bomb for a special achievement. You may receive a handwritten response.

For pre-school and young grandchildren, record one of your favorite or their favorite children’s books. You can use a recording app on your smartphone and e-mail the recording. You can also read stories together via Skype or Facetime. (several help books and on-line tutorials will walk you through these communication tools.)

Texting, Skyping, Facetime, Instagram, and regular phone calls are easy and affordable.

If you want to share your family history, memories, and special thoughts, start a scrapbook, journal, or perhaps a blog and update it on a regular basis. Design your own method or purchase one of the numerous pre-designed books with prompts such as “Letters to My Grandchild.”

One trend that is gaining popularity among grandparents is setting up an email account for your grandchild to read when he or she reaches a specific age or life achievement. Send email messages to that account on a weekly or monthly basis, or on special occasions or in anticipation of special events. You may not be around when your grandchild delivers her first child, for example, but she will understand how much you thought about her.

Use your imagination and start communicating as you shorten the distance between you and your grandchildren. Meanwhile, keep your fingers crossed that they will move back “home.” 

**You may not be around when  
your grandchildren have their first  
child, for example, but they will  
understand how much you  
thought about them.**