



Considering hiring grandparents to provide child care? Here are Jill Spivack's tips.

Parents need to think about:

1. The personalities involved. Can you all communicate without being too defensive? It will be quite stressful if Grandma won't respect the way you want things done with your kids. Be sure to hammer out guidelines ahead of time.
2. Are you and your spouse in agreement? If not, it will destroy your marriage.

Grandparents need to think about:

1. Will you have enough down time to rest and enjoy your days? Are you energetic enough to care for young children?
2. Do you think you can respect your children's rules in their home and their parenting style or would it be too tough on you to do so?
3. How will this arrangement impact other family members, i.e. your child's siblings?

How do you talk to your children about Grandma taking care of them?

1. Be honest. Tell them "Your father and I have decided that it would be very helpful if Grandma moves in with us to help out with taking care of you when we're at work. You will get to spend extra special time with her during the week!" If they are feeling negatively about the situation, empathize with their feelings.
2. Discipline and rules. Explain to your children that when Grandma is taking care of you, she is in charge and the same rules apply as always.

How do you ensure that your new situation is a positive experience?

1. Set up a schedule for what the week looks like and post it. Things like school routines, meal plans, who will do what chores and when you'll be together as a family should be on the chart. If Grandma has moved in, define when exactly Grandma is "on" with the kids and when she has some time off. Ask her what she'd like in terms of privacy and down time -- and respect it!
2. Set up a family meeting once a month where everyone can share their feelings about how things are going re: privacy, discipline, etc. It's crucial to the success of this arrangement that parents and caregivers are on the same page.
3. Positive reinforcement is 10 times stronger than negative reinforcement. Make sure Grandma knows she is valued and respected.



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