

# The Grandparent's Briefing

*You are the secret weapon of screen-free childhood*

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## Why you matter more than you think

Grandparents hold a unique position: you have time the parents do not, patience the parents have spent, and a memory of childhood before screens. The research on early development keeps arriving at the same conclusion: young children build their brains through unhurried, face-to-face, hands-on play with people who love them. That is your home ground.

## The visit is the present

A grandchild does not remember the gadget. They remember feeding the ducks, the button tin, losing at snakes and ladders, the way you always have mints. Twenty minutes of your full attention outranks anything with a plug. If a screen is on in the background, turn it off: background TV measurably reduces conversation, and conversation is the engine of language.

## What to actually do (no preparation required)

Walk anywhere and name what you see. Bake something forgiving. Play a card or board game and do not always win. Tell them what their parent was like at their age: this is the content they cannot get anywhere else. Teach the games of your own childhood. Sort the button tin, shell the peas, sand the wood: real jobs are play to a four year old.

## On gifts: one good thing

When in doubt, buy fewer, better things. The evidence is clear that children play more deeply with fewer toys, and a well-made wooden toy or family game will still be in the house when the grandchild is grown. Ask the parents what is needed before buying. A gift that creates a shared activity (a game you then play together, a puzzle you then do together) gives twice.

## If the parents are stricter about screens than you would be

Back them. Consistency between home and grandparents' house makes the child's life easier, not harder. If you disagree, say it to the parents in private and follow their lead in front of the child. The greatest gift you can give the parents is being the place where the rules hold without a fight.

## The one-line version

*Your presence, your stories, your games and your time are the developmental gold. Everything else is wrapping.*

### GOES WELL WITH

Grandparents & Real Play: [antiscreen.co.uk/grandparents-play.html](https://antiscreen.co.uk/grandparents-play.html)

Traditional games made since 1795: [jaqueslondon.co.uk](https://jaqueslondon.co.uk)