
NEW STUDY SHOWS DRAMATIC SHIFT IN THE AMERICAN FAMILY: MILLIONS OF CHILDREN GROWING UP WITHOUT GRANDPARENTS

(New York, NY) A new study shows that for the first time in U.S. history, as the average age of women giving birth has increased significantly, millions of children are at risk of having fewer years with their grandparents than ever before. While grandparents are living longer, they're not living long enough to compensate for these staggering delays. This sweeping demographic shift affects every member of the American family, and has never been reported, until now: Parents are raising kids without the help and support of their own parents, and children don't have grandparents with all the recognized social and cognitive benefits associated with these grandparent/grandchild relationships.

To study this striking change and its substantial ramifications, journalist, author, and award-winning television producer, Allison Gilbert launched the **Parentless Parents Survey**, the first ever conducted, polled, studied, and interviewed more than 1,300 parentless parents from across the United States, and a dozen countries. Her findings are reported in her groundbreaking book, **PARENTLESS PARENTS: How the Loss of Our Mothers and Fathers Impacts the Way We Raise Our Children** (Hyperion: 2011).

In the book, Gilbert, herself a parentless parent, also reveals her personal story, and with uncommon honesty, shows how being a parentless parent has dramatically impacted her, and her two young children and her marriage. Without her parents, Gilbert felt alone in all the challenges of motherhood, and set on a quest to find creative ways to keep the memory of her parents alive for her children. Ultimately, Gilbert shares the empowering and creative strategies she's learned, and the myriad ways parentless parents can find the support and understanding they need.

Parentless Parents Survey Highlights:

- In response to every question regarding pregnancy, childbirth, and emotions about children entering school and celebrating important milestones, respondents of every age report having felt more isolated than supported. Indeed, 57% of all parentless parents say they didn't have enough parenting support when their children were young.
- Almost 70% of respondents report feeling jealous when they see other children with their grandparents. This awareness is often heightened in social settings such as school events and play dates.
- Relationships with in-laws are delicate and conflicted. While 68% say they're grateful their children have them as grandparents, nearly half (46%) of parentless parents get jealous when their in-laws are with their children. Despite welcoming their presence, 29% resent their in-laws' influence over their children.
- Among the positive aspects reported by parentless parents, almost seven in ten say they appreciate their kids more than they would have if they weren't parentless, and more than half (55%) say they're more understanding with their children because they've lost their parents. Nearly 60% say sharing memories with their children about their deceased parents makes them feel better about having lost them.
- The majority, almost 60%, have made it a priority to get important documents, such as a will, in order. For respondents between ages twenty-five and thirty-four, the rate rises to over 71% — nearly triple the rate for the general population in the same age group.

Parentless Parents is the first book to show how the absence of grandparents impacts everything

about the way mothers and fathers raise their children—from everyday parenting decisions to the relationships they have with their spouses and in-laws.

For a review copy of the book or an interview with Allison Gilbert please contact: Christine Ragasa at christine.ragasa@abc.com, 917.661.2052.