



African American Grandmothers and the Education of Grandchildren

By Valarie Boyer

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The roles of grandparents, from occasional helpers to custodial adults in their grandchildren's lives, often raise levels of social discomfort among those involved, especially when the children are still in elementary school. A disproportionate number of custodial grandparents are African American women. This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of 8 custodial African American grandmothers in Delaware regarding the education of their school-aged grandchildren. The theoretical foundation was Carter and McGoldrick's theory of families as interconnected systems, and Sands, Goldberg-Glen, Shin, and Robin's theory that life event changes often lead to stress and coping strategies. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using open and axial coding to reveal common themes. The grandmothers saw themselves as surrogate parents to their grandchildren and depended on support programs to help with their grandchildren's education. A recommendation is for school districts to build relationships with these African American grandmothers to help facilitate the education of their grandchildren and provide effective and affordable services. 144 pp. Englisch.



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