



from

Providence Children's Museum

Come play, come learn!

# GRAND Parenting

By Janice O'Donnell, Executive Director

I'm generally regarded as a creative person, but when I'm in my grandmother role I'm a walking, talking cliché. I'll show you pictures of my grandchildren, which are on every surface in my living room and in my office, in my wallet and on my computer screen. I'll repeat the funny things they say and tell you about their latest accomplishments until your eyes glaze over. When I compare notes with other grandparents, we always agree – grandchildren are our well-deserved reward for bringing up children.

I love spending time with my grandkids and welcome the opportunity to take them places or have them for the weekend. They really are wonderful, funny, cute, loving children but, I'll admit it, they are children, so they're also sometimes messy, noisy, cranky and stubborn. I don't want to spend our time together disciplining them. (I'm done raising kids!) I want it to be fun and special and I've got a few tricks for making sure it is.

Just take one. Grandparents are extra parents, so we don't always have to have all the children at once. One day, I can take three-year-old Finn to the carousel, and on another, eight-year-old Olivia and I can go for a long ride on the bike path. (If siblings are close in age and old enough to notice, you do have to keep the number and kinds of activities about even.)

Traditions. One of the best things about being a grandparent is how special you are to your grandchildren – the adoration is mutual! So even routine things you do together become special traditions to them. I realized this one Sunday morning when I asked Olivia what she'd like for breakfast and she said, "You know I always have pancakes on the yellow plate when I'm at your house." Since then, I know exactly what to serve for breakfast – and on what plate.

Surprises. I have allotted a large bottom drawer for my grandkids' toys and games. This makes clean up easy, gives them their own place for their stuff, and reduces the temptation to get at things I'd rather they didn't play with. To keep it interesting, I put surprises in there for

them: little things like a new activity book, puzzle or yo-yo. It's one of the first places they check when they come to visit and they can stay happily occupied with the treasures they discover and rediscover.

Outings. I do love to have the kids at my house but after awhile the increasing mess becomes irksome. So off we go – to the playground, to the shore, to the children's museum. Wonderful places for grand-families! There's a lot more room than at my house and lots to do. We play together but the entertainment is not all up to me – and there are places to sit down.

That's another true cliché about the joys of grandparenthood. At the end of the day, you give them back to their parents.

*Janice O'Donnell is Executive Director of Providence Children's Museum and grandmother of Olivia, Finn and Jackson.*



## A Membership Especially for Grandparents! Just \$75 for four people!

### The Grand-Star Membership includes:

- One year of free and unlimited visits to Providence Children's Museum for grand-family members.
- A newsletter packed with fun activities
- Discounts on birthday party rates and special programs
- 10% off at the Museum Gift Shop

### Purchase a Grand-Star Membership

#### ONLINE by following these 3 Easy Steps:

- 1 Visit [www.childrenmuseum.org](http://www.childrenmuseum.org)
- 2 Click on 'Membership Information' and follow the simple instructions.
- 3 Enjoy the benefits of membership! Your new card will arrive in the mail in two to three weeks.

A Grand-Star Membership also makes a terrific gift for a new grandparent. Join today and create special memories that will last a lifetime! Call (401) 273-5437 ext. 221



PROVIDENCE

# Children's museum

Come play, come learn!