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- Just [Click Here](#) for the Table of Contents
- Or
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- Or
- Use those ARROWS at the top to thumb through it. It's a magazine...simple, yet state-of-the-art in digital media



No trees were harmed in the making of this magazine!



Me and my new GRANDbaby, Poppy

Check out the Special Section for NEW Grandparents: MY GRANDbaby, and send me an [email](#) or let's connect on [Facebook](#).

With my best,
Christine Crosby
Founder and Editorial Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACK ISSUES

SUBSCRIBE



GRAND

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR AWESOME GRANDPARENTS!

MAY JUNE 2016

Win a Jogging Stroller!

'Glowing' Makeup Tips

Is Your Kitchen a Picky Eater's Paradise?

How YOU Can Live the Grand Life

13 Best Books for Newbie Grands

MUST HAVE GEAR for New Grands

LESLEY STAHL

Strange Bedfellows: Sex & Philanthropy

The Joys and Science of Grandparenting

My GRANDbaby

SPECIAL SECTION For New and Expecting GRANDparents

Celebrate Your Special Needs Grandchild's Graduation

BY DEANNA PICON

High school graduation is an exciting and stressful time for most students, including special needs young adults. With new people, places, and activities on the horizon, your grandchild needs extra love and support. As a grandparent, you can play a special role in marking this momentous occasion and preparing for the future.

Take pride

Graduating from a specialized high school isn't easy. Your grandson or granddaughter worked very hard to achieve this educational milestone, likely spending many years in speech, occupational, or physical therapy, in addition to regular classes, and meeting challenging goals to the best of their ability. This calls for a standing ovation!

Show support

After high school, your

grandchild may transition to a vocational training, day rehabilitation, or volunteer worksite program. S/he will have new opportunities for personal growth, but will also face new issues and challenges as they adjust to adulthood. You may need to adjust as well.

Although this may not be the life you dreamed of for your grandchild, don't allow it to dishearten you. So what if your grandchild isn't going to Yale or Harvard? It doesn't lessen what s/he has accomplished or can achieve in the future.

Be proactive

For most people, milestones of change can be welcome and exciting. But for special needs individuals, losing the structure and routine (and the comfort and security) of school can make this transition difficult. Teachers, therapists and administrative


“More importantly, you have a lifetime of experiences to share with your grandchild. Your life lessons can help guide him/her through this transitional time in their life”

staff were an integral part of his/her support team for many years. After high school, these long-term relationships will be lost and new ones will be formed with different program staff. And, unlike high school, the staff will probably not have a lot of time to work individually with your grandchild.

This is where you can play a vital, proactive role. By spending personal time, even once a week for a few hours, with your grandchild, you can continue to build on the progress made with teachers and school therapists.

Whether it is using iPad apps to help them learn new subjects and skills, walking in the park to build muscle strength and endurance, or going on local outings to develop socialization skills, your contributions can make an enormous difference.

Cheer loudly

A graduation is something worth celebrating – with gladness and pride for today, and with optimism and determination for tomorrow. You and your grandchild deserve it! 

Deanna Picon is founder of *Your Autism Coach, LLC*, which provides personalized guidance, support and seminars for parents of autistic and special needs children. She is a parent of a non-verbal, young man with autism. Deanna is the author of *The Autism Parents' Guide to Reclaiming Your Life*. She can be reached at www.YourAutismCoach.com @yourautismcoach.

