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Intergenerational education

Ellen Johnson
University of Northern Iowa

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Intergenerational education

Abstract

Jane Addams, famous social reformer, stated in *Democracy and Social Ethics*: The Democratic ideal demands of the school that it gives a child's own experience a social value: that it shall teach him to direct his own activities and adjust them to those of other people's We are impatient with the schools which lay stress on reading and writing, expecting them to rest upon the assumption that all knowledge and interest must be brought to the children through the medium of books. Such an assumption fails to give the child any clue to the life about him or any power to usefully or intelligently connect himself with it. (1902, pp. 180-181) The American Association of Retired Persons found that in 1987, persons over the age of 65 comprised 12% of the population of the United States, whereas in 1900, only four percent of the population was over 65 (Jenkins, Lambert, & Fruit, 1991). A sometimes forgotten resource for schools is this population which includes the elderly, the retired, or the children of yesterday.

INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATION

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Ellen Johnson

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Loretta Kuse
Director of Research Paper

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Loretta Kuse
Graduate Faculty Adviser

July 1, 1992
Date Approved

Marvin Heller
Graduate Faculty Reader

July 2, 1992
Date Approved

Peggy Ishler
Head, Department of the
Curriculum and Instruction

INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATION

Jane Addams, famous social reformer, stated in Democracy and Social Ethics:

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The American Association of Retired Persons found that in 1987, persons over the age of 65 comprised 12% of the population of the United States, whereas in 1900, only four percent of the population was over 65 (Jenkins, Lambert, & Fruit, 1991). A sometimes forgotten resource for schools is this population which includes the elderly, the retired, or the children of yesterday.

The two most often forgotten groups in our society are the young and the old. Literature encourages us to answer the

needs of both of these groups by bringing them together. The idea of intergenerational programs within the school is an example of what Jane Addams was talking about when she said that schools need to ". . . give the child's own experience a social value . . . to teach him to direct his own activities and adjust them to those of other people's" (1902, pp. 180-181).

Social studies should deal with the real social world of the student and prepare him or her to interact in that world, both as a child, and in the future, as an adult.

This paper will attempt to answer three questions:

1. How do intergenerational programs affect the attitudes of the students toward the elderly?
2. What are some approaches to and kinds of intergenerational programs?
3. What children's literature is available to help young people relate to the elderly?

Effects of Intergenerational Programs on the Attitudes of Students Toward the Elderly

There have been several studies done in this area. Some have dealt with the attitudes of students before and after direct contact with intergenerational programs.

In 1986, a study was conducted involving 21 sixth graders (Corbin, Kagen, & Metal-Corbin). The main purpose of the study was to show students that even though they differed in many ways, they still had many things in common with the elderly. The students were asked to keep daily tallies of their activities and feelings. Analysis of the data showed that the perception of the elderly by the students seemed to grow negative as the study progressed. Further analysis suggested that the students had started to think of the elders in more active terms and as time went on, they became more at ease with their visitors. The researchers concluded that it was unrealistic to expect a short term program to greatly improve the students' perceptions of the elderly. However, the results did show increased daily interaction.

Another study by Nishi-Strattner and Myers, 1983, not only looked at the attitudes of children toward the elderly, but also at how the elderly thought they themselves would be viewed by the children. An Attitude Perception Questionnaire was given to 52 fifth and sixth grade children and 52 elderly adults. Each item on the questionnaire was determined to be either a negative or positive attitude by a group of 20 graduate students in counselor education. Results showed the older group thought

that the attitudes of the youngsters would be more negative than they actually were. The researchers concluded that perhaps the negative feelings that older people have toward themselves, because of their age, carried over into how they thought the students would view them. The researchers recommended that the issue of health of the elderly would be an interesting follow-up study to determine whether health affected the perceptions that both students and the elderly have of the aged. They further recommended that intergenerational programs would benefit both the students and the elderly and that youngsters would learn that aging need not be a scary or hopeless situation.

In 1983 a study set out to see what effect a unit on aging would have on 42 third graders in Alachua County, Florida (Rich, Myrick, & Cambell, 1983). The elementary, counselor-led unit was made up of eight 30-minute lessons. A bulletin board to display a collage on aging, newspapers, magazines, books, and writing activities was used. Older members of the community were invited to the classrooms at various times. The eight sessions consisted of the following activities:

Session 1. The students were pretested and introduced to the unit by the use of a time line to show and discuss the various stages in life. After this initial session, the students

were divided into a control group and an experimental group. The control group returned to its regular classes.

Session 2. The experimental group wrote stories to go along with a book, entitled The Old Man On Our Block, that only had illustrations.

Session 3. This began with showing pictures of older people doing work and recreational activities. The discussion lead to many ways the elderly experience life. Negative stereotypes were dispersed.

Session 4. Physical changes people experience as they age were discussed. Photographs and magazine pictures showed these changes. The students were asked to interview elderly people in their neighborhoods.

Session 5. The students made Grandperson Booklets to hold pictures and record information from their interviews in the fourth session.

Session 6. Two older people involved the students in yoga exercises.

Session 7. Four elderly people were brought into the classroom to answer students' questions.

Session 8. A posttest was given to both the experimental and control groups.

The researchers concluded that units on and experiences with the elderly had a positive effect on the third grade students in the experimental group. The results also suggested that the attitudes and experiences people have as children affect the way they envision not only the elderly now, but their own aging process.

Two hundred fifty-six 8 and 10 year olds were involved in a study in Allegheny County in Western Pennsylvania (Marks, Newman, & Onawola, 1985). The researchers devised their own instrument of evaluation. They called it the "Children's View on Aging". It consisted of 53 items of open-ended and closed-ended questions. The results showed that the children were able to differentiate between the old and the young and that the students had a negative view of the aging process but a positive view of the elderly themselves. The students perceived old people more positively on the affective domain items while they judged young people more positively on the questions dealing with the cognitive domain.

The implication of this research suggests that the elderly could be a valuable resource to the elementary classroom. Such topics as cultural traditions, family relationships, and changing traditions should be enhanced by the contributions of the

elderly.

In 1983, a study was done to see if the way the elderly are shown in literature and on television has a negative effect on children (Fillmer, 1983). An examination of the materials showed negative stereotypes such as wrinkled, crabby, crippled, and inactive people. Ads on television were found to show the elderly as users of tonics, laxatives, and wrinkle-removing creams. The researcher felt that children did not have enough associations with the elderly to develop true pictures.

Fillmer used students from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in a university laboratory. The study included 74 boys and 70 girls who had not participated in a previous unit on aging. Students were shown pictures of a young man, an old man, a young woman and an old woman. As students in small groups were shown each picture the researcher asked the students which adjective best described the person they saw in the picture. The adjectives were on a sliding scale and included such choices as sick/healthy, ugly/attractive, rich/poor, happy/sad, or friendly/unfriendly.

After that, the pictures were shown again and the students were asked the following questions:

1. If you saw this person on the street, would you say

"hello" to him or her?

2. Would you like this person to be your friend?
3. Would you like this person to sit next to you on the bus?
4. Would you like this person to watch you play?
5. Would you like this person to help your teacher?

The answer choices the students had were always, almost always, sometimes, seldom, and never. During the whole investigation, no verbal reference was made about the age of the subjects in the pictures.

The researchers interpreted the results as suggesting three main conclusions:

1. Overall, the pupils rated young adults more favorably than old adults. However, old people were rated more favorably in the adjectives, but young people were rated more favorably in the questions.

2. Men received significantly higher ratings than women. However, in general, boys ranked women higher than men, and girls ranked men higher than women.

3. Pupils gave more favorable responses to the questions asked than they did using adjectives to describe the pictures of the elderly.

From these findings, Fillmer concluded that children do

develop negative stereotypes of the elderly, and, in general, would rather associate with younger adults. He sees this as very important for educators and recommends that the elderly of a community should be involved in our educational process so that youngsters get a true picture of what it is like to be old.

What if students and children were integrated into the environment of the elderly instead of the elderly visiting the children? A study was done in 1984 to answer this question (Sparling & Rogers, 1984). This took place at a retirement center in the Piedmont area in North Carolina. This arrangement allowed both the stronger and the weaker residents to participate. The youngsters were six neurologically impaired preschoolers ranging in age from 2.5 to 6.0 years and six adolescents whose ages were 12.0 to 14.4 years. The researchers looked at three variables that they thought could affect the levels of the individuals involved: environment, health, and socio-economic status. Using these variables, they proposed three theories:

1. The environment can be used to maximize the well, frail, and ill older person's quality of life.
2. Familiarity with one's environment frees the older person with sensory and physical limitations to concentrate on

activities and interactions.

3. Previous educational and social experiences of older persons will require a range of intervention opportunities.

The experimental program began with a meeting of all of the residents of the retirement center. The intergenerational program was described and volunteers were solicited. Within the next week, those who had volunteered to participate were questioned about their areas of interest. The results determined the programs for the first week.

During this same time period, the adolescent participants were attending a training session to become teaching assistants and learners in the project. Movies were shown that depicted older people as important members of a community. Exercises were carried out to help the adolescents experience such things as sensory loss and medical problems. The adolescents also received training in how to deal with the limited capabilities of the six neurologically impaired children who were to be involved in the project.

Interviews with parents of the preschoolers provided information about the children's health, performance level, environment, and interests. Information from school reports was also obtained.

In the daily program, the older participants served as group leaders, participants in activities, or only as observers, depending on their physical and mental capabilities. From the information that had been gathered about the interests of the people involved, five main areas of activity were carried out: crafts, homemaking, individual instruction, music and sports.

One homemaking activity brought forth the following incident:

A well older person expressed an interest in bread baking. Her friends were unable to sample her bread due to their special diets. One shy adolescent interested in cooking joined the older woman in making the bread, and shared the method and results of baking with other adolescents and the preschoolers during snacktime. The adolescent's need for improving social skills, coupled with her sincere interest in cooking, presented the older person with a way in which she could maintain her cooking skills and simultaneously feel useful. (Sparling & Rogers, 1984, p. 43)

Another example of the interaction was seen in the use of nursery rhymes:

For the frail and ill older persons, fond memories of their own youth or mothering were stimulated by the rhymes.

For the preschoolers, the rhymes facilitated their imaginations as familiar objects, such as cows, did crazy things, such as jumping over the moon. For the adolescents, the rhymes provided an incentive for practicing their sewing skills. They made finger puppets for the children and interested older persons. (Sparling & Rogers, 1984, p. 45)

All three of the groups benefitted from the various activities.

Elementary and high school students were involved in a study conducted to measure the impact of a one day, five hour intergenerational workshop in the northeastern United States (Couper, Sheehan, & Thomas, 1990). The older adults involved were 36 women and three men who were 60 years of age or older who were in relatively good health. Mixed groups were formed with eight to ten people in each group. Activities within each group included communication, problem solving, and values-clarification exercises. There was a final exercise to give positive feedback on the personal strengths of the people involved.

The researchers chose activities that would show the common feelings and traits among the different age groups, rather than the differences.

Although the researchers found the program to be a success, they found differences in attitudes among the two student groups. It was found that elementary students had a more positive attitude toward the older people involved than the high school students, but that the high school students' attitudes were more affected by the program. The researchers felt some of the more negative attitudes expressed by the high school students reflected the characteristics of adolescents. They are often less accepting of any group that is different from themselves.

Girls also showed a more positive attitude toward the elderly than did the boys. However, the researchers thought that the disproportionate number of women to men in the older group affected the attitudes. They found that "this intergenerational workshop established desired conditions for positive attitude change."

Summary

The research in the area of intergenerational education shows that both the older and younger participants in such programs benefit. Youngsters do have negative attitudes toward the elderly. Even after short periods of interaction with the

elderly, youngsters perceptions are changed in a positive manner.

Approaches to and Kinds of Intergenerational Programs

Amir (1969) developed the following conditions that should be present if a positive outcome is to be expected when combining the young and the old:

1. There should be equal status between the members of the two groups.
2. The members of the group should be a majority group, or higher-status members of a minority group.
3. The contact should be of an intimate, rather than casual nature.
4. Contact should be pleasant and rewarding for both groups.
5. There is a functional interaction taking place, with both groups involved in goal-setting, and participation in important activities.

Other recommendations were set forth by Seefeldt (1987):

1. Protect the prestige of elders as well as children.
2. Limit frustration for both adults and children by

arranging for contact that is intimate, not casual.

3. Ensure that contact between old and young is rewarding and pleasant for both groups.

The organizers of an intergenerational program in Riverside, California also have suggestions for establishing a program (de Pillis, 1981).

1. Make sure all "minor" arrangements have been taken care of, such as lunch, if needed, and that adult size chairs are available.

2. Make sure a definite purpose has been established.

3. Constantly evaluate the program so that changes can be made along the way, if necessary.

Once the philosophy and guidelines of an intergenerational program have been established, the question arises as to where to find the older volunteers.

In some areas, articles in newspapers, notices sent home with students, and announcements at parent-teacher group meetings may be enough. However, one of the best ways is to contact organizations that have contact with the elderly (Cassidy, 1981). Women's clubs, church groups, local senior citizen centers, and hospitals are all good sources.

Although all intergenerational programs have the goal of

bringing the old and young together to benefit both groups, this can be accomplished through a variety of program types. Some successful programs matching the younger generation with the older citizens have been taking place throughout the last few years.

A project called KAT (Keenagers and Teenagers) was started in one city (Keller, 1983). It paired latch-key teenagers with seniors from a local center. The elderly volunteers taught the teens such things as canning, caning chairs, soap making, and weaving. Although the program was geared to benefit the otherwise alone teenagers, the "keenagers" also derived much satisfaction.

In Buffalo, Minnesota, the Wright County Retirement Center has special rooms that have become the Generation Day Care (Peacock & Talley, 1984). There the residents and children interact by going on outings together. There are similar projects in Bellingham, Washington at Fairhaven College where people sixty years or older are incorporated into the classroom. There is a caring center in Montreal, Canada sponsored by the Jewish Family Services. The Foster Grandparents Program is established across the United States. It involves youngsters with adults over sixty years of age who are

on a fixed income.

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, there is a program called "Teaching-Learning Communities" in which everyone teaches and everyone learns. Different subjects are shared, with everything from poetry to gardening having its place (Tice, 1982).

At the SEM Villa, a retirement community, one can find the Lady Bug Co-operative Nursery School (Bugge & Miller, 1989). This Cincinnati setting provides activities involving the residents and the children who spend their days there. An added feature is that a third generation is involved when each parent is periodically required to participate in the activities.

In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, a program called Helping Hands brings together children of Four Oaks, a home for youngsters with emotional problems or from families in crisis situations, with elderly residents of various institutions in the area (Boone, 1989). Says Larry Rutter, its founder:

It works because it fills a need at both ends of the spectrum. Our kids need a little unconditional love and these older folks are more than willing to provide it. In return, the elderly get some love and attention and the feeling of being needed. In families of 50 or 60 years ago,

you would have had this sort of relationship. We're trying to create a family relationship for these kids. (Boone, 1989)

Another model of an intergenerational program that promotes caring and community responsibility is the Jones Middle School-First Community Village Partnership Program in Upper Arlington, Ohio (Rasinski, 1988). Approximately 30 eighth-grade volunteers are accepted into a six-week program which involves classroom time and field experience with the older residents of First Community Village.

Before the actual contact begins for the week, Monday is spent in the classroom where preparation for the week is done. Assignments are laid out, questions are answered, and plans are made to deal with unexpected situations. This is also a time for exploration of issues involving the elderly, such as physical limitations, careers that involve working with the elderly, or the elderly as historians of the period of time in which they lived.

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, the actual contact between the two groups takes place. The students are assigned to a partner and go to the elder's room or apartment. Each session has its own theme, such as families, traditions, or family customs. Photographs are shared and stories exchanged.

After the students' sessions with their older friends, they get together to discuss their visits including any problems they may have encountered.

Fridays are used to tie things together, look ahead to the next week, and participate in special activities. One time an activity might deal with physical disabilities that some senior citizens have to deal with, such as hearing and vision loss, arthritis, and diminishing mental capabilities. Another Friday session might deal with problem situations that may have arisen, such as crying or anger from the senior partners.

Students are also required to keep a journal of their activities and thoughts during the sessions. They are assigned articles to read and have reports and projects to complete.

The final activity at the end of the six-week program is a party that the students plan for their partners. Entertainment, speakers, and refreshments are provided by the students. At the end, one of the villagers presents a brief speech.

Summary

Intergenerational programs such as those described, take the students beyond the four walls of the textbook, facts-based, confining classroom. The programs involve them with real people in the real world.

A poem, "A Sad Song About Greenwich Village" by Frances Park tells of an elderly woman who lives by herself and has no one to care about her. The last verse follows:

"I haven't seen my neighbor
Since a long time ago.
And even if she's dead
There's nobody to know" (1983, p. 23).

Educators can help remedy a situation such as the one in the poem, and at the same time provide a rich, meaningful social studies experience for their students. Friendships will develop that will last for years. Many children will develop an altruistic attitude and an understanding of the inevitable aging of others and themselves.

Children's Literature Available to Help

Young People Relate to the Elderly

There is much quality literature available to the elementary student that deals with relationships between the old and the young. It is listed in the card catalog under various headings. Some of the headings include old age, aging, elderly, grandfather, grandmother, and grandparent.

Karen Ackerman's Song and Dance Man is the story of

three children who love to visit their grandpa who was once a vaudeville entertainer. He takes them up to his attic where he dons his old costumes and sings and dances for them. When he is finished and tired from his routine, they all go back downstairs. The children watch as Grandpa longingly "glances back up the stairs" and they realize how much he misses the stage and when he was the song and dance man.

On the day the little girl was born, her grandfather made her a ring. So begins Alik's, The Two of Them. From that day on they spent much of their time together. They went swimming at the beach together, she helped him in his store, and they played songs together in his garden under the apple trees. As the years went by, time changed the two of them and the grandfather became ill and died. The girl, now grown, would go to his apple trees and watch the apple blossoms change to fruit and think of her grandfather.

In Spectacles by Ann Beatie, a young girl, Alison has little time for the complaining of her great-grandmother. She is upset when her mother takes time away from her birthday party to tend to the elder woman. Great-Grandmother always talks of how much better things used to be. But something magical happens when Allison awakens one night and tries on Great-

Grandmother's spectacles and sees her great-grandmother's life of long ago. She comes to view her great-grandmother as a more valuable part of her life.

The children aren't very excited when they find out they will be staying with Grandma and Grandpa for a week while their parents go on a second honey moon in The Berenstain Bears and the Week at Grandma's by Stan and Jan Berenstain. They pack many toys and books as they are sure there won't be much to do with such old people. They discover that their grandparents lead very full and active lives and the week goes by quickly.

A stranger, Old Henry, comes to town and moves into an old rundown house that has been vacant for years. He keeps to himself, but the neighbors are unhappy that he doesn't fix up the place and keep it nice like the rest of the neighborhood. They continue to push him to do something about his house and finally ask the minister for advice. He tells them to be kind to Old Henry and offer to do the jobs for him. Even that doesn't help. Old Henry decides to move away as he knows he will never be neat and tidy like the rest of the neighbors. After he leaves the people fix up his place and realize they miss him after all. At the same time, Old Henry is writing a letter to the

mayor and asking if he may return to the town if he promises to keep his property neater than before. Old Henry, by Joan Blos, is made complete by illustrations of Stephan Gammell.

Grandpa, a short tale by Barbara Borack, tells of all the different things a little girl and her grandpa do when they are together. They play games and share breakfast. They go for walks before anyone else is up and work in his store together. When they are apart the little girl writes him letters to tell him that she loves him.

In Eve Bunting's The Wednesday Surprise, Grandma and Anna are planning a special surprise for Anna's father's birthday. They get together on Wednesday nights and make plans. Grandma brings a bag full of children's books each week. The birthday surprise turns out to be that Anna has been teaching Grandma how to read.

Leo Buscaglia's book, The Fall of Freddy the Leaf, uses a metaphor to explain aging and death. Freddy had first appeared in the spring. He had lots of company on the huge tree, but Daniel was his wisest and best friend. Daniel would explain all the wonders of nature to Freddy and answer any questions that Freddy asked. As autumn came, Freddy lost many friends from the tree. He asked Daniel about the death of his friends and

Daniel tried to explain to him that the leaves had served their purpose and that it was time for them to say good-bye. New leaves could take their place in the spring. Freddy was the last leaf to fall and it was only then, as he saw the tall strong tree on the way to the ground, that he realized that he had been a part of something strong and wonderful. He would join with the water and other fallen leaves to make the tree stronger yet.

In The Remembering Box by Eth Clifford, Joshua visits his grandmother Golda almost every Sabbath. She often reads to him and tell him stories of "the old country". But what Joshua likes best is when Grandma would gets out her remembering box where she keeps her special things that remind her of certain events in her life. At the end of the story, she gives Joshua the box for him to keep forever. When the time comes for them to light the Sabbath candles, Joshua can't awaken Grandmother. He lights the candles by himself and says, "Shabbat Shalom, Grandma," and quietly goes to the kitchen to phone his father.

Little Alice in Miss Rumphius tells the tale of her Great Aunt Alice as the tale was told to her by the great aunt. It is the story of the great aunt's life from childhood until the present, when she is an old lady. When Great-Aunt Alice came to this

country as a little girl, she helped her grandfather make wooden figureheads for ships and helped him paint in the skies in his pictures. He would tell her tales of faraway places and she would tell him that one day she would travel to these places. But Grandfather always told her that the most important thing in life was to make the world a more beautiful place. When Great-Aunt Alice grew into a woman she traveled the world as she had planned and years later settled in a little house by the sea. She spent her time scattering lupine seeds, her favorite plant. This was her way of making the world a more beautiful place. When she became an old woman she passed the same instructions down to her great-niece Alice; that she should do something to make the world a more beautiful place. Barbara Cooney has done this with her book.

Stephen Cosgrove's Grandpa-Lop takes place deep in the forest where the baby rabbits visit Grampa-Lop. They love to hear him tell stories about the magical things that went on in the forest when he was young. The other older rabbits start to wonder where the babies go each afternoon. When they find out they are visiting Grampa-Lop, they become upset and forbid the baby rabbits from visiting Grampa-Lop any more and listening to his lies about magical things. The next days go badly as the baby

rabbits begin to bicker and walk around feeling sad because they miss the magical stories of Grampa-Lop. The older rabbits finally consent to let them visit the old rabbit again only now they visit and listen with the babies. They, too, are enchanted by the wonderful stories of Grampa-Lop and continue to go with the babies into the woods every day.

Tomie de Paola has written two books that deal with intergenerational relationships. In Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs, every Sunday afternoon Tommy and his family would visit his grandmother and his great-grandmother. They lived in the same house, but his grandmother lived downstairs and his great-grandmother lived upstairs; thus the names Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs. Nana Upstairs was too old to come downstairs so Tommy would go up to her room to visit. Sometimes Nana Downstairs would go with him, too, to help take care of Nana Upstairs. The three of them would have great times together. One morning his mother told Tommy that Nana Upstairs had died. It was hard for him to accept this but when he visited her room and saw her bed was empty, he realized that she was gone forever. A few nights later, he saw a falling star and his mother told him that perhaps it was a kiss from Nana Upstairs since she was in heaven. Years later when Tommy was

grown and Nana Downstairs had also died, Tommy saw another star falling. He thought, "Now you are both Nana Upstairs."

In Now One Foot , Now the Other, de Paola tells of Bobby, a boy who is named after his grandfather who was also his best friend. When Bobby is small it is his grandfather who teaches him to build things with blocks and to walk. They do lots of things together. Unfortunately Grandfather Bob has a stroke and can't talk or walk. Although Bobby is hesitant at first to be around his changed grandfather, it is Bobby who eventually teaches Grandfather to do the things that grandfather had taught him as a child.

Mem Fox tells of Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge who lived next door to an old folks home. He got to know the residents very well and became special friends with Miss Nancy Alison Delacourt Cooper. She had four names just as he did. One day he heard his mother and father talking about Miss Nancy and how she had lost her memory. He set out to find out what a memory was so that he could help his friend. He asked all the residents what a memory was and got a different answer from each one. He used each of the answers to help him find just the right collection of articles. He showed them all to Miss

Nancy and they reminded her of different events in her life. Wilfrid was happy because his friend had her memory back.

In Norma Farber's factual book, How Does it Feel to be Old?, each page starts with the question, "How does it feel to be old?" and answers with a poem. Some of the answers tell of the positive aspects of old age and some tell of the negative. The answers are frank and to the point. It gives an interesting and factual account of the aging process.

Jenny is getting ready to spend the night with her granny and grandpa in Edith Thatcher Hurd's I Dance in My Red Pajamas. Her parents remind her to not jump around and shout because her grandparents are very old. She just smiles. When she gets to her grandparent's house and her parents leave, the fun begins. Her grandpa takes her by the hands and swings her around the room. They build a little house for her outside. She and Grandpa carry in a load of firewood. The most fun is had at the end of the day when Granny plays the piano and Jenny and Grandpa dance briskly around the room, with Jenny wearing her red pajamas.

Mavis Jukes' Blackberries in the Dark, tells of Austin who isn't very excited to be visiting his grandparent's farm this year because his grandfather has died since his last visit. His

grandmother meets him at the plane but Austin is quiet and unresponsive. He misses his grandfather and he can't imagine Grandma will be any fun. She can't fish with him or drive the tractor like Grandpa. As the visit progresses he finds that Grandma is willing to do all the things that Grandpa had done with him and that he can enjoy doing some different activities that Grandma suggests. They develop as close a relationship as he had with his grandfather.

Riki Levinson's book, I Go With My Family to Grandma's has very little text. It shows, mostly through Diane Goode's illustrations, all the different ways various family members get to Grandma's house for a family gathering. It shows how the grandparents are the center of the family activity and that their house will always be home to the family members.

Through Grandpa's Eyes, by Patricia MacLachlan, tells the story of John who likes to visit his grandpa's house more than anything else. His grandpa is blind but has his own way of seeing. In spite of his blindness, Grandpa is able to do many things with his grandson. They do exercises together, play their cellos, and sculpt clay. They smell the wet earth as they visit the riverbank. They listen to the "honkers" as they fly overhead on their way south for the winter. All throughout their visits

John learns how to use all his other senses so that he sees the world through Grandpa's eyes.

My Grandmother's Cookie Jar, by Montzalee Miller, had always seemed wonderful and mysterious. It was made in the shape of an Indian head. Whenever Grandmother took off the headdress and gave out cookies, she would tell stories of her people long ago. She told stories of dancers around an open fire on a starry night. She told stories of fear when "the people" came and took the land away from Grandmother's people. Grandmother's stories instilled pride and honor for the ancient ways. One day Grandmother is gone and Grandfather passes the cookie jar on to the young girl. He tells her it is full, but when she opens the lid, there is nothing inside. "The jar is full of Grandmother's love and Indian spirit." He tells the girl to share Grandmother's stories with others to keep the spirit alive.

Robert Munsch's Love You Forever is a story of generations. A new baby is born and the mother holds him in her arm and sings to him: I'll love you forever/I'll like you for always/As long as I'm living/ My baby you'll be. As the baby grows each different stage of his life brings different problems for his mother. But no matter what he does she goes to his room at night , holds him in her arms and sings the song. Finally, when the boy is a man

and the mother is too old to hold him in her arms and sing, he cradles his mother in his arms and sings to her. When he returns to his own home, he checks in on his sleeping baby, cradles him in his arms, sings the song to his baby that his mother had sung to him through the years and the traditions and life cycle continue.

Little Martha is especially excited about her visit to Grampie's in Happy Birthday, Grampie by Susan Pearson. Although her family must go to church first, she is thinking about the special birthday card she made for Grampie. He is blind in his old age but she made the card so even Grampie could "see it". She glued on a felt heart, construction paper, and shiny, smooth, stick-on letters that spell, "Grampie, I Love You." Her grandfather was originally from Sweden and has reverted back to speaking only his native language. But when he feels the lettering on Martha's card, he laughs and hugs her and replies in English, "Martha, I love you, too."

Gretchen's Grandma by Phyllis Root and Carol Marron tells the story of a little girl and her grandma. Gretchen's grandma from Germany is here to visit for the first time. Gretchen is worried when she has to spend the whole day alone with her because Grandma doesn't speak English. Grandma fixes

breakfast but Gretchen isn't able to tell her that she doesn't like fried eggs. When Gretchen asks her to help make a cake for Father's birthday, Grandma hands her a dish towel to dry the dishes. When Gretchen rubs her stomach to show that she is hungry, Grandma helps her to the couch because she thinks she is sick. As the day goes on, things get better. They go to the park to feed the ducks and Grandma pushes Gretchen on the swing. At the end of the day when Grandma gives her a big hug, Gretchen whispers, "I love you", and Gretchen is sure by the way she smiles that Grandma understands.

Where else would a friend of the birds live but in the treetops? In Tricia Tusa's Maebelle's Suitcase, one hundred eight year old Maebelle makes hats for a hobby. She is working on a special hat for the annual town hat contest. Her friends, the birds are heading south for the winter. Her special bird friend, Binkle, needs to borrow Maebelle's suitcase for his trip but soon finds, after filling it with all of his belongings, that it is too heavy to carry. Maebelle "tricks" him into leaving most of his things behind by gradually borrowing them for her new hat creation. Her hat ends up looking like a nesting place with a branch, nest, and eggs. She doesn't win the contest but receives an award for the most original hat. She has succeeded

in lessening the load for Binkle. He is able to head south knowing his belongings are safely on display in the local museum. Maebelle tries on her original entry for the contest and sighs to herself, " Maybe next year."

In Music, Music, Music by Vera B. Williams, Grandma's frailty has caused her to stay in her room upstairs. The money jar in which the family had saved extra change to buy Mama a chair and Rosa an accordion has been empty for a long time. All the extra money has had to be used to help with Grandma's expenses. Rosa and her friends often play music for her grandma because it reminds her of the old country. The girls decide to practice their music so their little band can play for parties. They divide the money they make and Rosa once again has money for the big family jar.

The book A Special Trade by Sally Wittman tells the story of Nelly. When Nelly was very small she befriended a man in her neighborhood named Bartholomew. They would do so many things together. He would push her in her stroller and go for walks. He would push her through Mrs. Pringle's sprinkler and warn her of bumps ahead. As Nelly grew and no longer needed a stroller, Bartholomew grew older, too. They continued to play together and Nelly gradually began helping Bartholomew. One

day an ambulance came and took Bartholomew to the hospital, as he had fallen. Nelly wrote to him every day and when he returned, he was in a wheelchair. "I guess our walks are over," he said. "No they aren't," said Nelly. "I can take you for walks." And so she pushed him through Mrs. Pringles sprinkler and warned him of bumps ahead.

Summary

Relationships between the elderly and the young are dealt with in many children's books. Themes include the sharing of memories, stories of the generations helping each other, positive and negative aspects of aging, and death. All of these themes can be important components of an intergenerational program.

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