NORLAND

OPEN ACCESS

The role of grandparents in early education and care in the 21st century: a thematic literature review of the UK research landscape

Mallika Kanyal[a] , **Daniela Mangione[b]** and **Paulette Luff[b]**

[a] University of the Arts London, [b] Anglia Ruskin University

Terms & Conditions

Abstract

In recent years there has been increased interest in undertaking research about grandparents in different contexts and across a variety of academic disciplines. Although the role of grandparents as pivotal figures is often recognised, these roles are frequently taken for granted in the field of early childhood education and care. There is little mention of the vital roles that they may play in partnerships between families and early years settings or schools. This paper presents a literature review on grandparent roles in the 21st century in the UK. Four EBSCO education and child development databases, set keywords, and clear inclusion/exclusion criteria were used. Forty-one peer-reviewed articles published between 2000 and 2023 were selected and a qualitative thematic

analysis undertaken, which identified three main themes: 1) intergenerational learning; 2) social and cultural influences; and 3) support for families.

Findings highlight the significant and multifaceted place of grandparents as supporters and mediators of culture within contemporary families, education and care settings, and different ecosystems inhabited by the grandchildren. By exploring various ways in which grandparents contribute to family functioning, this review offers important insights for educare professionals, including nannies and childminders, as well as for policymakers, about the possibility of establishing synergistic partnerships with grandparents.

Keywords: grandparent, grandparenting, intergenerational, grandchild, grandmother

Introduction

The 21st century has been described as "The age of the grandparent" (*The Economist*, 2023). The ratio of living grandparents to children is rising, due to increasing life expectancy and decreasing rates of fertility. In the UK, more than 14 million adults are grandparents. Almost two-thirds of grandparents are involved with the care of their grandchildren, including those who offer regular informal, home-based educare (Information NOW, 2023). While there is an acknowledgement of the importance of grandparents in contemporary family life, for their emotional, practical and financial support as childcare providers, they are often taken for granted or rarely mentioned in terms of partnerships with families in education and care (Mitchell, 2008). There is some recognition of grandparent care within UK policy whereby the weekly National Insurance credit available to a parent or carer in receipt of child benefit can be transferred to an eligible family member. This enables grandparents below state retirement age, who reduce their work hours to care for grandchildren, to maintain their National Insurance record and build entitlement towards a full state pension (HM Revenue & Customs, 2023). Further, increased life expectancy offers grandchildren opportunities to interact with their grandparents as well as with their great-grandparents (Moulton *et al.*, 2017). While this phenomenon triggers challenges in terms of intergenerational differences and health and wellbeing matters (Dunning, 2006), it also presents opportunities for mutual learning, support and enrichment.

Based on the review of existing literature on the role of grandparents, we note that there are gaps and new opportunities to understand ecological intergenerational relationships (Kenner, 2005; Kenner *et al.*, 2007; Akhter, 2016). This review establishes an important baseline for a broader research agenda that aims to explore grandparenthood through the lenses of available literature alongside grandparents' lived perceptions and experiences (Mangione *et al.*, 2023).

In this context, the paper reports a thematic literature review, undertaken to address the following question: 'What insights can be gained from existing research regarding the roles of UK grandparents in the 21st century?'

Theoretical/conceptual framework

The established norm of partnership between families and early years settings and schools, in England, focuses on parents (Demetriadi, 2022; Department for Education, 2023a; 2023b; 2023c), although the non-statutory Birth to 5 Matters guidance says that "Working with families will often entail developing relationships with the extended family as well as the child's parents" (Early Years Coalition, 2021, p. 28), and textbooks for early childhood students recognise custodial grandparenting as a specific family structure (Owen and Barnes, 2023). Sadownik and Višnjić Jevtić (2023), writing from an

international context, went further and proposed a 'more-than-parental' intergenerational approach that recognises the roles and influence of all members of a child's close family and extends parental involvement to include grandparents. Similarly, in Ireland, Fitzpatrick and Halpenny (2023) argued for recognition of intergenerational learning as a rich pedagogical strategy with benefits for children's development and wellbeing and for the flourishing of individuals and communities. In line with these views, we take a contextual and ecological perspective towards a review of grandparenting literature in early childhood, recognising that families, educational researchers and reviewers are embedded within complex social and cultural contexts. In accordance with Fitzpatrick and Halpenny (2023) and Sadownik and Višnjić Jevtić (2023), we draw on both the sociocultural historical theory of Vygotsky (1934; 1978; 1981) and the bioecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1992; 1995; 2001) to provide an underpinning for our exploration and interpretation of literature relating to grandparental roles in young children's learning and development.

The focus of Vygotsky's theory is the role of culture, and the mediation of cultural values, norms and practices through social interaction. Human development and learning are seen as lifelong and participatory, with knowledge and meaning-making constructed within cultural and historical contexts. Intergenerational learning and support are therefore built from social experience in collaborative contexts through sharing and dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978). The rich array of experiences that grandparents bring to families interact with the social-cultural worlds of their grandchildren, allowing exchanges of funds of knowledge (Moll *et al.*, 1992) and expanding learning possibilities for grandchildren (Neuman *et al.*, 1996) and also for the grandparents themselves.

Dynamic interactions between people and their environments are also characteristic of bioecological systems theory, in which proximal processes, personal characteristics, context and time are seen to combine to influence human growth and development (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). Human activity, including interaction between grandchildren and grandparents, takes place within a hierarchy of systems, which operate independently and in relation to one another (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this review the theory is used, implicitly, as a basis for appreciating the ways in which ideologies and policies within the wider society (macro and exo systems) may interconnect with the diverse day-to-day experiences and activities of intergenerational family life (meso and micro systems) over time (the chronosystem). The theory is often applied to child development, with the agentic child at the centre who both influences and is influenced by the surrounding context. Bronfenbrenner (1991, p. 2) wrote:

> A child requires participation in progressively more complex reciprocal activity on a regular basis over an extended period in the child's life, with one or more persons with whom the child develops a strong, mutual, irrational, emotional attachment and who is committed to the child's well-being and development, preferably for life.

We envisage grandparents as being among the adults who have a mutual, irrational, emotional attachment to the child and who are committed to her or his wellbeing. Grandparents, we believe, share rich and valuable 'funds of knowledge' (Moll *et al.*, 1992) in their interactions with grandchildren. In the context of our research, these intergenerational encounters occur within ecosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), in which cultural values, norms and practices are mediated through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978).

In order to frame the review of the literature, we applied the above-cited theories, bringing a sociocultural lens to the design of the methodology and review of the papers.

Methodology

The literature review utilised a thematic approach – following guidelines developed by Ferrari (2015) to support preparation of narrative reviews through rigorous means – to select, review and synthesise existing research on the roles of grandparents in the 21st century for children living in the UK. The aim of the review was to integrate findings from multiple studies to gain well-informed insights about contemporary grandparenting, and the first step was to identify grandparenting and the role of grandparents as an issue to be explored by the review team.

To identify relevant research, an electronic search was undertaken of four EBSCO databases, selected for their comprehensive collections of articles of relevance to early childhood care, development and education: the British Education Index; Child Development and Adolescent Studies; ERIC (the Education Resource Information Center); and Professional Development Collection. A Boolean search was carried out, using the search terms 'grandparent' OR 'grandparenting' OR 'grandmother' OR 'grandfather' OR 'grandparents AND grandchildren', with 'apply related words' and 'apply equivalent subjects' selected. Additional criteria, generated by authors' reading around the topic and subsequent discussion about inclusion and exclusion criteria, were: AND 'intergenerational learning'; AND 'intersubjectivity'; NOT 'custodial grandparents' OR 'kinship care' OR 'grandparents raising grandchildren'; AND NOT 'migration' OR 'immigration' OR 'emigration' OR 'refugee'. For the purposes of this article, an additional geographic criterion was AND 'United Kingdom' OR 'UK' OR 'Britain' OR 'Scotland' OR 'England' OR 'Wales' OR 'Northern Ireland'. Date parameters were specified as 2000 to present, and results were limited by publication type, with 'Academic Journal' and 'Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals' selected. This returned 212 items published between 2000 and 2023.

The titles and abstracts of these papers were scanned for relevance to the review. Inclusion criteria comprised research carried out in one or more countries of the UK that addressed the role of grandparents; the influence of grandparents; learning with or from grandparents; and/or grandparent childcare. Excluded from the review were studies in which mention of grandparents or grandparenting was peripheral to the study and findings; studies about grandparent-headed households; papers about other specific issues that were not directly related to grandparents' roles in grandchildren living in the UK (e.g., migration, immigration and family reunification, transnational grandparenting, and a specific historical grandparent depicted in a play); articles that were not research papers (e.g., summaries of legislation); and studies for which the research was not carried out in the UK. As a result of this process, 171 papers were excluded, and the remaining 41 papers were included.

The next step was to read the 41 selected papers, with particular attention paid to the topic, aim, key findings and implications, with research methodology, methods and theoretical framing also noted. In some cases, there was more than one paper published from the same research study. As each paper was read, and the content noted, papers were grouped and regrouped according to notable concepts. At the end of this process, there were seven categories: i) grandparent and grandchild interactions; ii) intergenerational learning; iii) the influence of grandparents; iv) grandparents and language learning, including language maintenance in heritage languages; v) grandparents and cultural learning; vi) grandparents and grandchildren with autistic spectrum disorders or other special educational needs or disabilities; and vii) grandparents providing childcare. From these, three overarching themes were identified: 1) intergenerational learning (11 articles); 2) social and cultural influences (16 articles); and 3) support for families (14 articles). We recognise that these three themes are not mutually exclusive, as some papers addressed multiple themes and had the potential to fit into more than one category. The overlap reflects the interconnectedness between different aspects of research in the field of grandparenting. Organising our paper according to these overarching themes helps us and our readers navigate through a diverse range of studies and understand how these themes relate to the broader concept of grandparenting.

A summary of the literature review process can be found in Figure 1.
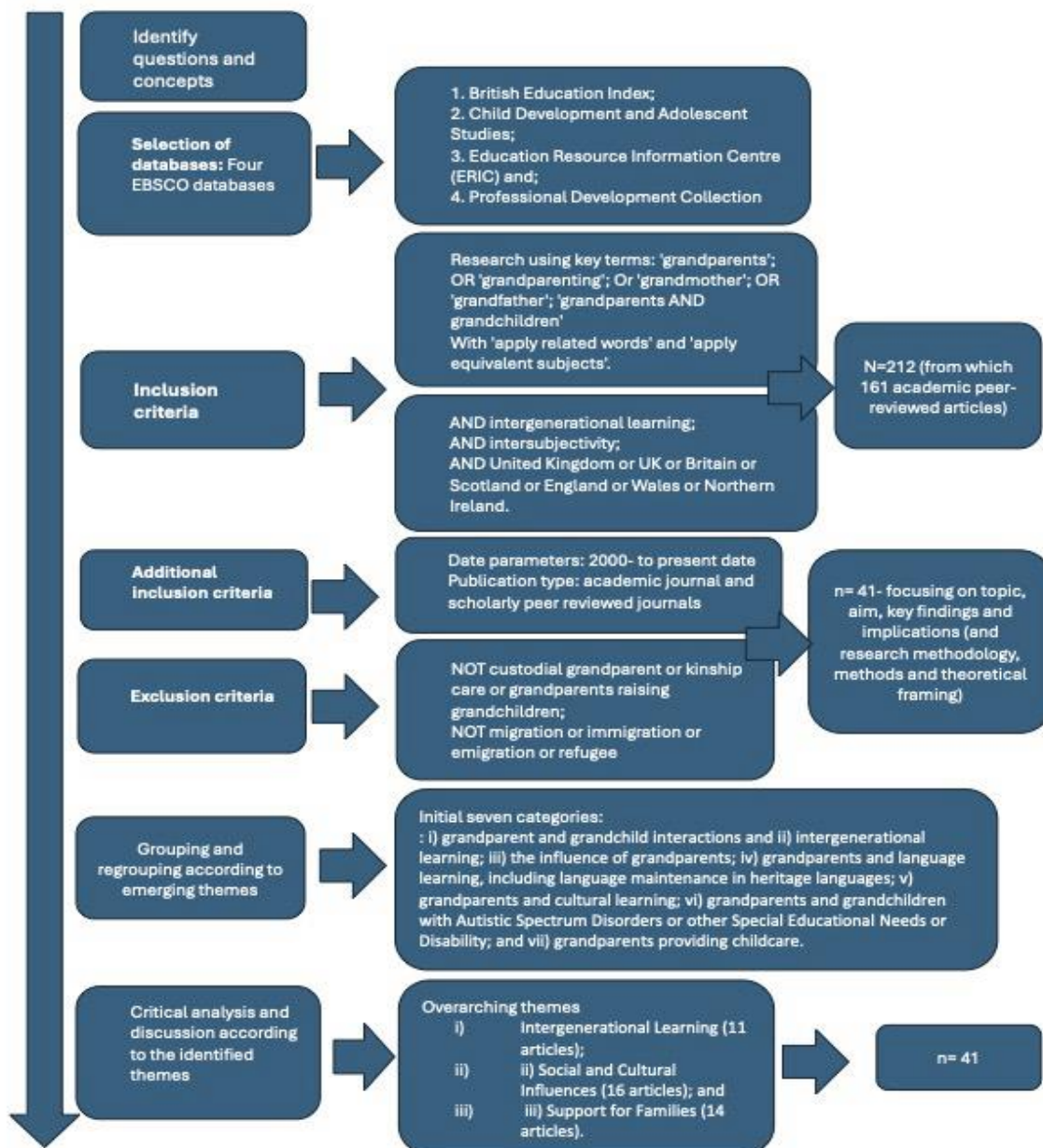

Figure 1 **A summary of the literature review process**

Our review of the papers was underpinned by Suri's (2020) three main guiding principles of research, which ensure that ethical protocols are followed through attention being paid to:

1) informed subjectivity and reflexivity

2) purposefully informed selective inclusivity

3) audience-appropriate transparency.

In terms of informed subjectivity and reflexivity, the journal articles that we reviewed represent the multiplicity of meaning-making informed by the subjectivity and reflexivity of the authors of this paper. For example, we acknowledge that our life experiences and heritage influence the interpretation and formulation of key concepts and themes portrayed in this paper. The formulation of key concepts informed the purposeful selection of the research context, databases, keywords and subsequently inclusion and exclusion criteria. While we have diverse backgrounds (British, Indian and Italian), our professional experience in the UK made the UK the primary context to focus on. The main stakeholders and audience for this review are expected to be grandparents, Early Childhood Studies students, early childhood education and care professionals, and academics interested in intergenerational education and care in ecological contexts. Although we acknowledge our subjectivities in undertaking this review, every attempt has been made to fulfil our ethical duty of portraying a balanced and rigorous account of the selected literature.

The discussion that follows synthesises key findings from the 41 reviewed articles, organising insights from them around the three principal salient themes mentioned above, and associated subthemes.

Discussion of key findings from the literature review

Intergenerational learning

Intergenerational learning between grandparents and young grandchildren in the UK context was explored in a subset of 11 articles based on small-scale studies by individual researchers and teams (Shute and Wheldall, 2001; Arnold, 2015; 2019; Kelly, 2015; Guilbaud, 2019; Latham, 2020), as well as multiple publications from a larger Economic and Social Science Research Council-funded project based in East London (Kenner *et al.*, 2007; 2008; Ruby *et al.*, 2007; Gregory *et al.*, 2010; Jessel *et al.*, 2011). Collectively, these 11 articles reveal mutuality of learning through reciprocal exchanges between grandparents and grandchildren. Key insights about bidirectional learning and influence suggest contemporary grandparent–grandchild relationships facilitate cherished opportunities for co-creation of knowledge, meaning and shared understanding.

Grandparents' support for grandchildren's learning

Arnold (2015; 2019) wrote from her position as a grandparent. In observing her granddaughter, she noted features of the child's developing skills and patterns of action. For example, separating and connecting were identified as dominant schemas, and Arnold (2015) provided resources to support interests in exploring wholes and parts.

The emphasis on understanding children's intentions and sensitive responses from adults was continued when Arnold (2019) noticed how her granddaughter Gabriella's explorations of seriation became expressed in her use of language linking. Similarly, a younger granddaughter had interests in going inside and through and began to use language that was related to her physical explorations of spaces. As the children played and learned, Arnold, as grandparent, aimed to tune into the children's repeated actions and to respond with relevant language and suitable resources to support their thinking.

Another grandmother researcher is Kelly (2015), who captured communicative exchanges via Skype with her granddaughter and family. The granddaughter was supported by prompts and supported by adults to make sense of this online social environment and to utilise it to develop interactions and sustain communication. Not all grandparents have in-depth understanding of the concepts that their grandchildren may be exploring or the affordances of physical and virtual spaces, but, nevertheless, they may respond with sensitivity and create close and comfortable environments for learning with their grandchildren (Gregory *et al.*, 2010). Jessel *et al.* (2011, p. 38) referred to these as "discursive spaces" that include the time and attention that grandparents can give to their grandchildren.

As documented by Kenner *et al.* (2007), grandparents communicate with young grandchildren through a multifaceted repertoire encompassing gaze, facial expressions, gestures, touch and speech. Similarly, Shute and Wheldall (2001) observed 'grandmotherese' in conversations and story reading. Like 'motherese', grandmothers' speech was in a higher register when speaking to the child, and the story reading was at a slower pace than when reading to adults.

Scaffolding is a concept that is explored in several papers – for example, adults scaffolding the child's online communication (Kelly, 2015). Arnold (2015) advised that this concept should be interpreted as adults understanding and supporting the child's intentions rather than following an adult agenda. Kenner *et al.* (2007), Gregory *et al.* (2010) and Jessel *et al.* (2011) also critiqued this concept and proposed that, in contrast to formal learning contexts where scaffolding is often adult led, in intergenerational family learning there tend to be joint and reciprocal interactions and synergy in creation of mutual understandings. This was well illustrated when a grandmother and her granddaughter constantly surprised and challenged one another during the process of co-writing a novel (Latham, 2020). Nevertheless, grandparents provide structure for activities, and support grandchildren in maintaining concentration, by being alongside grandchildren, making suggestions and prompting where needed (Kenner *et al.*, 2008; Jessel *et al.*, 2011; Latham, 2020).

Children engaging grandparents in their learning

Arnold (2015, p. 739) was clear that "even very young children are capable of leading their own learning", and she considered that learning occurs most effectively when explorations are child-initiated and supported by adults (Arnold, 2019). Arnold's granddaughter jigged up and down to indicate when she wanted music on and was seen to set herself several physical and intellectual challenges as she explored the world around her (Arnold, 2015; 2019).

During Skype calls, the grandchild in the research by Kelly (2015) displayed agency as she took her grandparents to different places in her house and included them in her games of jumping on the bed, playing hide and seek, and pretending to go camping. In devising these creative ways of relating and interacting, she was demonstrating to the adults the affordances of online video calls, and they followed her lead.

Kenner *et al.* (2007, p. 226) described "a relationship of mutuality" in grandparent–grandchildren relationships and noted ways in which each generation contributes to the knowledge of the other. This reciprocity of learning and teaching between generations could be seen in video recordings of three- to six-year-old children engaging in computer activities with their grandparents (Kenner *et al.*, 2008). As observed by Kenner *et al.* (2007), grandchildren supported their grandparents to use the computer and to play computer games, such as solitaire.

Grandparents passing on knowledge and skills

While children may possess competences in uses of new technology, grandparents may possess different 'funds of knowledge', defined as "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies

of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll *et al.*, 1992, p. 133). In Ruby *et al.* (2007), grandparents participated in gardening activities with their grandchildren, introducing children to a wide range of fruits and vegetables and passing on knowledge about growing plants. Steven cooked alongside his grandmother and learned to make fairy cakes and breadsticks (Kenner *et al.*, 2007). For Latham (2020) and her granddaughter, the shared cultural activity was creative writing. Guilbaud (2019) reflected on repetition across generations in the practice of Waldorf principles, originally learned and still practised by the grandmother, and now influencing the ways of being and doing of the parent and her children.

Kenner *et al.* (2007) and Jessel *et al.* (2011) reported that the most popular activities with grandparents were telling stories, talking about the family, playing, and watching TV or videos, as well as going out to the park, shopping, undertaking religious activities or visiting others. There was also engagement in household activities, such as cooking and gardening, in which the children participated alongside grandparents and authentic, situated learning took place. Intergenerational exchanges during these activities complemented learning of language (Arnold, 2015; 2019) and literacy (Kenner *et al.*, 2007; Latham, 2020) in other contexts. Children's scientific knowledge, too, was supported and extended – for example, as they learned about identification of different plants and gained an understanding of conditions and stages of plant growth (Ruby *et al.*, 2007). The passing on of religious, cultural and linguistic knowledge is considered further in the next section of this review.

Social and cultural influences

Recent changes in the demography of grandparenthood have amplified the potential influence of grandparents on their grandchildren, resulting from the possibility of prolonged relationships compared with previous generations (Moulton *et al.*, 2017). The theme of 'social and cultural influences' draws on 16 articles, 13 of which are mainly small-scale qualitative studies based in multicultural and multilingual home settings. These articles offer insights into the mutual influence between grandparents and their grandchildren by referring to participants' unique life stories and experiences. This review acknowledges the need to consider holistic and multidimensional aspects and the unique experiences and stories of multilingual and multicultural families, and for this reason three quantitative studies are also included. These articles – by Moulton *et al.* (2017) and Tanskanen and Danielsbacka (2012; 2018) – provide valuable quantitative correlations between grandparents' involvement and children's educational success, aspirations and wellbeing.

Three main subthemes have emerged from the review of 16 journal articles:

1) intergenerational heritage maintenance

2) knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage

3) wellbeing and personal aspirations towards grandchildren's success and social mobility.

Intergenerational heritage maintenance

Language maintenance among multilingual families requires a great 'effort' (Braun, 2012; Ruby, 2012; Smith-Christmas, 2014; 2017; Akhter, 2016; Little, 2017), especially among trilingual families (Braun, 2012). It is often undertaken by grandparents, and is intersected by individual, sociocultural and educational factors.

In her autobiographical article, Guzy-Sprague (2022) provided a historical exploration of the Yiddish language alongside her own personal experiences in an intergenerational family context (father, grandmother, great-grandmother and beyond). She concluded that language heritage and shifts can be a space of both 'alienation' and 'belonging', where identities can be formed, negotiated, contested

and recreated. Ruby (2012) acknowledged that maintaining home language and culture is important for children's social and cognitive development and drew attention to the lack of research on intergenerational interactions and learning involving grandparents. In her ethnographic case study, she emphasised the importance of grandparents' attitude of creating a supportive environment for the grandchildren. In line with Ruby's perspective, engagement in dialogues, exploration of ideas and acquisition of heritage language without any pressure in the home environment need to be combined with an acknowledgement, by educators, of the role of grandparents in the personal, social and academic development of their grandchildren.

The importance of grandparents adopting a playful and child-centred attitude in interactions with their grandchildren was highlighted by Smith-Christmas's (2017) ethnographic study as being key for the maintenance of heritage language among generations. Kenner's (2005) work involving case studies of bilingual families with six-year-old children showed the complexity of the literacy learning processes, which relied on the knowledge and skills of the family members, including the grandparents. As Kenner (2005) maintained, there is a need for educators to explore the 'literacy ecosystems' within a family context in order to reinforce the support that is already taking place in the home environment.

This nurturing intergenerational relationship demonstrates the importance of relational pedagogy, a pedagogy that values the uniqueness of life stories in multicultural and multilingual contexts, to support a child's learning and development.

Knowledge and understanding of cultural heritage

Ruby (2012) investigated intergenerational knowledge exchange through syncretic interaction processes in which grandparent and child perspectives combine in a mutually influential 'synergy' that serves as a vital source of cultural and linguistic resources. Kenner (2005) and Ruby (2012) contended that to appreciate grandparents' critical role in shaping children's identity and cultural awareness, educators must learn to engage with and leverage the rich linguistic, cultural and cognitive resources embedded within students' family households. Akhter (2016), similarly, explored the complexity of intergenerational literacy and reading practices between a multilingual seven-year-old child and his grandmother, as they used visual screen-based multimodal communication (digital technology and the internet) to help the child to acquire Qur'anic literacy. Ethnographic observations and video recordings showed the mutual exchange between generations through 'syncretic' literacy practices involving multilingual and multicultural factors. Akhter (2016) pointed out the vital influence of grandparents in favouring intergenerational learning within a multicultural context, and the need for extended school services that include provision for cultural family literacy and language support, and which involve grandparents. This, she argued, will allow educators to gain an in-depth understanding of the variety of intergenerational learning that the children in their care go through. On a similar note, Ruby (2012) suggested that practitioners could learn different ways of engaging with family households to understand their rich cultural and cognitive resources to support children's personal, academic and social development. Further, she concluded that to support successful integration into host countries, it is important to understand how multilingual and multinational families are assisted in maintaining their linguistic and cultural identity.

Hua and Wei (2016) argued that given the proliferation of multilingual and multicultural families in the 21st century, more research is needed to explore how diverse transnational and multilingual experiences shape family life, dynamics and social relationships. Developing a critical understanding of family stories around heritage, language and identity, Little (2017) argued, is an area of concern which needs to be further researched and considered while developing educational policy and practice. A recognition of the vital role that grandparents play in maintaining these linguistic and

cultural identities, as discussed above, implies extending service provisions with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of multifaceted aspects. Hua and Wei (2016) acknowledged the importance of studying a variety of experiences in a more holistic and multidimensional manner, but argued that in order to gain an in-depth understanding of linguistic and cultural identities, it is vital to pay attention to individual stories too. Identification of any patterns is useful only if they are contextualised within individuals, families and communities.

Wellbeing and personal aspirations towards success and social mobility

In line with the evolutionary theory prediction, Tanskanen and Danielsbacka (2012), in their study on the correlation between grandparental involvement and grandchildren's emotional and behavioural problems, found that the involvement of maternal grandparents, especially grandmothers (more than paternal grandparents), had beneficial effects on grandchildren's wellbeing. In their quantitative study on the direct and indirect influence of maternal and paternal grandparents' social class on their grandchildren's aspiration at the age of seven, Moulton *et al.* (2017) noted that social class mobility from grandparents to grandchildren is an overlooked area of investigation. Their quantitative analysis, drawn from the UK Millennium Cohort Study, surprisingly showed that only the paternal (rather than the expected maternal) grandparents' social class directly influences grandchildren's aspirations. Tanskanen and Danielsbacka (2018), in a study on the effect of grandparental investment (in terms of contact and financial support) in grandchildren's cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes, stated that grandparents' involvement might be related to better outcomes for the grandchildren but may not always be beneficial to them; this contradicts studies that assume the existence of a causal association and demonstrates the need for further exploration of the influence of grandparents on their grandchildren. Although, in their large-scale studies, Moulton *et al.* (2017) and Tanskanen and Danielsbacka (2012; 2018) provided interesting insights into the influence of grandparents on their grandchildren's wellbeing and aspirations, Phillips (2011), Basit (2013) and Owusu-Kwarteng (2021), in particular, explored these matters from a qualitative perspective, and through the unique lens of the participants involved in their studies.

With regard to wellbeing, Phillips (2011) suggested the existence of a 'symbiotic' mutual relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. The intergenerational experience offers a sense of enabling and nourishment to grandchildren and, at the same time, generativity and enrichment to grandparents. Phillips (2011) illustrated this with a biographical account of a grandparent supporting a grandchild to follow his interest of drawing at home. The process of engagement with drawing offered the opportunity for discovery and satisfaction to the grandchild, whereas the grandparent, as a mediator, was delighted to be providing suitable materials and working conditions to foster and encourage the grandchild's interest.

Basit's (2013) study, which consisted of a three-generational analysis of educational achievement, social mobility and economic success among British Asians from different ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds, involved focus groups, individual interviews and the use of photographs to collect data from grandparents, parents and young people. Findings showed how grandparents can instil aspirations among their grandchildren by sharing examples from family attributes and education. Basit (2013) suggested that although grandparents want their grandchildren to inherit religious and moral values, they also want them to aspire to higher educational experiences and career options. Engagement with higher education, grandparents believed, leads to economic success and upward social mobility. Grandparents seemed to convey this aspiration by sharing their own occupational stories with grandchildren – for example, by narrating any underachieved occupational history and unemployment due to lack of education, or by reinforcing the value of economic success by referring to different role models, jobs with high remuneration, large houses, big cars, annual holidays and a better life. Grandparents in the study made clear the correlation between educational

achievement and economic success, especially via acquisition of educational capital as a catalyst for upward social mobility. While observing this correlation in participants' words, Basit (2013, p. 722) also referred to a "pedagogy of contradiction": grandparents wanted the young people to "be like me; and don't be like me". Grandparents wanted the young children to be like them in terms of their moral and religious values, and this was generally accompanied by a desire for grandchildren to practise the teachings of their religion. At the same time, they did not want their grandchildren to emulate the older generations and remain uneducated, with limited career opportunities.

Grandparents thus want grandchildren to work hard and attain a good education. Owusu-Kwarteng (2021) explained this through an 'auto/biographical' account of her grandmother's influence on her academic and career outcomes and on other female descendants. She described her grandmother as a figure who had worked hard to ensure her daughter received an education, not a female priority in that sociocultural context. This intergenerational relationship had impacted on her professional identity as a black female academic.

Support for families

This theme includes a review of 14 articles on the value and types of intergenerational support that grandparents offer to both their grandchildren and the parents of those grandchildren, within the context of changing family life. Changes in family life are leading to increased grandparental roles in childcare – for example, through increased contact with school during drop-off and/or pick-up time (Mitchell, 2008), and through more practical (respite care, domestic help) and emotional (non-judgemental advice, a listening ear) support (Findler, 2000; Hastings *et al.*, 2002).

The final section of our paper therefore discusses various ways in which grandparents support families, whether that is support for families with grandchildren with special educational needs and disabilities (Hastings *et al.*, 2002; Mitchell, 2008); support for families with adopted children (Pitcher, 2009); grandparent and grandchildren relationships (Bridges *et al.*, 2007; Attar-Schwartz *et al.*, 2009a; 2009b; Griggs *et al.*, 2010; Tan *et al.*, 2010; McAuley, 2019; Walsh *et al.*, 2023); or the quality, type and level of intergenerational support (Dunning, 2006; Leach *et al.*, 2008; Parkes *et al.*, 2015; Akyol *et al.*, 2023). The age group for children in this section ranges from 2 to 16 years, which is helpful in seeing the influence of grandparent support over the years.

Grandparent support for children with special educational needs and disabilities

The proportion of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in the total school population in the UK is a sizeable 20% (O'Connor *et al.*, 2023). Despite that, research on grandparent support in families with children with SEND is underdeveloped (Mitchell, 2008).

Mitchell (2008) argued that grandparents can be a significant point of contact between home and school life, providing extended value for children with SEND. Various life skills like cooking, gardening, linguistic and other independence skills can be exchanged via informal intergenerational relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, already discussed under theme one of this paper (see above).

While acknowledging a range of benefits, Hastings *et al.* (2002) highlighted instances where grandparents can be a potential source of stress too. If explanations are not offered in a timely manner, grandparents may go through a potential period of disillusionment as they come to terms with the acceptance of a grandchild with needs that they did not expect. The quality of support and information they receive about their grandchild's disability may further affect their relationship-building with both the parents of the child and the grandchild. Hastings *et al.* (2002) suggested that a lack of understanding of a grandchild's needs can affect the quality or willingness of grandparents in

offering support, which can create tension among family members. This can be further complicated by the difference in blood relationship between parents and grandparents and the heterogeneity of socio-economic factors facing families.

The situation can be further compounded in schools. Depending on their needs, children with SEND may be reliant on school transport, which limits the contact between school and family/extended family. Lack of regular contact can affect a teacher's knowledge of significant others in children's lives, like grandparents (Findler, 2007). Schools/educare settings may therefore need to invest more in developing holistic 'family-based' information programmes with room for different degrees of involvement by grandparents, as noted by Kenner *et al.* (2004) and Al-Azami (2006), and they could offer opportunities for reciprocal positive learning experiences (Kenner *et al.*, 2007).

Grandparents and adopted grandchildren

Research affirms that in adoptive families, just as in families formed by birth, grandparents play an influential role. Pitcher's (2009) mixed-methods study presents the views of 236 social workers on maternal and paternal grandparents' level of involvement with adopted families (obtained through a questionnaire), as well as the views (obtained through research interviews) of six white British families who had adopted 6- to 12-year-old children (who had been in placement for at least two years). The analysis of the social worker questionnaire revealed grandparents to be close to the adoptive parents – particularly the mothers of adoptive mothers, who were very close. Social workers, however, stated that grandparents did not provide much practical help, such as babysitting, to the families. Analyses of family interviews, especially interviews with grandparents, suggested various reasons why grandparents like to be involved in decision-making during/before adoption. According to grandparents, the time when adopter parents tell grandparents their plan for adoption is important. A delay in communicating an adoption plan may leave grandparents with little to no time to get used to the idea or ask any questions. Parents' interviews, however, revealed that they had not consulted grandparents in order to protect them from disappointment should things not work out. Adopter parents also get anxious about whether their parents (the grandparents) will approve the adoption. Grandparents, therefore, can be seen to be acting as 'approving witnesses' in an adopter family. Their approval can be a symbol of acceptance – both to the new parents and to the child. In terms of grandparents' role, children and grandparents themselves viewed their role as being 'fun', treating all their grandchildren the same and being 'close'.

Grandparenting, therefore, is seen in a positive regard as a source of 'fun' (echoed by Gyllenspetz, 2007, p. 21). Children's perceptions and expectations of grandparents often came from their experience of older people, including a birth grandparent, and from images they absorbed from story books and media. These images, when supported by adopted family narratives, affirmed their view of an approving safe person. For grandparents, the relationship seemed to be about having 'claiming' property too. Grandparents, for example, were keen to describe the progress the child had made since joining their family, such as being able to show more physical affection, riding a bicycle and swimming (Pitcher, 2009).

In the light of his study, Pitcher (2009) encouraged adopter parents to be open with their parents at an early stage to avoid any stress in the future. The study (p. 65) suggested exploration of grandparenting with grandparents themselves – for example, by asking questions such as 'What should grandparents do?', 'How should they behave?', 'What makes a good grandparent?' and 'Where is the line between help and interference?' Exploration of grandparenting with grandparents can help make some assumptions explicit which, if left unstated, may cause misunderstandings later.

The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren

With any change in family life, such as parental separation, comes transition for the child. Families adapt to change partly by expanding support across generations (Bengston *et al.*, 2002), such as with grandparents.

McAuley (2019) underlined the importance that young children attach to their relationship with grandparents, in addition to their relationships with immediate family (predominantly parents) and friends. A national study (Griggs *et al.*, 2010) with 1,596 11- to 16-year-old children (using 1,596 surveys and 40 in-depth interviews) showed that grandparents had a statistically significant impact on grandchildren's wellbeing, reinforced by the research's qualitative findings.

Attar-Schwartz *et al.* (2009a) examined a large-scale representative sample of 1,478 students aged 11–16 from England and Wales to understand adolescent–grandparent relationships, especially from the adolescent perspective. Results corroborated earlier studies' findings that grandparents take a significant position in their adolescent grandchild's life. Hierarchical regression analyses from the study showed that "more frequent contact, greater grandparent involvement, and better parent–grandparent relationships predict adolescents' higher levels of emotional closeness to grandparents" (p. 1,057). It is important to recognise the important role that parents may play here as gatekeepers of intergenerational exchange.

With regard to incidences of family transition, research has shown that grandparents are one of the key people in whom children confide in early weeks following separation (Dunn *et al.*, 2000; Lussier *et al.*, 2002; Bridges *et al.*, 2007). Lussier *et al.* (2002) and Ruiz and Silverstein (2007) also reported fewer adjustment problems among young people who have close relationships with grandparents following parental separation.

Bridges *et al.* (2007) investigated children's closeness to grandparents following parental separation, over a five-year longitudinal period. Data from 385 children, with longitudinal analyses on 140, were collected at two time points. At the first time point (eight to nine years old), closeness to grandparents following parental separation was associated with fewer adjustment problems (echoed by Lussier *et al.*, 2002). Grandparents appear to be important confidants for many young children (Dunn and Deater-Deckard, 2001). However, this did not remain the case five years later (point two) when the children were, on average, 14 years old. There was not any significant drop in the closeness to grandparents over time, but lesser links were found between child–grandparent relationships and adjustment at time point two (Bridges *et al.*, 2007). For children in their teenage years, other relationships – for example, with their peers – become important and are likely to be more closely linked to their adjustment (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, 1984). Closeness to the maternal grandmother was particularly stable for children living with a single mother. The level of closeness between maternal grandmother and grandchild was found to be associated with the mother's childhood relationship with her own mother, with strong correlations in single-mother families. Positive childhood experiences between mothers and daughters led mothers to foster relationships between their children and their own mothers (as grandmothers). In addition, it was found that grandmothers who had enjoyed their role as a mother were keener to play a role in the upbringing of their grandchildren (Bridges *et al.*, 2007).

Similar, however, cannot be said for families who may lack a grandparent figure, especially a grandmother. Research has shown the intergenerational effect of mothering without a mother (grandmother). Walsh *et al.* (2023), for example, investigated the lived experiences of motherhood for women who themselves did not have a meaningful relationship with their mothers. Walsh *et al.* (2023) conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 mothers of children under two years of age, exploring their experiences of motherhood. Analysis from interviews brought to the fore the need for

services to be aware of the struggles of motherhood. The findings corroborate those of Levy and Zucker's study (2020), in that the transition to motherhood is psychologically and emotionally more difficult for those who lack the emotional presence or support of their own mother (grandmother), an idea often taken for granted in popular culture.

Research by Attar-Schwartz *et al.* (2009b) explored grandparent involvement in two-parent biological families, lone-parent families and stepfamilies. The study investigated grandparent involvement and its impact on the emotional and behavioural adjustment of adolescents in different family structures. The sample consisted of 1,515 secondary school children (aged 11–16 years) from England and Wales, who completed a structured questionnaire. Findings suggested that greater grandparent involvement leads to fewer emotional problems and more prosocial behaviour. Overall, the study showed no differences in the level of grandparent involvement across different family structures, but there was strong evidence of reduced adjustment difficulties among adolescents from lone-parent families and stepfamilies than those from two-parent biological families. The results, however, were derived by taking into account only grandchildren's views. The views of parents and grandparents were not included. Variables such as grandparents' age and health were also not considered. The sample was a cross-sectional population of adolescents. Longitudinal designs may offer deeper insights in future. Despite these limitations, the study identified grandparents as a potential resource whose consistent presence can moderate the negative influence of parental separation and multiple family transitions. Grandparents can, therefore, be one of the significant stabilising factors in the lives of children, especially at times of family transition (Attar-Schwartz *et al.*, 2009b).

The quality, type and level of intergenerational support

There are several studies exploring the concept of quality in early childhood education and care (see Sylva *et al.*, 2006; Dahlberg *et al.*, 2013). An extensive study by Leach *et al.* (2008) explored the use of nine different measures to assess the quality of childcare at 10 and 18 months, including home-based childcare by grandparents, nannies and childminders. Findings showed that purchased care by registered childminders or a nanny offers good/better care than that by a relative, such as a grandparent. Grandparents were found to have lower levels of positive relationships with children and lower safety and health scores. It's worth noting at this point that participating mothers who used grandparent care were representative of socially disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, Leach *et al.* (2008) made associations between the quality of mothers' behaviour towards their infants and that of their child carer. Only a small minority of behaviour associations between both groups (mothers and child carers) were significant, and these were mostly the ones related to grandparent or nanny care – for example, emotional and verbal responsiveness, and avoidance of restrictive and punitive behaviour. It is likely that the modes of interaction between mother and infant were taught or modelled for mothers by their own mothers and insisted upon with nannies, showing the implicit impact of grandmothers on mothers' parenting behaviours.

In addition to mothers modelling parenting behaviours, Akyol *et al.* (2023) showed the positive impact of grandparent support on maternal outcomes such as stress related with child upbringing. Akyol *et al.* (2023), however, also pointed out that grandparent support may not always alleviate distal parenting outcomes, such as maternal psychological distress. The implications of grandparent support and maternal mental health may vary with the differences in the parent's access (or lack of access) to resources of support – for instance, among single mothers across ethnic groups or mothers in full-time employment. Akyol *et al.* (2023) drew evidence from the UK's Millennium Cohort Study, done with a population sample of 1,495 biological mothers living in the UK. The study reinforced what Bridges *et al.* (2007) reported (see above) – that grandparental support with childcare at a young age (for example, three years) does not necessarily influence a child's later social and emotional outcomes (for example, at age seven) via maternal mental health or the mother–child relationship.

Another important factor to be considered in grandparenting is maternal education and family socio-economic position. Parkes *et al.* (2015) examined parenting stress and parent support for mothers with high and low education (Parkes *et al.*, 2015). Findings suggested that parenting stress might be greater for parents from low or high socio-economic positions in comparison to parents from intermediate socio-economic positions. The reason for more parental stress can be associated with material hardship or employment demands among parents of low and high socio-economic positions, respectively. In addition, less-frequent contact with grandparents may add to parenting stress, particularly among mothers from migrant families. This lack of intergenerational support by grandparents may lead to hardships and stressful conditions that affect parenting behaviours of mothers.

Dunning (2006) summarised the role of grandparents as an intergenerational resource for families. Grandparents' position, as discussed earlier, is rediscovered in literature due to the significant demographic and social changes in family life (see Findler, 2000; Hastings *et al.*, 2002; Dunning, 2006). In addition to the practical, emotional and financial support that grandparents provide to families, Dunning (2006) highlighted the harsher realities that grandparents may find themselves facing. For example, Denchand Ogg (2002, in Dunning, 2006, p. 131) drew attention to the 74% of grandparents who "often put themselves out" in order to help or look after their grandchildren. The sacrifices they make involve cutting down on or giving up work altogether. In another study (Clarke and Roberts, 2003, in Dunning, 2006), 6% of grandparents reported the pressure (and obligation) of undertaking more or different things than they anticipated they would do as a grandparent.

To sum up, Dunning (2006, p. 131) characterised grandparenthood as "fragile negotiations, constraint and not interfering" help that grandparents are often expected to offer their children in parenting. It is therefore important to consider explicit and implicit benefits and challenges of grandparenting and grandparenthood while discussing intergenerational support for and within families.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the findings from the studies cited above, it can be argued that grandparents play a pivotal role in building intergenerational relationships and enhancing children's outcomes. Grandparents, therefore, are likely to exert a significant influence on grandchildren's lives, especially in early years (see Bridges *et al.*, 2007; Akyol *et al.*, 2023). The exchange of support and engagement in household activities between generations yields advantages for grandparents, grandchildren and the educational and care environments that they are part of, especially the development of versatile and transferable skills in grandchildren (Gyllenspetz, 2007; Mitchell, 2008). The reciprocal nature of intergenerational learning holds potential benefits for grandparents too, particularly in reinforcing their sense of self-worth through their perceived role as educators in their grandchildren's lives (Mitchell, 2008).

It is important to acknowledge that this intergenerational dynamic operates within a larger framework of interconnected systems, as outlined by Bronfenbrenner (1979; 2001). Policies at the societal level, such as those pertaining to families and extended families (Sadownik and Višnjić Jevtić, 2023) within educare settings, intersect with the intricacies of intergenerational family life. These macro and exo systems influence and are influenced by the interactions occurring within the microsystem of the family. Central to this dynamic is the child, who both shapes and is shaped by the surrounding context. Research, too, acknowledges the benefits of close partnerships between macro and micro systems, such as family/extended family, and educare settings and schools (see, for example, Råde, 2020; Al-Azami, 2006; Gregory *et al.*, 2007).

Despite the positive outcomes associated with such partnerships, grandparents often do not receive adequate recognition and are under-represented in policy discussions (Griggs *et al.*, 2010), although the option to transfer National Insurance credits to family members (HM Revenue & Customs, 2023) shows increasing recognition of their contribution.

It is common to find education and care workers recommending formal resources supplied by the state for the support of young children, rather than exploring the possibilities of grandparental help (Griggs *et al.*, 2010). To enhance the participation of grandparents, educare settings can encourage and facilitate frequent intergenerational communication and activities (Tan *et al.*, 2010) and carefully assess the formal inclusion of grandparents in policy and practice.

We therefore support the adoption by early years education and care settings and schools of the 'more-than-parental' intergenerational approach (Sadownik and Višnjić Jevtić, 2023), which extends parental involvement to include grandparents in children's educare. An intergenerational approach, which builds on bioecological interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) within collaborative sociocultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978), has the potential to provide rich opportunities for grandchildren and grandparents to learn from each other. Studies that focus closely on interactions between grandparents and grandchildren can be interpreted as providing insights into the proximal processes that support development (Bronfenbrenner, 2001).

While the paper presents the results of a thematic review of peer-reviewed articles from four EBSCO databases between 2000 and 2023, the 41 articles yielded by the narrow search criteria, which consist of research undertaken in the UK, may not be representative of grandparenting in different contexts. Discussion, therefore, may be limited in cultural diversity. A wider scope may lead to newer themes being identified which may not have been covered by this review. A strength, however, of our review is that it identifies patterns of gaps and opportunities that can be used to explore ecological intergenerational relationships through the lens of a 'more-than-parental' intergenerational approach.

Declaration of authorship and no conflict of interest

The authors confirm this is their own work and there are no known conflicts of interest, financial or non-financial, associated with this publication.

References

Akhter, P. (2016) 'A young child's intergenerational practices through the use of visual screen-based multimodal communication to acquire Qur'anic literacy', *Language and Education*, 30(6), pp. 500–518. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2016.1141935

Akyol, N.A., Ergin, D.A. and Kallitsoglou, A. (2023) 'The pathway from grandparental support with childcare in the early years to child socioemotional outcomes in middle childhood: evidence from the Millennium Cohort Study', *Early Child Development and Care*, 193(9–10), pp. 1067–1082. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2023.2218596

Al-Azami, S. (2006) *The silver lining of my life: learning with grand-parents. A report of the work of the National Development Project*. Nottingham: Basic Skills Agency.

Arnold, C. (2015) 'Schemas: a way into a child's world', *Early Child Development and Care*, 185(5), pp. 727–741. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2014.952634

Arnold, C. (2019) 'How action schemas are reflected in young children's emerging language', *Early Child Development and Care*, 189(12), pp. 1992–2004. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2018.1427087

Attar-Schwartz, S., Tan, J.-P. and Buchanan, A. (2009a) 'Adolescents' perspectives on relationships with grandparents: the contribution of adolescent, grandparent, and parent–grandparent relationship variables', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31(9), pp. 1057–1066.

Attar-Schwartz, S., Tan, J.-P., Buchanan, A., Flouri, E. and Griggs, J. (2009b) 'Grandparenting and adolescent adjustment in two-parent biological, lone-parent, and step-families', *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(1), pp. 67–75.

Basit, T.N. (2013) 'Educational capital as a catalyst for upward social mobility amongst British Asians: a three-generational analysis', *British Educational Research Journal*, 39(4), pp. 714–732. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2012.677414

Bengtson, V.L., Biblarz, T.J. and Roberts, R.E.L. (2002) *How families still matter: a longitudinal study of youth in two generations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biscomb, K. (2012) 'Three generations of Lancashire women', *Asia-Pacific Journal of Health, Sport and Physical Education*, 3(3), pp. 253–265. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/18377122.2012.721742

Braun, A. (2012) 'Language maintenance in trilingual families – a focus on grandparents', *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 9(4), pp. 423–436. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2012.714384

Bridges, L.J., Roe, A.E.C., Dunn, J. and O'Connor, T.G. (2007) 'Children's perspectives on their relationships with grandparents following parental separation: a longitudinal study', *Social Development*, 16(3), pp. 539–554.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The ecology of human development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1991) *What do families do?* Institute for American Values, Winter/Spring, p. 2.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992) 'Ecological systems theory', in R. Vasta (ed.) *Six theories of child development: revised formulations and current issues*. London: Jessica Kingsley, pp. 187–249.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995) 'Developmental ecology through space and time: a future perspective', in P. Moen, G.H. Elder, Jr. and K. Lüscher (eds) *Examining lives in context: perspectives on the ecology of human development*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, pp. 619–647.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2001) 'The bioecological theory of human development', in N.J. Smelser and P.B. Baltes (eds) *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences*. Vol. 10. New York, NY: Elsevier, pp. 6963–6970.

Buchanan, A. (2006) 'Children aged 0–13 at risk of social exclusion: impact of government policy in England and Wales', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28(10), pp. 1135-1151.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. and Larson, R. (1984) *Being adolescent*. New York: Basic Books.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P. and Pence, A. (2013) *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: languages of evaluation*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Demetriadi, N. (2022) 'Parent partnership: supporting learning at home', *Early Years Educator*, 13 April. Available at: https://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/abs/10.12968/eyed.2022.23.10.38 (Accessed: 21 January 2024).

Department for Education (DfE) (2017) *Study of Early Education and Development (SEED): study of quality of early years provision in England research report*. London: DfE.

Department for Education (DfE) (2023a) *Development matters: non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage*. London: DfE. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf (Accessed: 21 January 2024).

Department for Education (DfE) (2023b) *Early years foundation stage statutory framework: for childminders*. London: DfE. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e29ed27ca001327b2c6/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders.pdf (Accessed: 21 January 2024).

Department for Education (DfE) (2023c) *Early years foundation stage statutory framework: for group and school-based providers*. London: DfE. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf (Accessed: 21 January 2024).

Dunn, J., Davies, L.C., O'Connor, T.G. and Sturgess, W. (2000) 'Parents' and partners' life course and family experiences: links with parent-child relationships in different family settings', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 41(8), pp. 955–968.

Dunn, J. and Deater-Deckard, K. (2001) *Children's views of their changing families*. York, United Kingdom: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Dunning, A. (2006) 'Grandparents-an intergenerational resource for families: a UK perspective', *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 4(1), pp. 127–135.

Early Years Coalition (2021) *Birth to 5 matters: guidance by the sector, for the sector*. Available at: https://birthto5matters.org.uk/ (Accessed: 22 January 2024).

Eden Project (2021) *Wondering allowed: developing an early years programme at the Eden Project especially for under 5s with their grandparents*. Available at: https://www.edenproject.com/sites/default/files/2021-06/wondering-allowed-eden-project.pdf (Accessed: 21 January 2024).

Ferrari, R. (2015) 'Writing narrative style literature reviews', *Medical Writing*, 24(4), pp. 230–235. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1179/2047480615Z.000000000329

Findler, L.S. (2000) 'The role of grandparents in the social support system of mothers of children with a physical disability', *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 81(4), pp. 370–381.

Findler, L. (2007) 'Grandparents—the overlooked potential partners: perceptions and practice of teachers in special and regular education', *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 22(2), pp. 199–216.

Fitzpatrick, A. and Halpenny, A.M. (2023) 'Intergenerational learning as a pedagogical strategy in early childhood education services: perspectives from an Irish study', *European Early Childhood*

Education Research Journal, 31(4), pp. 512–528. Available at:
https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2022.2153259

Gregory, E., Arju, T., Jessel, J., Kenner, C. and Ruby, M. (2007) 'Snow White in different guises: interlingual and intercultural exchanges between grandparents and young children at home in East London', *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 7(1), pp. 5–25. Available at:
http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468798407074831

Gregory, E., Ruby, M. and Kenner, C. (2010) 'Modelling and close observation: ways of teaching and learning between third-generation Bangladeshi British children and their grandparents in London', *Early Years*, 30(2), pp. 161–173. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2010.484799

Griggs, J., Tan, J.-P., Buchanan, A., Attar-Schwartz, S. and Flouri, E. (2010) '"They've always been there for me": grandparental involvement and child well-being', *Children & Society*, 24(3), pp. 200–214. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2009.00215.x

Guilbaud, S. (2019) 'Inheriting Steiner – how a grandmother's learning shapes a new baby's daily life', *Scottish Educational Review*, 51(2), pp. 108–118.

Guzy-Sprague, Z. (2022) 'The *Mishpacha* of language: Yiddish and belonging', *Changing English*, 29(2), pp. 185–188. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2022.2027742

Gyllenspetz, I. (2007) *Learning with grandparents: trialling the materials*. Leicester: Basic Skills Agency @ NIACE.

Hastings, R.P., Thomas, H. and Delwiche, N. (2002) 'Grandparent support for families of children with Down's syndrome', *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 15(1), pp. 97–104.

HM Revenue & Customs (2023) *Guidance: apply for Specified Adult Childcare credits*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-specified-adult-childcare-credits (Accessed: 2 March 2024).

Hua, Z. and Wei, L. (2016) 'Transnational experience, aspiration and family language policy', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 37(7), pp. 655–666. Available at:
https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2015.1127928

Information NOW (2023) *Grandparent issues*. Available at:
https://www.informationnow.org.uk/article/grandparent-issues/ (Accessed: 1 October 2023).

Jessel, J., Kenner, C., Gregory, E., Ruby, M. and Arju, T. (2011) 'Different spaces: learning and literacy with children and their grandparents in east London homes', *Linguistics and Education*, 22(1), pp. 37–50. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2010.11.008

Kelly, C. (2015) '"Let's do some jumping together": intergenerational participation in the use of remote technology to co-construct social relations over distance', *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 13(1), pp. 29–46.

Kenner, C. (2005) 'Bilingual families as literacy eco-systems', *Early Years*, 25(3), pp. 283–298. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09575140500251897

Kenner, C., Arju, T., Gregory, E., Jessel, J. and Ruby, M. (2004) 'The role of grandparents in children's learning', *Primary Practice*, 38, pp. 41–44.

Kenner, C., Ruby, M., Jessel, J., Gregory, E. and Arju, T. (2007) 'Intergenerational learning between children and grandparents in east London', *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 5(3), pp. 219–243. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X07080471

Kenner, C., Ruby, M., Jessel, J., Gregory, E. and Arju, T. (2008) 'Intergenerational learning events around the computer: a site for linguistic and cultural exchange', *Language and Education*, 22(4), pp. 298–319.

Latham, G. (2020) 'Teacher as writer: the process of an out of school collaboration in narrative writing', *English in Education*, 54(4), pp. 396–406. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/04250494.2019.1639472

Leach, P., Barnes, J., Malmberg, L.-E., Sylva, K., Stein, A. and the FCCC team 1 (2008) 'The quality of different types of child care at 10 and 18 months: a comparison between types and factors related to quality', *Early Child Development and Care*, 178(2), pp. 177–209. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430600722655

Levy, S.G. and Zucker, J. (2020) '"Motherless mothers": the hidden grief of becoming a mom without one of your own', *The Guardian*, 18 February. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/feb/18/motherless-mothers-the-hidden-grief-of-becoming-a-mom-without-one-of-your-own (Accessed: 15 November 2023).

Little, S. (2017) 'A generational arc: early literacy practices among Pakistani and Indian heritage language families', *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 25(4), pp. 424–438. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2017.1341302

Lussier, G., Deater-Deckard, K., Dunn, J. and Davies, L. (2002) 'Support across two generations: children's closeness to grandparents following parental divorce and remarriage', *Journal of Family Psychology*, 16(3), pp. 363–376.

Mangione, D.A., Luff, P. and Kanyal, M. (2023) 'Towards a new pedagogy of grandparenting: proposing a participatory project', *Rivista Italiana di Educazione Familiare*, 22(1), pp. 17–28.

McAuley, C. (2019) 'Exploring eleven year old children's understanding of well-being using well-being maps: commonalities and divergences across areas of varying levels of deprivation and ethnic diversity in an English Qualitative Study', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 97(3), pp. 22–29.

Mitchell, W. (2008) 'The role played by grandparents in family support and learning: considerations for mainstream and special schools', *Support for Learning*, 23(3), pp. 126–135.

Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D. and González, N. (1992) 'Funds of knowledge for teaching: using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms', *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), pp. 132–141.

Moulton, V., Flouri, E., Joshi, H. and Sullivan, A. (2017) 'The influence of grandparents' social class on children's aspirations', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 38(4), pp. 500–517. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2015.1093407

Neuman, S.B., Celano, D. and Fischer, R. (1996) 'The children's literature hour: a social-constructivist approach to family literacy', *Journal of Literacy Research*, 28(4), pp. 499–523.

O'Connor, U., Courtney, C., Mulhall, P. and Taggart, L. (2023) 'The prevalence of special educational needs in Northern Ireland: a comparative analysis', *European Journal of Special Needs Education,* 38(4), pp. 543–557. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2022.2127082

Owen, K. and Barnes, C. (eds) (2023) *Family relationships in the early years.* London: Sage.

Owusu-Kwarteng, L. (2021) '"Educated and educating as a Black woman" – an auto/biographical reflection on my grandmother's influence on my academic and professional outcomes', *Gender and Education*, 33(7), pp. 881–897. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2019.1632811

Parkes, A., Sweeting, H. and Wight, D. (2015) 'Parenting stress and parent support among mothers with high and low education', *Journal of Family Psychology*, 29(6), pp. 907–918.

Phillips, T. (2011) 'It is approaching breakfast and this is a campervan: weather, drawings and grandparenting in North-West England', *Education 3-13*, 39(2), pp. 107–125.

Pitcher, D. (2009) 'Adopted children and their grandparents: views from three generations', *Adoption & Fostering*, 33(1), pp. 56–67.

Råde, A. (2020) 'The involved, engaged or partnership parents in early childhood education and care', *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(7), pp. 2833–2841. Available at: https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080710

Ruby, M. (2012) 'The role of a grandmother in maintaining Bangla with her granddaughter in East London', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 33(1), pp. 67–83. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2011.638075

Ruby, M., Kenner, C., Jessel, J., Gregory, E. and Arju, T. (2007) 'Gardening with grandparents: an early engagement with the science curriculum', *Early Years*, 27(2), pp. 131–144. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/09575140701425266

Ruiz, S.A. and Silverstein, M. (2007) 'Relationships with grandparents and the emotional well-being of late adolescent and young adult grandchildren', *Journal of Social Issues*, 63(4), pp. 793–808.

Sadownik, A.R. and Višnjić Jevtić, A. (2023) '(Re)theorising more-then-parental involvement in early childhood education and care', in A.R. Sadownik and A. Višnjić Jevtić (eds) *International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education and Development*. Volume 40. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, pp. 191–203.

Shute, B. and Wheldall, K. (2001) 'How do grandmothers speak to their grandchildren? Fundamental frequency and temporal modifications in the speech of British grandmothers to their grandchildren', *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*, 21(4), pp. 493–503. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410120090858

Smith-Christmas, C. (2014) 'Being socialised into language shift: the impact of extended family members on family language policy', *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(5), pp. 511–526. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2014.882930

Smith-Christmas, C. (2017) '"One *Cas*, two *Cas*": exploring the affective dimensions of family language policy', *Multilingua: Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*, 37(2), pp. 131–152. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/multi-2017-0018

Suri, H. (2020) 'Ethical considerations of conducting systematic reviews in educational research', in O. Zawacki-Richter, M. Kerres, S. Bedenlier, M. Bond and K. Buntins (eds) *Systematic reviews in educational research*. Springer VS, Wiesbaden, pp. 41–54. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-27602-7_3

Sylva, K., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Taggart, B., Sammons, P., Melhuish, E., Elliot, K. and Totsika, V. (2006) 'Capturing quality in early childhood through environmental rating scales', *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21(1), pp. 76–92.

Tan, J.-P., Buchanan, A., Flouri, E., Attar-Schwartz, S. and Griggs, J. (2010) 'Filling the parenting gap? Grandparent involvement with U.K. adolescents', *Journal of Family Issues,* 31(7), pp. 992–1015. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X09360499

Tanskanen, A.O. and Danielsbacka, M. (2012) 'Beneficial effects of grandparental involvement vary by lineage in the UK', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 53(8), pp. 985–988.

Tanskanen, A.O. and Danielsbacka, M. (2018) 'Multigenerational effects on children's cognitive and socioemotional outcomes: a within-child investigation', *Child Development*, 89(5), pp. 1856–1870.

The Economist (2023) 'The age of the grandparent has arrived', *The Economist*, 12 January. Available at: https://www.economist.com/international/2023/01/12/the-age-of-the-grandparent-has-arrived (Accessed: 10 October 2023).

Vygotsky, L.S. (1934) *Thought and language*. A. Kozulin (ed.), revised edition. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner and E. Souberman (eds and trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1981) 'The genesis of higher mental functions', in J.V. Wertsch (ed.) *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, pp. 144–188.

Walsh, A., Tiernan, B., Thompson, B., McCormack, D. and Adair, P. (2023) '"Nobody taught her how to be a mother": the lived experience of mothering without a mother', *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 44(4), pp. 554–571. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.22059