AIMS For a better birth...

# Being a grandmother

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*Editor's note: In writing this delightful account of being a grandmother, Alex's little granddaughter has added a few lines all by herself to illustrate the very point her grnadmother was making!*



*By Alex Chislett*

What a privilege and a deep, deep joy!

I am doubly lucky, because with an unexpected pregnancy, my daughter moved back home to me, and her own daughter was then born just over a year ago. To watch one's own child take to motherhood in such a natural and selfless way, is one of the very best experiences in my life so far, and to see my granddaughter develop and grow on a daily basis, is the greatest gift of all. I have heard my daughter say of my granddaughter, “She only seems to have her temper outbursts when it’s just me and her, and she can stop them abruptly if she clocks anyone else in the house”. That was a very familiar feeling, and one my daughter and I can now laugh about with a much deeper understanding. My daughter and I have watched a video of when she was about the same age as my granddaughter, which she never showed the slightest interest in before. To be able to share those moments and delight in them has been incredibly healing.

We have delighted in every milestone. Not necessarily even the big ones, but the beautiful idiosyncratic ones: my granddaughter’s obsession with a certain picture in our house, her giggles when tickled under her arms but not on her tummy, her utter dislike of getting dressed, her pride at discovering she can blow down a straw and make bubbles. But those are incidentals. The best thing about being a grandmother is having time. When I was a young mother I cared more about what other people thought, I was anxious

not to miss out on anything, I worried constantly, and I was always rushing. With the gift of hindsight, I care less what other people think, I don't mind missing out on things, and I have no need to rush. What matters is...

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...what's best for my granddaughter at any moment. (That was her taking over the keyboard while sitting on my knee!)

I do still worry, however! What will the road ahead be like for her? What if someone is unkind to her? What if she doesn't make friends easily? What if she struggles to find her place in the world? But with a greater security within myself, and more time to give, I can only hope that she is receiving the very best foundation for her life growing up.

And with my daughter as her mother, who shows infinitely more patience than I ever did, who is more laid back than I ever was, and who is hugely more fun than I can ever hope to be, I am not only bursting with pride, but also excited about all of our futures.

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**Author Bio:** Alex Chislett is a mother of two now very grown-up children, and grandmother to one baby girl. She trained as a primary school teacher but has worked with young adults with physical and learning disabilities for the past 40 years - focusing on ability rather than disability. Widowed young, she counts herself incredibly lucky that she knew unconditional love for 30 years and will treasure that forever.