

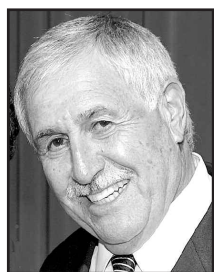
Cutler Bay

SERVING SOUTH DADE

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Being a grandparent is like leasing a car

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I have often heard it said that kids should come with an instruction manual. Maybe so.

Dr. Spock wrote one but I am not sure people use it anymore. I found the secret to raising wonderful kids. Marry a

woman who knows how to do it. I did and it worked out just fine.

Now grandkids are a different story. This is where my expertise comes in. My wife always is upset that when our grandkids come to our house, the first thing they ask is “where’s Papa?” Not that grandma isn’t great with them — buys them clothes, takes them shopping and all that good stuff — but Papa is, in their eyes a huge toy that doesn’t require “AA” batteries to work, although there are times that I feel like I need some.

When they first step through our door they ask for candy. This is just a formality because they know exactly where it is hidden and end up helping themselves anyway. When they come for a sleepover we allow them to stay up until midnight — a real treat. The only requirement is that they watch our digital clock change numbers until it reaches midnight. They usually last about 10 minutes until they fall asleep, but in their minds they beat the system.

Feeding them is a lot of fun. They just don’t eat anything worth while. When they sleep over, they insist on grandma making breakfast waffles for them — not to eat, but so they can watch her struggle with the waffle maker and all those mixes.

One time we gave them some of those frozen Eggos from the supermarket. They loved them and actually ate some.

Going to restaurants is also an adventure. We let them

choose and of course their first choice is always Cracker Barrel. Not for the food, which they don’t eat anyway, but in case you didn’t know it, they sell toys there. Papa can’t say no.

Playing with their “big toy” is the best part. They love to play rough house which involves jumping on my back and using me as an imaginary surfboard. I pay the price the next day but it is worth it. Of course my time with them is limited, not because I will eventually go to that big tennis court in the sky but because they are getting too old for some of Papa’s nonsense. My 4-year-old granddaughters no longer believe that there are monsters in my garage, even after I hid a Walkie Talkie there and made monster sounds.

When I visit them at school they always ask how I got there and my stock answer is that I flew in on my Pterodactyl. Recently both of them told me that Pterodactyls are extinct (Their words).

Not to be outdone, I immediately went to my computer and created a photo of me with my pet Pterodactyl. One of the smart—s kids said Papa must have done that with Photoshop on his computer. Damn those kids.

Their conversations keep getting more and more involved. I found myself discussing evolution versus creationism with my 6-year-old grandson. I spend more time on Google trying to answer their questions than I do anything else.

Now the good part of being a grandparent — it is like leasing a car. You eventually get to return it. Same with the grandkids; once they have had their fill of sugar and are raring to go, just hand them back to their parents and leave quickly.

Other articles of national importance can be viewed at Ernie’s website at <www.sochin.com>.