

Top Ten Ways to Raise a Thankful Child

1. **Keep gifts reasonable.** As children grow it can become difficult to teach about gratitude if they receive everything they ask for. If you are planning a large party, consider asking guests to select a small toy or book that will be donated to a local charity.
2. **Say thank you to your child.** “Thank you for cleaning up your toys.” “Thank you for sharing your toys with Johnny.” “Thank you for helping Mommy with dinner.”
3. **Show thankfulness to others around your children.** Let your children see you writing thank you cards, thanking the grocer and expressing thanks for others in front of your children.
4. **Prompt your children to use thankful words.** Remind children to use “please” and “thank you.” Help children to understand the meaning of the word “grateful.”
5. **Teach your children to express thankfulness toward their brother, sister or other family member in daily interactions.** Make the expression of thanks become habit and routine.
6. **Read books about what it means to be thankful.** Some suggestions for 1 to 3 year olds: *I’m Thankful Each Day* by P.K. Hallinan, *Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message* by Jake Swamp, *All the Places to Love* by Patricia MacLachlan.
7. **Involve children in writing thank you notes.** If they cannot yet write help them to draw a picture, add stickers to the note and place the stamp on the envelop. Make it a fun project rather than a chore.
8. **Look for ways to be involved in community giving with your child.** Collect hats and mittens for a children’s program. Make a meal for an elderly neighbor. Collect canned goods for a local food pantry.
9. **Share stories from your childhood of times others helped your family and your family helped others.** Discuss how you felt when receiving help and the gratitude you felt.
10. **Start traditions for showing thanks.** These traditions give children a lifetime memory of gratefulness and giving in the context of a family. Begin dinnertime one time per week with all family members naming one thing they are grateful for. Write your child an “appreciation letter” on their birthday describing all of the thinks you love and appreciate about him.

Prepared by the Lauren Martin from the Department of Social Services, in partnership with the Comprehensive Services Integration (CSI) Mental Health Services Committee, adapted from *ZERO to THREE: Raising a Thankful Child*.

With the support of Fond du Lac and North Fond du Lac School Districts and community partners, CSI is families, schools, and community working together to support children as they grow. Meeting their physical, social, and emotional needs now will result in healthy adults and a safe community for everyone. For more information or to get involved in the CSI project, please visit www.csifdl.org.

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