



# The Gift of Gratefulness

Instilling gratefulness in our children may be one of the greatest gifts we can ever give them. The ability to be grateful has several health benefits from increased happiness and positive mood to overall physical health. When we get skilled at gratefulness, we are more resilient, tend to have more reliable social connections, and a greater sense of self-worth. But gratitude is much more than saying thank you, it's a skillful way of seeing the world.

Here are a couple of things you might try to support your child to engage in a lifetime of gratefulness:

## Journal:

Start gratefulness journals. For you and them. If we are to teach our little ones how to be grateful, they first need to see it in us. Try to write in the journal daily or weekly. You don't have to write many things but try to be as specific as possible. List two–three things that you are grateful for and why. Share these with your children. *Today, I am grateful for the rain. It's helping the seeds we planted to grow.*

You can also write entries for your child and your pre-language child. You can write a gratefulness entry down for them and read it to them. Example for an infant: *Today, your cousin came over to play. He made you laugh. I think you are grateful for that.*

## Cards:

Let your child make some *Gratefulness* cards. These are different from *Thank You* cards. Cut out some construction paper, fold into cards, and decorate. Maybe, after a visit to your child's grandparents, ask your child what they liked best about the visit. Make it into a statement of gratefulness for the card: *Grandpa, I'm grateful that when I came over, we went for a walk.* You might ask them why they are grateful for that. And add that to the note. It's always good to ask your child if you've expressed their feelings correctly before you write it down.



References: Froh, Jeffrey, Giacomo Bono. (2014, March 5). *Seven Ways to Foster Gratitude in Kids*. Miller, Kori D. (2020, February 04). *Fourteen Health Benefits of Practicing Gratitude According to Science*. <https://positivepsychology.com/benefits-of-gratitude/>.