

# Counselor's Corner

November/December 2019



With the holidays approaching, it's easy to become consumed by the seasonal rush. However, the holiday season also provides an opportunity to focus on what you are thankful for and to introduce the idea of "gratitude" to your children. Gratitude can simply mean appreciating the things and people in our lives, so we can feel happier. You can start by giving your child examples of what you're grateful for, catering your responses based on your child's age and comprehension. Once you've explored the basic introduction to gratitude, you can help your children really embrace the idea by using a few of the "gratitude activities" listed below.

- 1. Create a gratitude habit.** Find some time each day to talk about what you are thankful for—perhaps at the dinner table, before bed, or while you are driving in the car. Ask your children, *"What was the best part of your day?"* For older children, try keeping a gratitude journal. This practice makes gratitude a part of each day, and helps kids flex their "gratitude muscle."
- 2. Encourage school-aged kids to say "thank you" throughout the day.** Teach young children to be specific and say *"thank you"* to others as part of a full sentence. For example, *"Thank you, Daddy, for making dinner tonight."*

**3. Teach your children about their roots.** Have you or other family members successfully overcome obstacles or adversity? Share what you have learned from the experience.

**4. Engage in random acts of kindness.** Your child likely already engages in these acts, whether it's holding the door open or returning a dropped toy to a friend. Share how these nice moments make other people thankful, and how that can make both your child and the recipient feel happier.

**5. Focus on the positive, all day.** Remind your children several times each day, *"Attitude is a choice."* Maintaining a positive outlook takes commitment and practice.

**6. Monitor your children's media.** Our children are bombarded with age-targeted marketing that fuels materialism and often challenges core values.

**7. Lead by example.** Our children are watching our every waking move. We can't ask them to practice gratitude, patience, or kindness, if we are not.

*\*Adapted from [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org) from the American Academy of Pediatrics*

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