

# FAMILY CONNECTIONS

WELLBEING NEWSLETTER FOR  
PARENTS



a note from us

We hope you are having a great start to the week! In this edition of our newsletter, we are excited to share tips to promote a sense of gratitude in our lives.

## GRATITUDE

Gratitude, the art of seeing and appreciating what we have, has many benefits for our mental, physical, and social well-being. Gratitude is a state of thankfulness and appreciation. It is recognizing and appreciating the positive and meaningful things in your life, as well as acknowledging the kindness and support received from others. It includes a sense of thankfulness, contentment, and a genuine appreciation for the people, experiences, and opportunities that contribute to your well-being and happiness. Gratitude involves focusing on the good things in life, even when you are faced with challenges.

*Gratitude can be expressed in many ways, big and small, towards others and even towards yourself and the world around you.*

- **Acknowledging someone's efforts**

Recognizing and appreciating the contributions of others. This could be done publicly, such as in a speech or on social media.

- **Writing a thank-you note**

Taking the time to express your gratitude in a heartfelt way.

- **Offering Help**

Returning the favour or doing something kind for someone who has been there for you.

- **Showing your love and affection**

Spending quality time with loved ones or simply letting them know you care

## *Gratitude toward yourself*

- **Celebrating your successes:**

Taking pride in your achievements, big or small.

- **Being grateful for your health:**

Appreciating your physical and mental well-being.

- **Forgiving yourself:** Acknowledging your mistakes and learning from them without dwelling on them.

- **Practicing self-care:** Taking time for activities that nourish your mind, body, and spirit.

- **Appreciating your strengths and talents:**

Recognizing and valuing your unique positive qualities, abilities, and accomplishments.

## *Gratitude towards the world around you*



- **Contributing to your community**

Volunteering your time or resources to make a positive impact.

- **Appreciating Nature**

Taking time to enjoy the beauty of the natural world, even in small

- **Finding joy in the simple things**

Taking pleasure in everyday experiences, like a warm cup of world, even in small coffee or a good laugh.

# How Can Parents Develop Gratitude in Children?

Our children want to be like us. We provide the blueprint for what to say and what to do and in what contexts. Expressing gratitude through words, writing, and small gifts or acts of reciprocity are all ways to teach children how to become grateful. Doing this will help make your appreciation for the goodness in your life more public, showing your kids that blessings abound and that being thankful is a valued attitude.

- *Model and Teach Gratitude*

Adults can promote gratitude directly in children by helping them appraise the benefits they receive from others—the personal value of those benefits, the altruistic intention of people providing them, and the cost to those people. This helps kids think gratefully.

- *Support your child's autonomy*

Using an authoritative or democratic parenting style, which is firm, yet flexible, supports children's autonomy. This will enhance family relationships, improve the atmosphere at home, and help bring out their strengths and talents, all good for making grateful kids. By taking ownership over their skills and talents and being responsible for developing them, children gain things to appreciate in life and make it easier to attract support from others, thus inviting gratitude into their daily life.

- *Spend time with your kids and be mindful when with them*

Another way to spell love is T-I-M-E. Believe it or not, children and, yes, even adolescents, like being with their parents. Giving a child a lot of quality time with you teaches them the language of love—life's greatest gift. Savor every moment together, big, and small, and rid yourself of distractions at such times, including your smartphone. Being mindful helps you maintain empathy toward a child, and this provides important modelling of empathy, the most important emotion for developing gratitude and moral behaviour.

- *Use kids' strengths to fuel gratitude.*

After you have identified your children's top strengths and you know their unique strengths profile, you should encourage and help them to use those strengths whenever possible. Not only does these open opportunities for others to contribute to the things your children love, but it also enables your children to strengthen their ability to be helpful and cooperative toward others, which will make them more grateful.

- *Help focus and support kids to achieve intrinsic goals.*

It is extremely easy for people, especially youth, to pursue extrinsic—or materialistic—goals such as desiring or having possessions that show wealth, status, or convey a certain image. This usually leads to less fulfilling social relationships and forecloses prospects for developing deep connections with others and genuine gratitude. It is our job to steer them away from pursuing extrinsic goals and toward pursuing intrinsic goals, such as engaging in activities that provide community, affiliation, and growth.

- *Encourage helping others and nurturing relationships.*

Helping others and being generous are two key ingredients for making grateful kids. When children lend a hand, especially while using their strengths, they feel more connected to those they are helping, which helps them to develop and nurture friendships and social relationships. A fantastic way to do this is by teaching them through your actions that other people matter and that tending to relationships should be a priority.

- *Help kids find what matters to them.*

Having a sense of purpose in life gives youth a compass for creating a meaningful life. As adults, it is our job to help kids discover their passions and to find a path to purpose that resonates with them— with their values, interests, and dreams. This starts with feeding their interests in the social issues they care about and pushing them to learn as much as they can about those issues and discover ways, they can be effective.





# STEP PLAN TO SHOUT IT OUT

*to instill gratitude in your children*

Teaching gratitude begins with some basic examples. We will not be able to help children recognize how to feel grateful for the bigger things in life if they do not realize the smaller, core foundations of what they have each moment of every day. Let us explore this strategy.

**S** self (bodies/movement)

**H** Heart (families/home)

**O** Our Community (School and Neighbourhood)

**U** Unique Response (Verbal and Written)

**T** time (Patience /time)

**S** *is for soul*

We start with what is closest to our children, their own bodies. Most children may not ever pay attention to the wonders of the miracles that their bodies produce daily. This is the beginning of learning gratitude in life.

Some examples of how we can begin to have gratitude for our bodies can include teaching your child to recognize and be able to verbalize:

- My body can take in 'fuel' in the form of food and get rid of its own waste.
- My arms and legs allow me to get from one place to another, to feed myself, and to reach things so that I may dress myself and complete other daily tasks.
- My body can grow and become stronger if I take care of it.

# H

## *is for heart*

When you think of the 'heart' of gratitude, think of your family and your home. Ask your child to generate examples of this based on their own lives. Some examples may include:

Some examples may include:

- I am so lucky to have a family and people who care about me in my life.
- I am so fortunate to have a place to live, food to eat and a bed to sleep in.
- It makes me so happy that I have toys and games to play with in my home.

# O

## *is for our community*

When you think about your community, encourage your child to think about their school, neighbourhood, sports, or religious communities. Once again, the ideas your children brainstorm will be specific to their ages and lives.

Some examples may include:

- There are so many resources and people around me from which I can learn.
- I want to volunteer to help others in my community to help make it a better place.
- My school offers programs or sports teams in which I may participate.

# U

## *is for unique responses*

When you think about 'unique responses' focus on the ability that your child must express their own gratitude, verbally or in written form, to others and to be able to actively listen to hear how others are sharing their gratitude toward your child.

Examples may include:

- My teacher helped me by giving me extra help on my math assignment, so I made her a card to show my gratitude.

# T is for time

When we think about time and how it relates to living a life of gratitude, it is important to help our children realize that not everything we may want or need in life will happen instantly.

Examples may include:

- I took the extra time to write a thank you note to my friend who gave me a birthday gift.

## Gratitude Practices you can follow at Home

### *Gratitude Journaling:*

Gratitude journaling is simply regularly writing down things for which you are thankful. This practice helps you focus on positive aspects of your life and encourages a mindset of appreciation.

### *Gratitude Meditation:*

Gratitude meditation is a mindfulness practice where you intentionally focus your thoughts on things you are grateful for. It often involves deep breathing and cultivating a sense of appreciation.

### *Mindful Appreciation:*

Mindful appreciation is the practice of being fully present and attentive to positive experiences in your daily life. It involves consciously savouring and expressing gratitude for the current moment.

### *Gratitude Affirmations:*

Gratitude affirmations are positive statements that emphasize thankfulness and appreciation. By repeating these positive affirmations, we can shift our mindset towards gratitude and foster a more positive outlook.

### *Gratitude Notes:*

Gratitude notes are brief written expressions of appreciation towards someone or something. They are like thank-you notes, but they extend beyond just acknowledging a specific gift or act of kindness. The purpose is to convey your appreciation for things you are grateful for in your life.

### *Gratitude Jar:*

A gratitude jar is any physical container, typically a glass or decorative jar, where you can store notes or small items that represent things for which you are thankful. At the end of each week, add three gratitude notes (write the date on them so you have better context when you review them). Every full moon, grab a handful of the notes and reflect on the abundance in your life.

### *Gratitude Walk:*

When you take a gratitude walk, you consciously focus on things in your surroundings for which you are grateful. The bonus is that it combines physical activity with gratitude, promoting a sense of well-being.

**A life of gratitude is filled with moments of appreciation and thankfulness. Living a life of gratitude is essential because it can make you feel happier and more content. By focusing on what you are thankful for, you are training your brain to spot the good in life. This helps you feel more positive, reduces stress, and makes challenges more manageable.**

**In short, gratitude can make your days brighter.**