

# REPORT to PARENTS

## Tips on Gift-Giving and Receiving

With the major holidays approaching, parents face two challenges: first, how to find the perfect presents for their children—the gifts that will be loved for years, not just hours—and perhaps more importantly, how to make sure their children are kind and grateful recipients, no matter what they get. Here are some ideas to try.

**Teach them what they're thanking people for.** What your children need to learn is that the thanks they give isn't necessarily for what is in the box—it's for the effort and caring that went into it. Their thanks needs to show that they recognize that someone cared enough to select a present just for them, pay for it, wrap it, and bring it to them.

**Understand that disappointment is part of life.** It's a guarantee that at some point your child is going to receive something he or she doesn't like or want. Explain this to your child ahead of time. Laugh about some gifts you've gotten that were unusual.

**When to write thanks, when to say thanks.** Let your children know that if a relative is in the room when they open their present, that a sincere face-to-face thank you (and a hug) is great. For everyone else, a thank-you note is an absolute must.

**Appeal to their desire for "more."** Sometimes children need to think of things from their own, slightly selfish, perspectives. Tell them that people may be less inclined to give them a nice gift if they don't seem grateful for the gifts they've received in the past.

**When they're the "giver."** One of the best ways to help children realize the significance of giving is to make sure they spend time finding and wrapping the gifts they give to others. Give them odd jobs to help them earn the money to buy gifts. Help them get excited about choosing just the right gift for each person.

**Give to others.** Help your children help those less fortunate. Save money for charity bell-ringers, adopt a less-fortunate child through anonymous giving programs, or work in a food kitchen. Show your children that giving is more rewarding than receiving.

**Give gifts that expand their interests.** Among the best gifts for children are things that introduce them to new activities: origami, tie dying, model planes or cars, scrapbooking, photography, cooking, or basic woodworking.

**Look for presents that help them stay active.** Any kind of sports equipment helps kids have fun and get exercise. Either give the child something you know he or she wants and needs (a new glove), or introduce him or her to a brand new sport (tennis racket and balls).

**Practical gifts can be fun, too.** A sleeping bag for overnights, or a small overnight bag or suitcase can be wonderful presents. Look for designs that will appeal to the child for years to come.

**Spin the wheel, roll the dice, deal the cards.** Card and board games are classics for a reason—they have been fun to play for decades. Look for games that children can play with just one or two others, as well as those that are for family-sized groups.

**Open up to books.** When you give a child a book, you're giving both of you a present. Younger children will enjoy the time they get to spend reading it with you. Older kids will be quietly building their reading skills and vocabulary, as well as their imaginations.

If you're really stumped about gift-giving, talk to friends or relatives who have children slightly older than yours. Ask what gifts their children really played with—gifts that lasted in appeal long after the "newness" wore off.

