

Children and Philanthropy

Children learn to become good citizens in school, in religious organizations, among their peers and from their parents of course, but the primary responsibility for teaching them to be philanthropic falls on their parents or grandparents. Introduce children to philanthropy when they are young. Having conversations about giving is crucial for your child to understand what it is to be caring in a charitable way.

When the time is right, talk to your children about the charitable causes you care about. Let them know why and how you are helping and what it means to the organization you support. Listen to their response and encourage questions. Ask them if there are any causes they care about, and if they could, how they would help. Depending on their age and interest at the time, this may be a long conversation or just a suggestion that you can build on in the future.

Here are a few thoughts on ways to encourage children to get involved: Bring them along when you volunteer at a nonprofit organization. Allow them to help and let them know that what they are doing, is making a difference too. This experience will be meaningful and something they will remember for the rest of their lives.

With young children, you could suggest they share their old toys or books with children that don't have as many as they do. Take them to a charity that collects toys for underprivileged children and let them experience the act of giving themselves. If it's possible, have someone in that organization talk about how the program works and how happy the children will be when they receive these gifts.

When your children are a little older, think about giving them a three-part allowance one third for spending, a third for savings and donate the last third to a charity they choose. Also, encourage them to take part in public service by volunteering at a senior citizen home, working at a community food bank or helping out at the local animal shelter.

As your children mature and get more involved, give them more responsibility. Set up a family fund or a savings account specifically for giving. Then have regularly scheduled family meetings to decide what organization to support, also, talk about the reasons for choosing a specific charity and how this gift will make a difference.

These are just a few suggestions to help your children learn to be philanthropists. Even at a young age, children enjoy giving and seeing the results of their generosity. Introducing your children to philanthropy will be a fun and rewarding experience for the whole family and you will also be preparing them for the responsibility of carrying on your family's philanthropic traditions