

# 5 tips for encouraging generosity in kids

### 1. Share and show it

Even very young children pick up on the generous behavior of those around them. Research shows parents' generous acts influence kids to be similarly giving. Model generosity and don't hide it — make giving a part of your family's culture.

### 2. Serve meals family-style

Let kids help themselves at mealtime; research suggests it teaches kids about fairness and respect, and that kids who grow up in homes where meals are served family-style grow up to be more generous adults.

### 3. Give kids a choice

The benefits of generosity really kick in when people choose to help. And research suggests that sharing begets more sharing when young kids are given a choice about whether or not to give. For older kids, ask open-ended questions about who they'd like to help, and how. "What would you like to do? Who can we ask to help?"

### 4. Show them giving feels good

Research shows kids can make the connection between generosity and happiness, and they are more generous when they do. You can reinforce this awareness by noticing their generous acts and asking questions that get them reflecting on the experience of sharing with others. How did it feel to let your cousin play with your favorite toy? Did it make you want to do it again? Chances are, the answer will be a resounding Yes.

### 5. Help them discover what they can offer

Encourage your child to think about how their interests and gifts could help others. A love for music could translate into playing for the local senior center. A child who loves animals might be able to help out at the humane society. A kid who loves doing math problems or reading could tutor younger kids. And a budding cook might like to volunteer at a shelter or soup kitchen preparing or serving meals. (These may require parent participation, too.)