

# How to help kids be grateful and kind

**Being grateful and kind boosts the way we feel, and tends to make us more likeable human beings. So how can we help our tamariki learn these important skills?**

## Model kindness

Your children will learn how to be kind mostly by watching you, so keep helping others, being friendly, giving compliments and sharing little bits of love. Doing so is a win-win, as it'll be good for your wellbeing too!

## Ditto gratitude

Just like sharing or turn taking, gratitude is a social skill children need to see, learn and practice. By showing your appreciation and acknowledging the people and things you're grateful for (and why), you'll help your tamariki learn that gratitude extends far beyond material things.

## Empathy starts with emotions

To develop empathy, children need to:

1. feel kindness from you and those who care for them
2. be free to discover and express their emotions
3. see a wide range of emotions in others
4. learn how to put themselves in others shoes.

## Recognise kindness

Identify examples of kindness in other people and in your kids' favourite stories. Point out what is good about the way people are acting and talk with your tamariki about situations when they could choose to act like that.

## Encourage pitching in

Be grateful when your kids help out. Thank them and praise their efforts, even if they don't get things 100% right. To encourage 'pitching in', rather than ask (complain or nag!), try: "I'm feeling pretty tired tonight. I'd love it if you could help me with the dishes." By giving them a choice, you're empowering them to show empathy and kindness. Tell them what a big difference they've made.

## Give with your kids

If you want to make a donation or do something nice (e.g. baking, cooking or buying flowers for someone who's had a tough time), encourage your kids to help and let them come with you when you deliver the goodies so they can discover first hand how it feels to brighten someone's day.

## Use special events as 'excuses' to be kind

Children love celebrations and they can be a great opportunity to encourage kindness. At Halloween for instance, you could try collecting non-perishable items instead of lollies, to give to 0800 Hungry or the Christchurch City Mission. At Christmas, you could create a kindness advent calendar where you do one small, kind act each day in the lead up to Christmas.

## Create a 'kindness bucket list'

Another fun idea is to create a whānau bucket list of five or ten kind things you'd love to do. Plan them together, and do the acts on the weekend or when your kids are around so they can experience them too.

Whenever you do something, work together to replace it with a new idea. You could try:

- taking flowers from your garden to a friend
- delivering baking to someone awesome
- doing something special for your partner or parents
- sending cards to someone you appreciate
- taking flowers to the cemetery.

## Earth love

Spending time in nature is scientifically proven to be good for us! To extend this happiness boost, teach your kids to look after our special outdoor spaces. Pick up litter, recycle and do your bit to look after the planet. And your kids will too.

## Mealtime gratitude

A great mealtime conversation is for each member of the whānau to say a few things they're grateful for and why. E.g. I'm grateful for the sunny day because it meant we could play outside. I'm grateful that Dad picked me up from school because I was feeling really tired.

## A gratitude diary

Another great way to practice gratitude is to create family (or individual) gratitude diaries where you and your older tamariki can record things you're grateful for.

**GIVING IS  
GOOD FOR YOU**

**PARENTING IS A BUSY GIG  
BUT THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT GIVING  
OUR TIME AND LOVE TO OTHERS  
IS PROVEN TO BOOST OUR OWN  
WELLBEING TOO.**

For our favourite kids' books, resources and tips, head to [allright.org.nz/sparklers/kids](https://allright.org.nz/sparklers/kids)