



Winning Ways to Mental Well-Being



Be Safe | Be Respectful | Be a Team Player | Be Kind

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November 2023



This is November, the month for giving thanks. Often parents will ask me, "How do I teach my children to have an attitude of gratitude and thankfulness?" After all, the experts tell us that mental wellness is often supported by acts of kindness. So, in the spirit of Thanksgiving, here is a list of ways to encourage the children in your care to give thanks and value the spirit of Thanksgiving:

1. Encourage your children to pack up their unwanted or unused toys and donate them for other children to have and play with.
2. A good lesson for younger children is to have them create a wish list of needs vs. wants. Have you ever made a list of needs vs. wants? Discussions like this allow you and your children to talk about the things that really matter.
3. Volunteer at community agencies and churches that have projects to help others during the holidays.
4. Your children do great at job tasks. Make a task table to keep them on track. In a fun way, everyone feels like they belong and can help. It's also a fun way to keep organized and sort out responsibilities.
5. There is probably no child in the world who is not fascinated by super heroes in one way or another. Put this to work for you. Explain to your child that super heroes are much like all of us. We all have special powers. Talk about their desire to help around the house, help with each other and other children. Have a super hero party and recognize the super in being human, kind, helpful, and thankful. That makes us all super heroes!
6. Support good manners. Good manners and gratefulness overlap.
7. Model grateful behavior. "I so happy you cleaned up your toys!"
8. Create a thankful routine. Simply ask your children, before they go to bed at night, what they were thankful for during the day.
9. When you are practicing a thankfulness routine encourage children to look beyond things. Ask your child to find gratitude in more than material things. Model for them by sharing that you are grateful for the sunny day or having your good friend.
10. Have your child think of a special person or persons and then teach them to say, "I wish you well!"
11. Let your children help. The more children help and contribute, the more they realize how much effort it takes others to get things done. And, they learn that many hands make light work!
12. Help children understand that gifts are thoughtful gestures. Encourage them to focus on the thought behind the gift like "that was so sweet of you to draw me that picture; you must have been thinking of me with love."

Enjoy your holiday, and by the way, thank you to all the parents who asked this question. It was thought provoking and offered us, your Mental Health Team, the opportunity to open our minds and hearts to gratitude as well. As always, we wish you good health and happiness and we wish you well! 😊