



## Character Trait of the Month November: Gratitude

*\*The below article has been paraphrased from its original form. To be linked to the original article published by Child Mind Institute, please click [here](#).*

### **10 Tips for Raising Grateful Kids**

#### ***How to help kids show (and feel) appreciation***

Saying thank you is one of the first [social rules](#) many parents teach their children, and for good reason. We want our kids to be appreciative and not take things for granted, and learning to be grateful can improve kids' relationships, ability to empathize, and overall happiness. If you are looking for ways to reinforce the importance of gratitude or would like to find other meaningful ways your kids can show appreciation, here are some tips:

#### **1. Set an example**

Kids learn a lot from watching their parents. Show them what it means to be grateful by offering a genuine "thank you!" to a waitress who serves your food, a helpful neighbor, someone who holds the door open for you. But don't stop there — include your kids, too. Thanking children for doing things that are helpful, even when they are chores like putting away toys, reinforces the behavior and lets them know they're appreciated.

#### **2. Point out generosity**

Call attention to it when people (including your kids!) do things that go beyond what's expected — helping without being asked, being especially thoughtful, or taking extra time to do something because it's important to someone else. Send the message that you will notice if they knock themselves out for you, or for someone else.

#### **3. Have a talk**

For some kids, especially young children or those who have trouble understanding emotions, it can help to have a talk about how showing appreciation makes other people feel. Try asking your child how they feel when people say thank you to them for doing something nice, and then how they feel when they don't. Going over his own feelings will help them understand how his behavior affects others and make it easier for them to understand the emotional benefits of being grateful.



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### 4. Find fun ways to say thanks

There are lots of ways to show gratitude. If your child isn't comfortable talking to strangers or has a hard time expressing themselves in writing, work together to come up with a different way for them to show their appreciation. They could try giving a smile or a thumbs up if someone holds the door, or show grandma how much they love their new coat by drawing a thank you picture (or taking a smiling selfie!) instead of writing a card.

### 5. Share the love

Encourage kids to think of people who help them, from coaches to neighbors to the local firemen, and say thanks with cookies or cupcakes. Making them and giving them are fun, and they help kids see how connected we all are.

### 6. Put things in perspective

Talk to your kids about those who are less fortunate. Don't scare them, but don't keep them in the dark either. Understanding that not everyone has the same advantages will help them develop compassion for others and gratitude for their own privileges.

### 7. Let kids choose

Encourage kids to turn their interests into action. Whether it's a fundraising drive at school, a bake sale, or a run for charity, expressing their interests and using their skills for a good cause is a great way to boost their [confidence](#) and give them a chance to give back at the same time.

### 8. Get involved

If kids are too young to go alone or aren't comfortable dealing with strangers solo, make giving back a family affair. Find places where you can volunteer together or let your child choose a charity to donate to. Giving and gratitude go hand in hand, and doing it as a family will bring everyone closer and help you make some great memories.



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### 9. Make gratitude part of bedtime

[When you tuck them in at night](#), ask your child to tell you three things they're grateful for. Even if they've had a bad day it will help them—and you—end each day on a positive note.

### 10. Give kids credit

Be mindful of the fact that your child may have their own way of expressing gratitude, even if it doesn't fit your expectations. Different kids communicate in different ways. For example, your child may be more comfortable giving a hug than a verbal thank you, or might show their appreciation by helping out around the house or drawing you a picture. Tuning in to your child's unique way of being thankful will let them know that even as they're learning new ways to give back, you see and appreciate the thoughtful person they already are.

### Additional Articles and Resources:

[How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain](#)

Videos:

[The Science of Gratitude](#) and [An Experiment in Gratitude](#)