

GIFT GIVING AND RECEIVING:



Gift Receiving - GRATITUDE:

Gratitude is NOT something we can force our kids to feel. We all want our kids to be grateful and show gratitude, AND we also need to remember that they are young and learning how to express themselves and tap into their gratitude.

1. **Gratitude is learned through experiencing it.** This means that we need to be intentional with how we express and show our appreciation towards our kids - this is how they know what it feels like to be on the receiving end of gratitude and how to say it to others around them.
2. Due to our children's growing brains, it's understandable for us to step in and **guide them to show gratitude**. We might need to help our child tune in and find the words to express their feelings.
3. In the worst-case scenario, when our child does NOT show gratitude (and does not say "thank you"), **we can say it on their behalf**.

Next, I'll share suggestions for various scenarios that can take place.

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Child says, "I don't like this!"

These types of situations can feel overwhelming to us. We might feel triggered, and thoughts such as "My child is ungrateful!" or "My child is so rude!" can run through our minds. We might feel humiliated and **embarrassed** that others heard what our child has said and worry that they will **judge us** and see us as a bad parent.

However, **we can't control our child; we can only control our reaction.** Our reaction says everything about us as their parent. So, instead of getting our child to do or say something, we can focus on ourselves.

This can sound like this:

We can turn towards everyone around our child, saying, "It ***seems like my child doesn't like this gift; maybe it's not what they've expected, and that's okay. We are so grateful you went out of your way and took the time to choose them as a gift. Thank you.***"

We can then turn to our child and say, "***I hear you. You don't like what you got. We will talk about it.***" It's best to wait for our child to calm down and discuss this privately.

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Discuss:

Ways we can say thank you to someone while also not loving what they gave us. For example: *"Thank you for going out of your way to buy me a gift," "Thank you for taking the time to gift me this,"* or *"I appreciate you buying me something."*
Children don't need to lie about liking their gift to show gratitude.



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Our child seems to like what they receive and doesn't say *thank you*.

Sometimes, a child is so excited and gets carried away and forgets to say "thank you." **Our role would be to help them and guide them gently.**

We can say to our child, ***"Wow! I see how much you love what you got! Did you want to share that with (person's name who gave them the gift)?"***

If our child doesn't proceed to share their gratitude, we can step up for them. They are listening to what we say out loud. It can sound like this:

"Wow, (child's name) loves what you got! It seems like they've already started playing! Look how excited they are! Thank you so much for taking the time to buy them something. It's so appreciated!"

At a later time, we can discuss this with our child, and it's never too late for them to call the person up or write a thank you card that we mail out to show gratitude.