

Comfort

Play

Comfort, Play & Teach: A Positive Approach to Parenting™

Tip Sheet

Giving Vs. Getting - Helping children find balance during the holidays with Comfort, Play & Teach™

The centre of many holiday celebrations is giving and receiving gifts, especially for children. Children fantasize about it, and most hope to receive lots of big, expensive gifts. Parents, for their part, worry that the mid-winter holidays will spoil their children or make them greedy. Most parents will probably have to provide a healthy reality check, providing some guidance for what are more reasonable dreams.

But what about your child's natural desire to receive lots of gifts? Does this promote greed? As long as your family also highlights the true meaning of the holidays, such as giving to others and celebrating cherished rituals together, you do not need to worry too much about your child's materialistic desires.

Here are some ways you can use Comfort, Play & Teach: A Positive Approach to Parenting™ to set the tone for raising kind and caring children, regardless of how many gifts they ask for or receive.

Spending time with your children in these ways will help to outweigh the material aspects of the holidays, and your actions will build fond memories and positive values that will stay with them for a lifetime.



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The very young child who has been at the receiving end of love, **comfort**, and attention to his needs from the earliest days, will replicate giving to others naturally and spontaneously.



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- ▶ Take a little time to help your children make their own gifts. It doesn't have to be fancy. They can make drawings or colour pictures and put them in envelopes to give Grandma, Daddy and other people they care about.
- ▶ Many fire halls and charities collect toys for children whose parents can't afford to buy them. Encourage your preschooler to choose a toy for purchase and let her give it to the charity.
- ▶ When grocery shopping for your family, take time with your child to fill a special bag for the Food Bank, and drop it off together. Toddlers are great at stuffing bags.



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Celebrate family values through play.

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- ▶ Preschoolers are very capable assistants in the kitchen when preparing special holiday foods. They enjoy baking and learn many important science concepts and motor skills in the process.
- ▶ Toddlers and preschoolers will enjoy decorating a tree. This is an opportunity for them to help make decisions about what ornament goes where and for you to engage them in a conversation about the ornaments. But remember, toddlers enjoy taking things off as much as they like putting them on.
- ▶ If your family participates in special ceremonies such as lighting candles on the Menorah, let your preschooler count out the candles each night and help put them in place.
- ▶ Sing seasonal songs, read seasonal stories and play traditional games as a family.
- ▶ Turn on the outdoor holiday lights with your little one each night. Nothing is too insignificant to delight a young child. And many times it is the little things that they will remember the most.



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Take this time to model for children how to think about others and to reach out to people who are less fortunate.

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- ▶ Talk about everything you are doing. Infants and toddlers may not understand every word, but your tone will communicate volumes. Preschoolers' capacity for language is growing exponentially and they love to listen to stories about people and traditions.
- ▶ Talk about the importance of sharing and how it makes people feel when they receive a gift.
- ▶ Take photos of family rituals and make a special holiday album. Use it to discuss what was happening and what emotions were experienced. Discuss the importance of celebrating cherished rituals together.
- ▶ Borrow picture books from the library that explore themes of poverty. Discuss with your preschooler what things would make it better for that child or family. Follow through with any reasonable suggestions to demonstrate to your child, that even at a young age, actions can help to make a difference in someone's life.



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