

5 TIPS TO START A GRATITUDE JOURNAL

THE ACT OF WRITING DOWN THANKFUL THOUGHTS HELPS CHILDREN DEVELOP A HEALTHY MINDSET AND OUTLOOK ON LIFE.

GratITUDE is being thankful for the people in our lives, what we have and what we receive. Studies show that people who appreciate what they have or experience are happier, have more positive emotions, and are more resilient and empathetic. Learning to be grateful can start at an early age. A gratitude journal is one such tool to help children reflect on the good in their lives, practise thankfulness and value others.



1 DON'T MAKE IT HOMEWORK

Make journalling enjoyable for children so that they look forward to it. Let them choose and decorate their own journals, be it a spiral-bound lined notebook or a sketchbook with plain pages they can fill with drawings. Do not pick on or fix what is 'wrong', such as misspelled words or colouring outside the lines. Children will have more motivation to carry on if journalling becomes a fun, creative activity and is not about getting the right answers.

2 MAKE IT CONSISTENT

Set a time for children to write in their gratitude journals, either before bed or after dinner. The idea is to allocate a regular time for journalling. By recording what they are grateful for daily, they make it a habit to notice the good. This helps foster a positive disposition.



3 FOCUS ON PEOPLE AND EXPERIENCES

Ask your child to think of who and what they are thankful for, besides material things. For instance, it could be making a new friend or mastering a skill like swimming. If it is hard for your child to come up with something, ask them to imagine what their lives would be like without certain people or experiences. Even amidst challenges, prompt your child to think of things to be thankful for, such as Grandma coming over to look after him when Mummy was sick.



4 JOURNAL TOGETHER

Set an example by starting your own gratitude journal. You can even start a family journal where everyone can chip in. As you journal alongside your child, share what you are grateful for and why. It will give your child ideas for what to put in their own journal and is also a good opportunity for you to connect with them.



5 OFFER PROMPTS

Children may not yet fully grasp the concept of gratitude. You can pre-fill the pages of their journals with a few prompts or ask them questions, like:

- Who/What made you feel happy today? Why?
- Who did something kind for you today? How can you return the kindness?
- Who made you feel loved today? How can you express your love for that person?
- Who did you have the most fun with today?
- What are you glad you got to do today?
- What things do you have that you are happy about? Why do you feel this way?