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# How To Rear Charitable Children

NEW YORK, Dec. 20, 2004

**FREE VIDEO**

**Raising Charitable Kids**



Families can sponsor an impoverished rural family by sending monthly gift boxes (Photo: CBS/The Early Show)

**(CBS)** This is the time of the year that many of us give, not only to our friends and families, but also to those less fortunate.

So, what better time than now for parents to start instilling in their kids the lifelong habit of generosity?

Miriam Arond, editor-in-chief of Child magazine, stopped by *The Early Show* to share some helpful ideas on how to raise children who are charitable.

**The sooner, the better:** It's never too early to teach kids about the importance of charitable giving. According to one study, young people

who participate in charitable deeds, not only become more aware of social issues, but also deepen their sense of connection to their community and develop their decision-making skills. Research also shows that involving children in the family's philanthropy when they are young is the best way to ensure that they'll practice it later on.

**Make it normal:** Openly discuss charitable giving. Philanthropic conversations will nurture generosity in children.

**Walk the walk:** If you volunteer, talk to your children about your experience. If possible, bring them along with you.

**Make it fun:** Give money to and volunteer at organizations that build on your children's interests.

**When giving money:** One way to teach children to be charitable is by having them divide up their allowance. To reinforce the lesson, use a set of piggy banks or mason jars labeled "For Now," "For the Future," and "For Others," or "Spend," "Save," and "Give."

Some school-based programs can also teach kids to raise money for charities. The Penny Harvest Program coordinated by Common Cents is one example of a school-based initiative that teaches New York City schoolchildren about charitable giving and service. Each fall, New York City schoolchildren from kindergarten through eighth grade mine their homes and streets for stray pennies. In 2003, they raised \$579,143. The idea is now catching on nationwide.

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Child magazine editor-in-chief Miriam Arond has some helpful ideas about how to teach kids about generosity, especially during this time of year.

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**Giving by sharing or doing:** Charity generally involves gifts of money, but doesn't necessarily have to cost anything. In fact, the definition of philanthropy is "a desire to help mankind." Have kids collect and donate their old toys, books, and clothing seasonally. Work with organizations tailored to children and families.

**Giving by using special talents or skills:** Kids can use their special talents or skills for the common good. Whether it's singing at a retirement home or planting flowers, they can determine how they can use their skills to help others.

#### Possible avenues:

- Kid's Stuff USA: Kids can decorate a shoe box, then fill it with toys, school supplies, and other items for disadvantaged children. [feedthechildren.org](http://feedthechildren.org) (click on United States Programs, then Kid's Stuff USA). 866-543-7269
- The Box Project: Sponsor an impoverished rural family by sending monthly gift boxes (see one at right) filled with clothing, food, and more. [boxproject.org](http://boxproject.org) 800-268-9928
- Project Linus: Become a "blanketeer" with your child by working to create a handmade blanket for abused and chronically ill children. [projectlinus.org](http://projectlinus.org) 309-664-7814

**Example of One Child Who Gives:** Sarah Berger and Bruce Campbell of St. Paul, Minn., wanted their daughter, Lydia, to understand that philanthropy on any scale can make a difference. So, when Lydia was 4, they started giving her an allowance of three quarters each week, which she put into three mason jars marked "Give," "Save," and "Spend." Now, seven years later, Lydia sews scented eye pillows and sells them for \$8 each to raise money for children's charities. [sevencontinentseyepillows](http://sevencontinentseyepillows)

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