

Twenty Small Acts of Kindness

Tips for parents looking for a way to thank their child's teacher

Thank-you's come in many forms. Sometimes the ones that don't cost anything are the ones that mean the most. Talk with other parents at your child's school. See how many ways you can think of to let your child's caregivers or teachers know how much you appreciate them. Here are some ideas to start with:

- 1. Smile:** Say hello and smile, even when you're in a hurry.
- 2. Talk:** You can brighten up a teacher's morning simply by passing along your child's enthusiastic comments. (Sometimes children will tell their parents about something that they especially liked at school — but never think to mention it to their teachers.)
- 3. Label:** There are few sights more welcome to a teacher on a hectic winter day than boots or mittens with a child's name clearly marked on them.
- 4. Write:** After parent-teacher conferences are over, send a note of thanks for all the time the teacher has put into preparing for them.
- 5. Tell a friend:** Say something positive about your child's teacher or caregiver to another parent in the class. Positive comments have a way of spreading.
- 6. Tell a boss:** Make time to say something complimentary about your child's teacher to the director or principal, too. Most administrators will pass compliments along. . . . Besides, directors and principals enjoy hearing from satisfied parents — sometimes people only go to them with complaints.
- 7. Tell the teacher:** And, of course, stop in and say something nice about your child's teacher to (who else?) the teacher herself.
- 8. Watch:** Here's something teachers might not mention, but considerate parents do anyway:

If you bring younger brothers or sisters into a classroom, always keep an eye on them yourself.
- 9. Cook:** Try fixing a special box lunch or coffee break snack for the teacher you want to thank. Do it as a surprise on an otherwise ordinary day. Your child can decorate the box, bag, or napkin the night before.
- 10. Laugh:** Share a joke, a cartoon, or just a good laugh.
- 11. Plan ahead:** Stick to the center's guidelines about sick kids. Anyone who works with young children and tries to keep illness from spreading through the group will truly appreciate your efforts in making back-up care plans ahead of time.
- 12. Copy it:** Write a thank-you note to your child's teacher for all she's done. Then make a copy and ask that it be put in his or her file.
- 13. Fix it today:** If the zipper on your child's jacket is broken or sticks, fix it. It's a small matter, but it makes a big difference.
- 14. Make an extra effort:** Most parents are polite to teachers and caregivers, but it never hurts to make an extra effort to be courteous. (Even though early childhood educators don't dress in suits to go to work, they are knowledgeable professionals.)
- 15. Make a card:** Find out when the teacher's or caregiver's birthday is and send a card. Homemade cards from your child are always the best ones.
- 16. Set aside time for figuring out jackets and boots:** Show your child how to put on his or her own jacket, boot, and mittens.
- 17. Help out:** Pitch in when something special is going on at school. Offer to lend a hand whenever you can.
- 18. Turn it off:** If you really want to do something nice for your child's teacher, try planning an alternative activity for your child during the Power Rangers' TV time slot.
- 19. Check the time:** Make it a top priority to arrive on time at the end of the day. Your child's caregiver, like everyone else, has family, appointments, and errands to get to.
- 20. Smile again:** Say good-bye and smile, even when you're in a hurry.

Consider thoughtfulness as a way of saying thank you to your child's teacher. It may not cost anything — but it means everything.

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