

# HOW TO TEACH YOUR KIDS ABOUT GIVING

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As the end of the year and holiday season approach, many families make plans for charitable donations. Linda Meisel, Executive Director of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Mercer, outlines strategies for introducing the concept of philanthropy to children.



"After all, charitable giving, *Tzedakah*, is deeply rooted in Jewish values"

## DO IT TOGETHER

Set an example for your children by doing *mitzvah* work side-by-side. Deliver meals together, work in a food pantry together, gather items for an animal shelter, or clean a trail as a family. Together, you can sort through outgrown items, such as toys, books, or clothes. Make sure everything that is passed along is in good condition as a sign of respect to the recipients.

## AGE APPROPRIATE

Keep it age appropriate so that it's relatable. There are many good children's books on the topic of *mitzvot*, or good deeds, where students work collectively to benefit their community, other people, animals, or the environment. When you buy necessities for your child, such as a backpack filled with school supplies or hats and gloves for winter, let your child pick out the same items for a similar-aged child. They are now doing for someone else what you are doing for them. They understand that not everyone has the same things that they do.

Your philanthropic partner in the community



JEWISH  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
of GREATER MERCER



## TZEDAKAH FUNDS

The Jewish Community Foundation gives families the opportunity to set up *Tzedakah* Funds, and the holiday season is an ideal time to involve the kids. “Our Hanukkah tradition is for every grandchild to select a charity that resonates with them. Then a grant is sent to each organization from our *Tzedakah* Fund.” If your kids are interested in different areas, such as food insecurity or homelessness or refugees, the Foundation will help identify charities that support these causes.

## MAKE IT ROUTINE

Build philanthropy into routine experiences such as vacations, holiday traditions and milestone occasions. “When we were in Israel, we packed Shabbat meals for families in need. For a recent milestone birthday, we all helped to buy linens, kitchen supplies and other household necessities for a family moving into transition housing.” The lesson: in lieu of receiving material items, the true gift came in doing something positive for another family.

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## OLDER KIDS

And if your children are older? “It’s never too late. Any moment is the right moment. After all, charitable giving, *Tzedakah*, is deeply rooted in Jewish values. So, you can open the conversation at any time.”

For more information about *Tzedakah* Funds or for additional help in guiding your family on charitable giving, reach out to Linda Meisel at the Jewish Community Foundation.

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