

## Writing A Gift Letter

Here's an example of how to explain your gift preferences to friends and family:

Dear Relatives and Friends: We appreciate how much you love our/my children, and, as you know, we are trying our best to raise them to respect and revere the world. This year, for holidays and birthdays, please join us in our efforts to raise strong kids by resisting the urge to buy the commercialized clutter advertised on TV. Here are some different gift ideas:

Spend time together. Activities need not be exotic. A trip to the fire station, a performance, or a trip to the swimming pool with you would be special.

Encourage their hobbies. Talk to the children to discover what they would like to do. A class in martial arts, trapeze, gymnastics, or hula dance might be perfect. We will provide transportation and arrange the details. Each time they go to class, we'll remind them that this experience was a gift from you.

Choose toys that have no real end point, or winners and losers. A box of scarves from a second-hand store, or irregular handmade building blocks, would be great. These are surprisingly satisfying to children.

Choose a toy you remember from your childhood-such as a hula-hoop, wooden airplane, or red wagon. A story about you as a child using that toy would be a great thrill for them.

Make something-a hat, a kite, a checkers board. Kids sense the difference when someone cares enough to make them something.

Give something really useful. Age 1: small silverware set. Age 2: flashlight. Age 3: step stool. Age 4: bowls, baskets, sewing kit. Age 5 and up: accessories to encourage our child's natural interests-swim goggles, a new basketball, art supplies, etc.

Give something alive. Bulbs in the fall, seeds in the spring, or a houseplant, cactus, or terrarium anytime. Please check with us before giving animals.

Honor the children with a donation to a nonprofit organization that addresses their concerns. Talk to them to find the best fit. Humane societies, environmental organizations, and food banks resonate with the concerns of many children. Even the very young understand the importance of giving.

Thanks for making this occasion a celebration of what really matters to our family.