



## SERVICE: HELPING YOU HELPS ME

Teaching your children to do service not only helps others but also has benefits for your children. Service can:

- Build self-esteem. As your children help others, they see how their actions can improve the lives of others. This perspective can give them the confidence to solve problems in their own life. Your children can also increase their self-worth through doing service, as service can give them a sense of purpose.
- Introduce new friends. Through service, your children can meet people from many different backgrounds. This helps develop new social skills and valuable relationships. Your children can learn how to interact with, relate to, and value people who are different than them.
- Provide work experience. As your children do service, they acquire experience that can be put on a resume for jobs or college applications. In addition, depending on the type of service they do, your children could hone skills to be used in a future job.
- Reveal passions and interests. Doing service can be an effective way for your children to use what interests them to help others or to discover new passions.
- Grow empathy. Helping others can give your children a chance to practice empathy and grow their ability to understand others and their struggles.
- Improve mental health. Serving others can give your children a chance to focus on others for a time. This shift of focus can help reduce stress and anxiety and result in more happiness for your children.

## SERVICE IDEAS AND STRATEGIES

Sometimes, finding the perfect service opportunity that your kids are excited about can be tricky. Below are a few ideas to make that process a little easier.

- Visit elderly neighbors or go to a nearby nursing home.
- Call family members near or far who may be feeling lonely.
- Tutor classmates or younger students or siblings.
- Offer free childcare to families you know.
- Donate old clothes and toys.
- See what service projects local churches, schools, or businesses have.

Whatever service you end up choosing, it can be helpful to (1) center the service around your kids' interests and existing skills, (2) schedule service that caters to your kids schedules, and (3) look for service that helps your kids reach their goals.

