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Kids Make the Ideal Volunteers

Few things can be as refreshing as the attitude of a child. The exuberance many kids exhibit makes them the ideal volunteers, as kids can brighten up a room in ways adults rarely can.

For parents hoping to instill a sense of commitment to community in their children, the following volunteer ideas can be a perfect way to do just that.

Clean Out the Closet
Kids can start their volunteer careers right at home. Many kids grow like beanstalks and, as a result, quickly outgrow their clothing. While some parents might want to keep those clothes for younger brothers and sisters, parents who know they won't be having any more children should encourage their kids to donate their clothing to a local charity. Kids can pick through their wardrobes and choose items they have outgrown to donate to a nearby church, clothing bank or shelter. Parents can lend a hand and explain to kids that their old winter coat will now go toward helping another child stay warm, instilling a valuable lesson that helping others feels good.



Spending some quality time with the elderly is a great volunteer opportunity for kids.

Work at the Local Food Bank
Food banks often need volunteers, and volunteers are welcomed in all shapes and sizes. The local food bank is a great place to teach kids about the less fortunate, and kids might even enjoy interacting with other volunteers and the people they serve at the food bank. Another way to get kids involved with the local food bank is to take them to the grocery store to shop

for items to donate. Parents should consult workers at the local food bank and get a list of the most needed items. Parents can then take their kids to the store and let them choose items to donate. This type of active involvement can help kids feel like they are genuinely contributing to a needy cause.

Interact with Seniors
Perhaps no group's eyes light up more at the sight of a child than the elderly. Many nursing homes and senior living facilities have volunteer programs for youth that encourage kids and seniors to play board games, puzzles, work on crafts, or even read together. Kids can go visit their own grandparents or, if grandma or grandpa live too far away, simply visit a nearby nursing home or senior center and "adopt" a grandparent to spend time with. Parents should call ahead and discuss their intentions with facility staff. Many seniors may be experiencing failing mental health that a child might not understand. Parents may consider requesting their child be paired with a senior who can relate to the child. For more ideas on volunteer opportunities for children, consult the local government or ask officials at a nearby church or community center.

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