

For Parents:

As someone who has taught effective parenting methods for 40 years, I want to point out to you the benefits of training and encouraging your children to think of the needs of others, including animals.

One of the most important ways of alleviating troublesome behaviors in your children is to allow them to belong in the family through contribution. A child who feels useful to the family, to others, and to the world is a happier and therefore better behaved child. She finds her place of importance through helping as opposed to exercising power over others or gaining negative attention.

When I advise parents to give an age-appropriate allowance to their child I always include the need for structuring the money. Typically we discuss the need for 4 uses of the cash. The basic categories include pocket money, college savings, breakage savings, and charity. It is helpful to provide envelopes for each category so that the children can see as the amounts accumulate. When each fund, especially the one for college, gets to \$25, a bank account can be opened - an exercise most children enjoy. The charity fund can likewise be built up to \$25 and then delivered by the child and parent to a charity that they have discussed and selected together.

It is very powerful and fulfilling for the child to be able to hand the money to the leader of the charity and be told how they plan to use it. Equine Voices, for children who love horses, can be a wonderful place to begin to train your child to think of the needs of animals.

A visit to the ranch teaches many lessons. First, that the child can make a contribution that relieves the suffering of animals. He can see that adult and teenage volunteers give of their time to help the horses. He can learn what the horses need and hear their stories. She can become encouraged to do more as she gives to and receives love and attention from the animals that she visits.

The most important words a parent can say to a child are "I love you" and the second most important words are "I need your help". Helping out in the family can expand to helping animals.

Parents thereby model their values and allow their children to feel important from the good they do in the world. Most importantly, children find their place of belonging through positive actions rather than troubling ones!

Article By Carolyn Crowder, PhD.