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NEWS RELEASE

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Being Courteous to the Gift Giver

Now that the excitement of the holiday has worn off, don't forget the thank you notes. One of the social graces that is often overlooked is writing of the Thank You Note. Showing kindness to loved ones and friends should involve both a verbal thank you and a handwritten note. It is important that children learn from a young age that it is appropriate to write a thank you note anytime they receive a gift or when someone does something especially nice for them or when a local community organization or corporate sponsor lends support to their activities.

Young children can write thank-you notes to grandparents, aunts, uncles and other family members to acknowledge appreciation for gifts and kindness. Look at it as a fun thing to do rather than a chore. The way you talk about thank-you notes will influence whether your children think of writing them as a chore or something they can do for someone who has done something thoughtful for them.

Keep your expectations in line with the child's developmental level. Children, who are just learning to write, will misspell words and form their letters imperfectly. Focus on helping your children understand the idea of thanking others and on the effort they put into doing a thank-you note. Do not worry about having a long or perfect-looking final product.

Pick a good time to do the thank you notes. Do not begin them when your children are tired or hungry. Pick a time when you can work together without feeling rushed. Open-ended choices can be overwhelming for young children; instead of asking them when they want to do the thank-you notes, ask them if they would like to do it right after dinner or before bedtime.

Writing thank-you notes is a habit, and habits are not learned overnight. Expect to encourage and support your child's writing thank-you notes for a long time before they are ready to do so independently.

Sometimes a gift will not be useful; remember, "It's the thought that counts." Express your thanks to the giver for their thoughtfulness, energy and time spent in choosing the gift.

There are no specific rules to follow; make the thank-you note a special message from the heart to the giver. A purchased thank-you note can be used if it also includes a personal message of thanks. When it's done, don't forget to mail it. You've just done something nice for someone who has done something nice for you.