

The Opportunity of Enough

Managing Gift Giving Holidays with Children

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Support Families to Manage Consumer Culture

The stress of “keeping-up” is a huge financial and emotional burden to parents.

Over the past 25 years marketing to children has become deregulated and children are highly targeted by firms merchandising food, toys, clothing, entertainment and more.

Approximately \$17 billion is spent each year marketing goods to children, a huge increase from the \$100 million spent in 1983.

Discuss Your Family's Customs with Your Child

- Custom is often linked to heritage, race and ethnicity - talk to your child about why your family exchanges gifts. (Books and music can help explain if there is a cultural or historical element.)
- Custom is often linked to habit - talk to your child about why your family exchanges gifts the way that they do – tell your family's unique story!

Discuss Your Family's Values and Practice with Your Child

- Create meaningful opportunities for your child to get to be the giver of gifts. (This includes making or shopping for items with their own resources, especially important to children ages six years and older.)
- Speak to your child about the behavior that best exemplifies your family's values, for example: kindness, gratefulness, creativity, generosity. (Grasping and acquisitive are unflattering traits!)
- Discuss with older children (ages six and up) giving for the sake of giving, and not for the reward of recognition. This is especially important if your family practices angel-giving to those with less economic resources.

Who is Your Unique Kid?

Artist Craftsman Engineer Explorer Scientist

Careful observer or cannonballs into the deep-end?

Delighted by bright lights and disco music or prefers quiet, cozy spaces?

Loves the sticky-icky feels or avoids gooey textures?

Loves to party or prefers to be alone?



Tested, tried and true:
Bella Luna
Community Playthings
Fat Brain Toys
Kapla
Lego (blocks, not kits)
Magic Cabin
Magnatiles



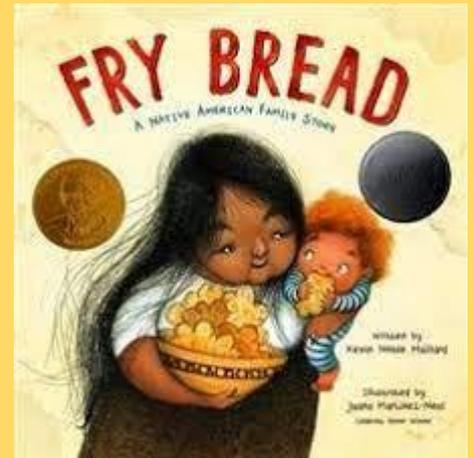
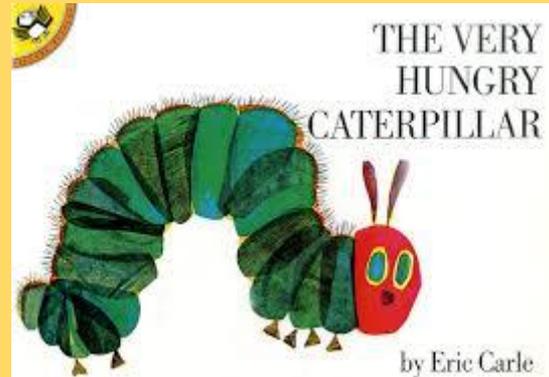
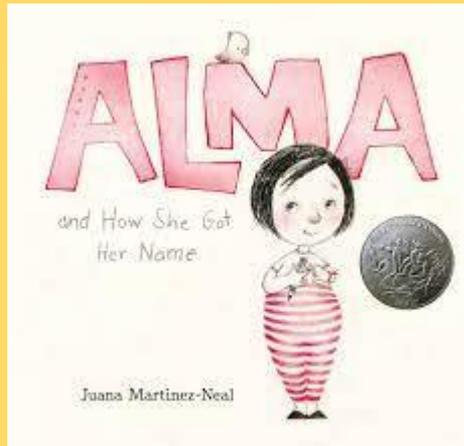
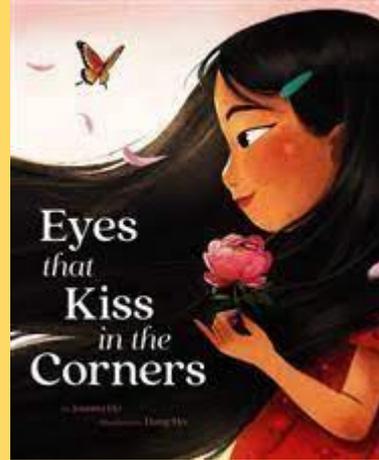
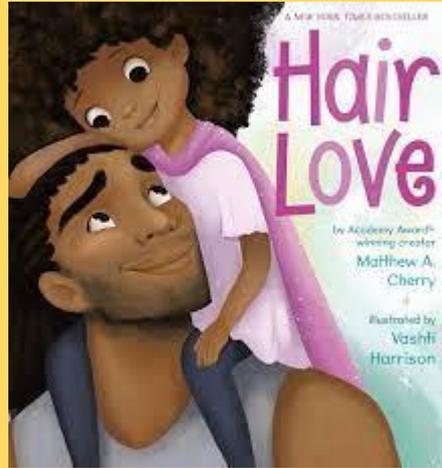
Consider the Opportunity to Gift Experiences

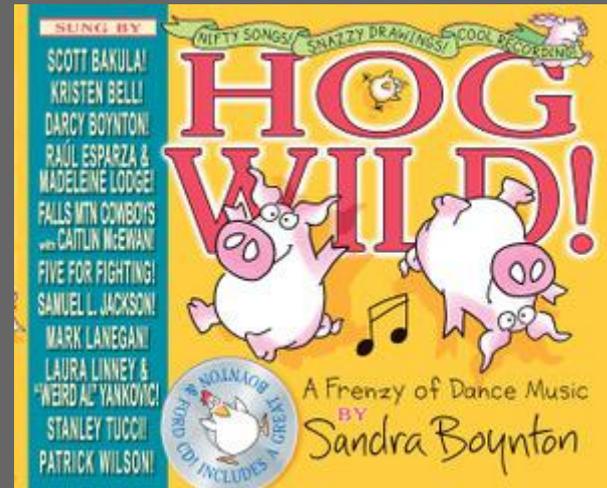
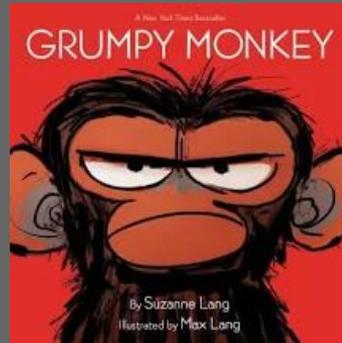
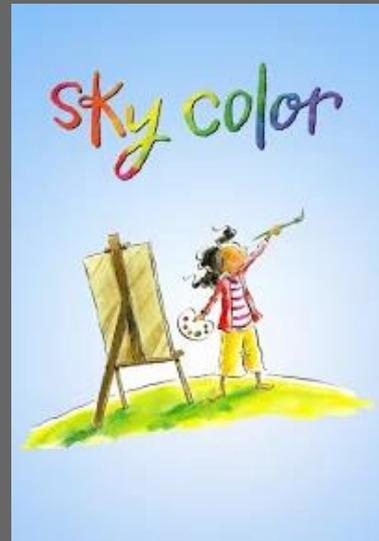
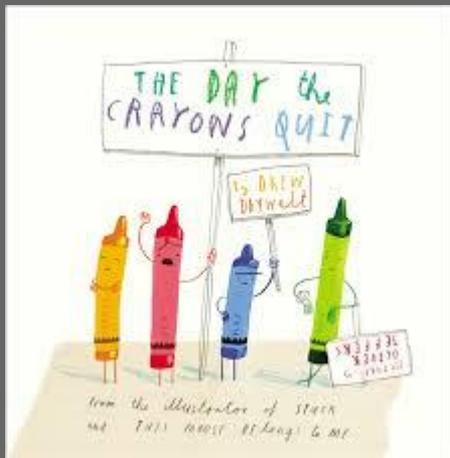
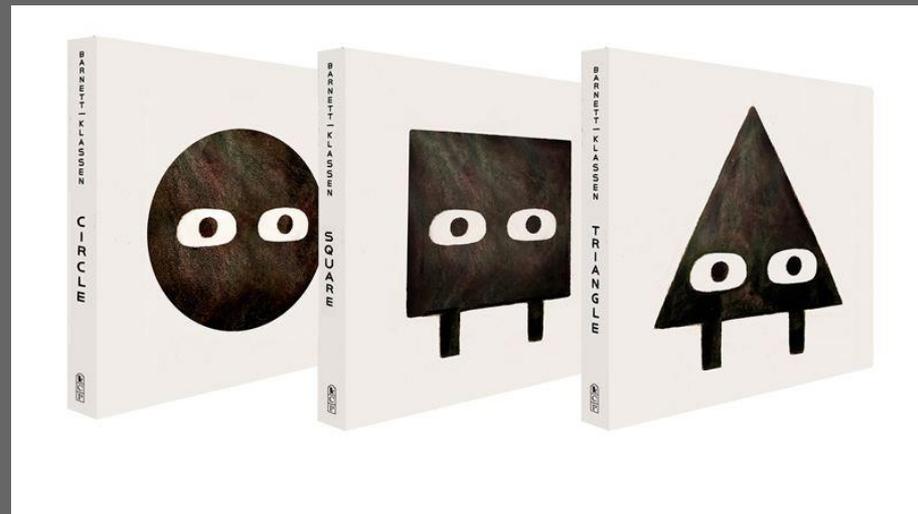
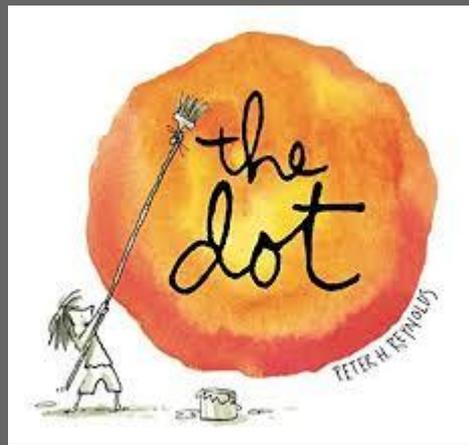
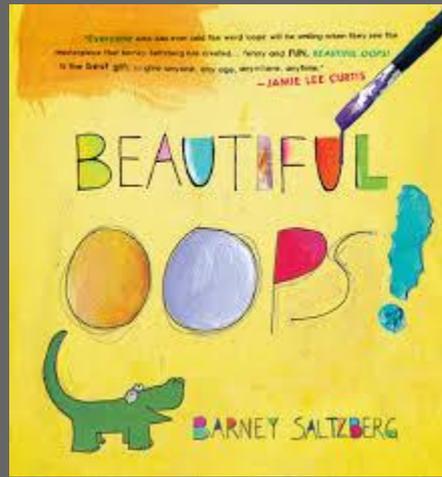
Experiences offer profound high impact supporting children to feel seen and valued:

- Tickets to an event (music, sports, theater)
- A whole day 1:1 with one parent doing “their thing”:
biking, hiking, ice skating, museum of. . ., whale watching
- Getting to meet your hero (someone prominent in their field of interest): artist, dancer, firefighter, musician, nurse, oceanographer
- A mini-trip to someplace no one in the family has been to (child’s choice): beach, caves, mountains, observatory



Books are wonderful gifts!





Child Development

Nothing is more disheartening than carefully selecting and wrapping gifts and having the day end with tears and tantrum:

- Children can be delighted by something new BUT especially young children can be overwhelmed by too much change, too soon.
- Keep to the child's regular schedule for nutrition and nap.
- Offer one gift at a time for children ages 0 - 8 years to open, examine, and engage with for at least 15 minutes.
- Take a break after opening a round of gifts (e.g., go for a walk, eat a meal.)

Strategies

- In advance of the gift event, there may be opportunity to “make space” - ask your children ages 3 - 21 years to identify books, clothes, games, and toys they are ready to pass on to people that need them. Ask them to help you neatly box these items and go with you to drop them off.
- At a family event allow the child to get to be the deliverer of gifts to others - this active role is easier for younger children who may otherwise struggle to watch and wait their turn.
- A total of three gifts is a good rule for all ages: something useful, something wanted, and something unexpected that is desirable (e.g., for a 9 year old: a flashlight, a bike, a jar of nutella.)

Reserve the Right to Discipline (“to teach”)

- If you catch a child being rude about a gift (e.g. socks, underwear, a book or toy they’re too old for), correct them immediately to appreciate the giver (e.g., “thank you for thinking of me.”)
- If your child is counting their pile of gifts prior to the big day privately discuss with them that gifts have value beyond quantity.
- If you observe your child comparing gifts with another put an immediate stop to the behavior by quietly asking the child to help you with a task in another room (e.g., take out the trash, get more cookies, etc.) When you are alone (1:1) discuss with the child that gifts have value beyond price tag.
- Old fashioned, hand-written thank you notes are a great tradition!

But Grandparents!

- Coordinating these rules with grandparents can sometimes be a bit of a challenge. . .pick your battles.
- Suggest that a generous grandparent give the gift of a special experience they can do together instead of a wrapped present (e.g., building a birdhouse, making muffins.)
- It can be nice to have grandparent time on a different day than the holiday. . . to space out the gifting frenzy.
- Don't forget to share that 529 college savings plan information!