



Non-Toy Gifts for the Holidays

Once November rolls around, toy companies begin a marketing blitz. All of the manufacturers want to ensure your children have the newest toy on their wish list. Whether it's Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or even winter birthdays, the temptation to keep up with the mythical Joneses can be intense. But whether you are looking to keep a minimal household or just avoid the latest craze quickly becoming the latest clutter in your house, non-toy gifts might be the solution to this madness. Here are a few non-toy ideas for the kids in your life, no matter their age.

For babies: Book subscriptions are a great gift for the babies in your life. Children whose parents read to them are more likely to achieve higher education, have better relationships, and have better financial security. Pediatricians recommend starting as early as possible because even infants benefit from being read to. For parents who don't want to read the same story again and again, there are several book subscription options available. Some popular services include the Amazon Prime Book Box and Lilypost, the latter of which donates a book to a child in need for every box sent.

For toddlers and school-age children: Learning experiences are such a valuable gift to younger children. This could include zoos, aquariums, children's museums, or music classes near them. Depending on your budget, this could be a one-time, seasonal or annual pass for the whole family.

Some memberships come with a tangible gift, like a stuffed animal for each new member at the zoo, so your child doesn't miss out on unwrapping something on the big day. If you're taking the child yourself, don't forget to take pictures - those shots with the giraffe or shark behind you are great reminders of your fun gift.

For tweens and teens: What better way to give a gift and spur bonding with a tween or teenager than a shared experience? If you want to spark some meaningful conversations, you could take a class together on one of your child's interests. This not only shows that you care about their likes, but you get to learn something new in the process! If you want to win gift-giver of the year award, you can snag tickets to their favorite artist in concert or sports team when they come to town. You may not be able to talk during the show or game but you'll create lasting memories that you can talk about for years to come.

For the over the top gifter: Travel is the ultimate experience gift. Vacations are great for family bonding, as they take you away from the ordinary and allow for some quality time outside of your normal routines. Trips are even good for childhood brain development. Of course, if the child you're gifting to is not your own, check with their parents first, but even a day trip to someplace new can be a great experience for everyone involved.

Click [here](#) for references.

News & Events

• Enchant - DFW

- Now through January 1
Fair Park Coliseum
1438 Coliseum Drive - Dallas, TX 75210
Enchant, the world's largest Christmas light spectacular, returns to Fair Park with an all-new interactive light-maze adventure, "The Mischievous Elf." Enchant includes an impressive 100-foot-tall holiday tree, a unique ice-skating trail, live entertainment, Santa visits and a village marketplace with crafts, gifts, festive culinary treats and holiday cocktails.

For more information visit:
www.visitdallas.com/things-to-do/events/view/15697/Enchant-Christmas-Dallas.html

• STOCKYARDS RODEO RINK - DFW

Nov. 29, 2022 - Feb. 14, 2023
Stockyards Station
130 E. Exchange Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76164-8210
All-new ice skating rink, cowboy santa's winter wonderland, live music, theme days, holiday lights, activations and more!

For more info visit: <https://fortworth-stockyards.com/events/stockyards-rodeo-rink/>

• PEPPERMINT PARKWAY - Austin

- Nov. 05 to Dec. 30
9201 Circuit of The Americas Blvd., Austin, TX 78617
Fa-La-La in love with Peppermint Plaza! Visit before or after your trip down Peppermint Parkway, race at COTA Karting, enjoy amusement park rides, grab a bite, and sing holiday carols! For more info visit:

<https://peppermintparkway.com/>

Resources

• **VIVA Pediatrics Resources**

In an effort to help our families, we constantly strive to provide them with relevant and helpful resources and information. Visit our resources page online at: www.vivaped.com/resources

For current events visit us on Facebook. www.facebook.com/VIVAPeds

• **Care Starter App**

The Connections App is a complete resource guide for families of kids, teens and adults with special needs. Their goal is to help you find providers, organizations and other resources in your community to help you along your path of care. Download the CareStarter App now! www.carestarter.co/connectionsapp



• **The Parker Lee Project**

The Parker Lee Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping families of children with medical needs obtain the necessary supplies & equipment, education, and support they need. While most supplies are covered by insurance, some are not, or not enough supplies are provided. If you have a need for medical supplies or have supplies to donate, please visit their website at www.theparkerleeproject.org

• **Texas Star Kids**

The Texas' Star Kids mandate threatens the lives of our weakest and most vulnerable little citizens. Join us in standing up for those who have no voice. Click this link to sign up: www.facebook.com/ProtectTXFragileKids
For more info visit: www.protecttxfragilekids.org

• **Thrive Magazine**

Need Resources for your child with special needs? Thrive Magazine shares resources and stories of other families in the DFW area who are living and thriving with special needs. www.dfwchild.com/thrive/directory

• **Recognize a VIVA Star**

Viva Pediatrics has an Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to thank and recognize employees that go "above and beyond". Both employees and patient families are welcome to recognize a VIVA employee! Call one of our offices and let us know if a VIVA employee has gone above and beyond!



Get Healthy with Giggles

Maintaining Mental Health During the Holidays

Here are some suggestions from the National Alliance on Mental Illness for how you can reduce stress and maintain good mental health during the holiday season:

Take steps to stay safe. Visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html for their latest guidelines for holiday gatherings.

Accept your needs. Be kind to yourself! Put your own mental and physical well-being first.

Write a gratitude list and offer thanks.

Manage your time and don't try to do too much.

Be realistic. We all have struggles one time or another and it's not realistic to expect otherwise.

Set boundaries. Family dynamics can be complex. Acknowledge them and accept that you can only control your role.

Practice relaxation, exercise daily and eat well.

Set aside time for yourself and prioritize self-care.

Get enough sleep.

Avoid alcohol and drugs.

Spend time in nature.

Volunteer. The act of volunteering can provide a great source of comfort.

Find support. Whether it's with friends, family, a counselor or a support group, airing out and talking can help.

Keep up or seek therapy. If you're feeling overwhelmed, it may be time to share with your mental health professional.

* namica.org

Food for Thought



Scrumptious Pumpkin Bread

Ingredients

2/3 cup shortening
1 cup brown sugar
1-2/3 cup granulated sugar
4 eggs
1 can pumpkin puree
2/3 cup milk
3 1/3 cup flour
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground cloves

Glaze

2 cups powdered sugar
3-4 tbsp milk
1 tsp almond extract
2 tbsp softened butter

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 F
- Grease 2 loaf pans (no flour)
- Cream shortening & sugar until well blended
- Stir in eggs, pumpkin and milk
- Blend dry ingredients, then stir into batter
- Bake both pans for 54 minutes until toothpick comes out clean
- Mix all glaze ingredients in a separate bowl and glaze when loaves are completely cooled

Enjoy!

Where do snowmen like to dance?



At a snowball

Just for Giggles!

