

**Monica's Money Management Blog**  
**Monica Thayer**  
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I'm a mother of three young children, ages 4, almost 2, and 8 months. Yes, our household is loud and if you show up at any given moment, I am sure there will be toys, shoes, and food remnants from one end of the house to the other. Have you ever heard the saying, "Excuse the mess. My children are making memories."? Well, this holiday season, consider adding to the memories instead of the materials.

Everywhere you look and listen, there are commercials and advertisements of the hottest toy, electronic, and even vehicle to purchase for a loved one. You know, it is the season of giving, right? Even though retailers want us to believe that the holidays are all about materials, give the gift of time and memories to those you love.

I'm guilty of it, too, but put away the cell phone, tablet, or book that your nose may be stuck in. Social media will be there later and I'm sure you will find time to catch up on everyone's happenings. Be in the moment with your family and friends. Pay attention to their interests and maybe that will help you select a more meaningful gift in the future. People can get so caught up into the moments of others on social media that they miss what is physically right in front of them beyond that electronic device.

As for giving a gift, consider giving an experience that will create memories. A gift of an experience can be tailored exactly to the person. Purchase admission to a local zoo, amusement park, movie theater, or museum. Find lessons to further a person's skills, such as horseback

riding, a musical instrument, or painting. For those real adventurous people in your life, send them skydiving or ziplining. These are just a few examples as the possibilities are endless.

Being a parent of young children, I understand that having something to open may be important, so I am not saying to scrap every gift. Consider following the adage of “Something they want, something they need, something they wear, and something they read.” Did I mention that reading is important to a child’s development? Find more on emergent literacy here: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3161.pdf>.

Iowa State Extension’s “Science of Parenting” Blog has lots of great information, including this post about gift-giving to children: <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/scienceofparenting/2016/12/21/consider-giving-kids-less-stuff-more-time-during-holidays/>.

For educational information on family resources, including budgeting, child development, relationships, and more, contact Monica Thayer, River Valley Extension District Family Resource Extension Agent, at 785-527-5084 and [mthayer@ksu.edu](mailto:mthayer@ksu.edu). More information can also be found on her website at [https://www.rivervalley.k-state.edu/family\\_resources/index.html](https://www.rivervalley.k-state.edu/family_resources/index.html).

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