



# Consumer kids

10 ways to stop your kids wanting more stuff



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Consumerism and advertising are everywhere in modern society and it can be hard even for adults to escape their influence, so children are particularly vulnerable to their messages. Children are an important target audience for advertisers, as they have their own spending power, 'pester power' over their parents and are the consumers of the future. As a parent it can be a source of real concern that one's children are becoming too materialistic, and it can be difficult to know what to do in the face of the onslaught of messages from advertisers.

*How can we help our kids become people rather than consumers?*

The poster on the other side of this leaflet outlines 10 steps you can take to help your kids think for themselves and become people rather than consumers. Check out the Life² website for more ideas and links to organisations that can help you to live a happier, wiser and more meaningful life – [www.lifesquared.org.uk](http://www.lifesquared.org.uk)

### 1. Educate them

Help them to understand the world they live in. Help them learn that consumerism is promoted to make money, and that it is designed to make people want things.

### 2. Get them to identify the things that really matter

Get them to think about the things that really matter to them in life, whether it is their pet, friends or playing football. Get them to see the importance of these in relation to the transient pleasure of material goods.

### 3. Suggest other ways to spend their time

Show them all the great things they can do instead of buying more stuff. See our Better than shopping leaflet for more ideas.

### 4. Unpick adverts

If you are with your child and you see an advertisement, explain what it is trying to make them do and feel, and unpick how it is trying to do it. Help them to understand how adverts work, and what the reality is behind the facade.

### 5. Give them time rather than stuff

Kids would generally rather spend more time with their parents than receive stuff as a substitute for this time. Give your kids more time if you can.

### 6. Help them build their identity

Help your child to be happy with who they are and remind them that they do not need to be like everyone else or follow the herd. Encourage them to live their life their way.

### 7. Turn off the TV

Consider limiting TV time each day, so that they have time to find interesting things to do rather than passively watching the, often fictional, lives of other people.

### 8. Do not preach

Do not give your child a complex about it, just educate them about these things and get them to see that buying stuff is not necessarily a problem, but it is really just a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

### 9. Inspire them

Excite them about the possibilities open to them in life and encourage them to get out and pursue the things that interest them.

### 10. Help them think critically

Help your child to question the messages they receive from any external source, from the television to their friends, and think about whether they want to accept them or not.