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Axelowitz Kauffmann Group at UBS Private Wealth Management

Mark Axelowitz, CIMA[®], Managing Director Todd Kauffmann, Senior Vice President

6 How can I be a good **'financial parent'?**

By Mark Axelowitz and Todd Kauffmann

If compound interest is "the most powerful force in the universe," as Albert Einstein described it, you will definitely want to teach your children to handle not only interest but all money matters responsibly. While theories abound about the how and when of "financial parenting," here are guidelines we not only recommend but follow with our own children.

REWARD HARD (I.E., COMPLETED) WORK

The most ubiquitous method of providing children spending moneythe allowance-can teach multiple financial lessons to children. Regularly administering an allowance in exchange for doing "chores" makes a direct connection between work and reward. But children need a clear understanding of what is expected of them to receive their allowance. So consider creating a list of their responsibilities and keeping a clear record of their performance-something of which they can be proud. But if they fail to complete their assigned jobs, withhold the allowance or reduce the amount. You will be tempted to cave in, but remember that negative reinforcement duplicates what happens in real life.

If you feel, as some parents do, that children should not get "paid" for doing what is expected of them as a member of the household, you can still reward them for performing "aboveand-beyond" tasks. Come up with an agreed upon sum for bigger projects, like doing hard yard work or keeping the cars clean and pay your child when the job is done—and done right.

TEACH HOW TO SPEND...AND GIVE AND SAVE

The work-for-allowance equation can also include money management lessons. Again, financial parenting styles can differ. The spend-it-on-anythingyou-want-but-once-it's-gone-don'tdare-ask-for-more approach certainly teaches limits—as long as you stick to the rule. Or, you may want to take a more granular approach when compensating your children that teaches broader lessons.

For example, allow them to do whatever they want with half of their allowance, but require that one quarter of it go into savings and one quarter to a good cause—one they choose. Also, let them know that if they put additional money into savings or giving, you will match their contribution. To make savings tangible, chart the growing amount with a bank statement or homegrown file.

TEACH REAL-WORLD LESSONS

Create scenarios that involve children in spending as it actually happens. For example, let them plan a family dinner then shop for the necessary items. They will learn instantly what a single meal for a family of four actually costs. Also invite your teenagers to a family financial planning meeting that you and your financial advisor tailor to the presence of your teen. Your kids will begin to understand that even high net worth families have limits to their finances.

Few financial lessons teach more than learning by one's mistakes. As kids, let them blow through their allowance and experience being broke for a month. In their senior year of high school, as a preparation for college spending, open a checking account with a debit card, but *do not include overdraft protection*. Paying penalties is part of the learning process.

Finally, being a good financial parent also means being prudent in your own spending habits. Few things teach as well or as deeply as example. As the Chinese proverb says, "Not the cry, but the flight of the wild duck leads the flock to fly and follow." ©

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Left to right: Michael DaSilva, Todd Kauffmann, Mark Axelowitz, Joy Christian, Annie Byun

About Mark Axelowitz and Todd Kauffmann

Mark Axelowitz has provided investment advice to ultra high net worth individuals, family offices and foundations since 1987. He is a certified investment management analyst (CIMA®), a designation he earned through the Wharton School of Business, and he has completed advanced programs in wealth management through the NYU Stern School of Business and the Wharton School's Critical Elements of Consulting. He was selected as one of the Top Ten Outstanding Brokers of the Year by *Registered Rep* magazine and was one of *Barron's* Top Advisors of America. Mr. Axelowitz is an officer on the board of The Boys & Girls Harbor, has co-chaired the Harbor Investment Conference since 2006 and is a member of the Robin Hood Foundation. He has a BA from Hofstra University. Todd Kauffmann has advised clients since 1989 and has been in partnership with Mr. Axelowitz since 1994. He focuses on asset allocation techniques when constructing portfolios specifically tailored to each client. He also advises on lending solutions, fixed income, and foreign currency transactions. He completed the Investment Consultant Program at the Wharton Business School and is working toward his CIMA® certification.

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