

# Should Parents Give Expensive Gifts to Children?

Over at *The Guardian*, fashion columnist Hadley Freeman has penned an [interesting piece](#) on the rise of designer children's clothing.

Designer wear kids' clothes, Freeman notes, seem to have gained popularity in recent years, particularly given the equation of Kim Kardashian + North West + social media accounts:

*"The usual celebrities, such as Victoria Beckham and Kim Kardashian West, are now regularly photographed with their daughters in designer mini-me clothes that cost more than the monthly salary of most adults. Fashion, not an industry known for eschewing an easy buck from fools, is quickly following the money, and Givenchy, Pucci and Roberto Cavalli are all imminently launching or relaunching their children's lines. Because a \$3,500 fur, as modelled recently by young North West, is precisely what every 20-month-old has been missing from their wardrobe."*

This standard is rather hard to maintain when relatively few in mainstream America live on a celebrity's income. For that reason, it's somewhat comforting to note how detrimental such a practice can be to a child's future life:

*"Look, I love fashion and spend too much money on it. But if \$2,500 outfits are your norm from the age of four, where do you go from there? And what kind of perspective will you ever have on the world?"*

Yet even while the average individual can scoff at such ridiculous expenditures for children, it must be admitted that

many of us would be tempted to fork out the money for similar frivolities if finances permitted. Furthermore, many of us may even push the limits of our own budgets to get a slightly more prestigious brand than is necessary for a child.

The fact is, we all want to give our children the best... so where do we draw the line? Is it possible to give our children good or high-quality gifts, but still teach them responsibility at the same time?

The answer to these questions is hinted at in Laura Ingalls Wilder's [Farmer Boy](#). In the last chapter, Wilder explains how her future husband came into the unexpected fortune of \$200 around age 10. In a discussion with his father about future life plans, Almanzo experienced the following surprise:

*"Father!" Almanzo exclaimed.*

*"Yes, son?"*

*"Can I? Can I really tell you what I want?"*

*"Yes, son," Father encouraged him.*

*"I want a colt," Almanzo said. "Could I buy a colt all my own with some of that two hundred dollars, and would you let me break him?"*

*Father's beard slowly widened with a smile. He put down his napkin and leaned back in his chair and looked at Mother. Then he turned to Almanzo and said:*

*"Son, you leave that money in the bank."*

*Almanzo felt everything sinking down inside him. And then, suddenly, the whole world was a great, shining, expanding glow of warm light. For Father went on:*

*"If it's a colt you want, I'll give you Starlight."*

*"Father!" Almanzo gasped. "For my very own?"*

*“Yes, son. You can break him, and drive him, and when he’s a four-year-old you can sell him or keep him, just as you want to.”*

The fact is, Almanzo’s father was not afraid of giving him a valuable and expensive gift because he recognized that Almanzo had digested the lessons of hard work and responsibility that his parents had been teaching him. He also was unafraid to bestow an expensive gift upon his child because he recognized that the gift would create a greater father-son bond, while also giving further opportunities to learn and grow.

I wonder if we would see more responsible, grateful children if today’s families were to do the same. Would we be wise to evaluate the clothes, the toys, and the activities we give to our children on the basis of whether they will provide lessons in life, responsibility, and family togetherness?