



Save the Children.

WRITING TO YOUR SPONSORED CHILD



Photo: Save the Children in the Philippines

Every letter you send goes a long way!

Letters might have to take multiple trains, planes and automobiles to reach your sponsored child, and just as many forms of transportation for their reply to reach you! This whole journey can take up to 4 months. Here's why:



What to include with your letter

When you're ready to send your letter, make sure to include the following information to ensure delivery:

- **On the envelope:** The name and address of your sponsored child's **country office** (available in your welcome kit or online account).
- **Within the letter (or email):** Your **donor ID**, your **first name**, your sponsored child's **child ID** and your sponsored child's **first name**.

Tips for success

Letter writing is one of the best ways for you to develop a bond with your sponsored child that you can both cherish forever. We know that writing to a child you've never met, in a country you may not know, can be challenging. Here are a few simple tips for making every communication a positive experience for both you and your sponsored child.

- 1 Show genuine interest.** Respectfully and enthusiastically ask about your sponsored child's family, friends, daily life, favorite activities and goals for the future.
- 2 Share something about yourself.** Kids are curious. There's no better way to build a bond than by sharing interesting details about your own life and interests.
- 3 Show you care.** Words of encouragement go further than you realize. Your letters show your sponsored child that someone cares and is invested in his or her life and future.
- 4 Encourage your child.** Many children lack a supportive, positive voice in their lives. Celebrate your sponsored child's achievements and root for his or her dreams.
- 5 Write simply and clearly.** Use language that's free of slang or complicated ideas that may be difficult to translate or that your sponsored child may not understand. Also remember, your child may still be learning to read.
- 6 Learn about his or her culture.** Research and ask about traditions, holidays and special occasions in your sponsored child's country. Share details about your own traditions. Since we serve children of many religions, please refrain from asking about or sharing any personal religious beliefs.
- 7 Find common ground.** The best way to build a friendship, and bridge a culture gap, is by finding common ground. Emphasize shared interests and experiences with your sponsored child.
- 8 Listen and accept.** Sometimes kids just need someone they can share their feelings with. Be a shoulder to lean on. Let your sponsored child know you hear and accept him or her.
- 9 Less is more.** Avoid possible confusion by limiting the topics and questions in your letters (two or three is good), and don't expect your sponsored child to always address every comment or question. We also recommend limiting the number of letters you send to three or four letters a year.
- 10 Be sensitive.** Keep in mind that your sponsored child is likely living without many things we may take for granted, so try not to focus on materials items. Please avoid religion, politics or culturally sensitive subjects, and don't share last names or contact info.



Photo: Save the Children in Bolivia

Sample letters ▶

Here are two sample letters to help get you started thinking about what to write to your sponsored child — and how to write it.

About postage

Postage for your sponsored child's letter or package will vary based on weight and size. For more info, visit the USPS website at PostCalc.USPS.com to calculate postage.

SAMPLE INTRO LETTER TO CHILD

Dear Anna,
My name is Matt, and I'm so excited to be your sponsor and learn more about you.
I live in New York in the United States. We have a very beautiful river here and many parks that I enjoy visiting with my wife Pam and our children Cindy and Steven. We like playing soccer and sitting by the water under the trees.
Can you tell me about where you live? What are your favorite hobbies?
Sincerely,
Matt

SAMPLE RESPONSE LETTER TO CHILD

Dear Anna,
Thank you for your letter. I shared it with my own kids, and they would love to learn even more about you!
It was nice to hear about your town and your family. I've included a picture of me, my wife Pam and our two children Cindy and Steven, so you can see what we look like.
I was especially glad to hear that you like learning in school. My favorite class in school was writing, because it inspired me to become a journalist. What's your favorite class? And do you know what you want to be when you grow up?
Your Friend,
Matt

Questions? Give us a call at 1-800-SavetheChildren or email us at supportercare@savethechildren.org.