

Mentorship Program

Tips on Communicating with your Child:

- Send photographs or postcards. Children love receiving pictures and will often display them in their home. These can be sent by email avoiding cost and delay.
- Talk about the concrete things in your life: family, work, food, the weather.
- Try describing your last family gathering. Introduce all the members of your extended family and describe what it's like when you get together.
- Talk about your neighborhood. Are there children playing, stores, fields, busy roads?
- Describe the seasons. What does snow look like? Are the autumn leaves red? Is it a hot summer day?
- Simply write that you're thinking of your sponsored child, and wish them the best. This is a warm reminder that someone far away cares, and one of the most important things you could ever send a child!
- Be sensitive when asking about your sponsored child's family as many of them don't know one of their parents, or may have lost someone due to violence, etc. But feel free to mention your own family members in your letters.
- If you have children of your own, involve them in writing the letter or enclose their drawings.
- Avoid politics and other potentially sensitive topics.

Tips on Giving Packages to your Child:

- Do *not* send expensive items as they may be stolen, sold for cash, lost or broken
- Children love personalized items and it will help ensure they retain what you sent them for themselves
- Linens and towels (personalized)
- Hair accessories and inexpensive jewelry for girls
- Stationery and pens
- Books that help them learn English
- Small toys and games
- Note on Care Package for School: There are 2 times a year kids get geared up for school with the biggest one being in late January as school begins in February. This is a *great* time to send a new backpack stuffed with school supplies!

Details to remember:

- Remember to print clearly rather than write (this will help them as well as a translator to better read and understand your letter).
- Please do not include your home address (to maintain your privacy).
- Please do not send any currency, seeds, food, liquid, or any items that are sharp, pressurized, breakable or may leak if punctured.

How does your letter get from here to there?

After writing your letter or putting together a care package, mail it to the address below:

Abundant Life Foundation
3001 RR 620 South #323
Austin, TX 78734
ATTN: Your sponsored child's name

We will package your letter with letters from other sponsors and hand-deliver it on our next field visit. (As a sponsor, you will receive email notifications of our upcoming trips to the island.)

A faster way of communicating is to send an email to our website with your child's name in the 'subject'. We will either print it off and take it with us on our next field visit, or forward it on to our contact on the island to have it delivered faster.

Email: info@abundantlifefoundation.net

When emailing to your child, please use the subject line as follows:

Subject: LETTER FOR Child's Name

For those children who do not speak English well enough to understand, or who are too young to read, a translator will read and translate the letter to them. A translator will also help provide a translated version of their letter back to the sponsor.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SPONSORED CHILD:

Children love to hear from their sponsors, and often share their letters with others. If you choose to write to your sponsored child or children, your letters will be gladly received. Here are some guidelines for corresponding with your child:

- Keep your letters short, and use simple language. Tell your sponsored child about your country, city, or town. Talk about the climate and what your surroundings look like during different seasons.
- Invite your child to write back. Ask him or her to describe a typical day or talk about his or her favorite subject in school.
- Write about your interests or hobbies, or share the customs and traditions you follow, the holidays you celebrate, even the foods you and your family enjoy.
- You can definitely send photos of you and your family. It's best to send photos of subjects who are modestly dressed.
- Avoid issues of material possessions. For a child of poverty and abandonment, affluence is often difficult to understand. Keep this in mind if you send photos of yourself or your surroundings. For example, use pictures with neutral backgrounds vs. standing in front of an elegant fireplace.
- You may send small gifts that fit in an envelope and can be shared. Excellent choices are coloring books, crayons, cards or postcards, stamps, paper dolls, colorful stickers, etc.

Things you could ask your sponsored child:

- Can you tell me about the weather in your country?
- What are your favorite activities at school?
- Is your school close-by or do you have far to travel?
- How do you get to school and back?
- Have you learned anything about the United States?
- What things do you do when you are not at school?
- Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Things you could talk about:

- Subjects that children learn in school here in the United States
- The suburb or town where you live
- What you do at school
- Where your state is
- Animals you find in your surroundings – armadillo, opossum, snakes
- Your work
- Your church
- Your pets
- Your friends