



Writing Letters That Bring Healing

Letters are an opportunity to pour into, encourage, and be a part of healing in the life of your sponsor child. It doesn't need to be long; simply by writing to your sponsor child, you are communicating he or she is not forgotten, and that they are valued, important, and unique. You also have the opportunity to help shape your sponsor child's belief system regarding what they believe about others, about themselves, and about the God who loves them. We want to encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity by writing to your sponsor child!

- Consider reminding your sponsor child about his or her true identity in Christ. Share a testimony or favorite Bible passage and why it is important to you.
- Share how important he or she is to your family (i.e. our family remembers you in our prayers.)
- Remind your sponsor child of all the good you've seen displayed in his or her character (i.e. you are smart, you are helpful, you are a hard worker, you care about your siblings, you are brave) and encourage these characteristics.
- Give your sponsored child voice. Ask your sponsored child questions about himself in your letters to him. Get to know what she likes and dislikes. Ask them what they are learning in school, who their friends are, what their favorite food is, if they have siblings, what they want to be when they grow up, etc.
- Model what healthy family and relationships look like. Consider telling your sponsor child what you've learned about how to have a strong marriage and/or strong friendships. Consider sending a photo of your family, friends, of you at your job, or a picture of your family pet—the children love to see different aspects of your life.
- Model what healthy lifestyles look like. Consider telling your sponsored child about your job, what your favorite aspect of your job is, how you decided to pursue your job. Share about the positive activities you're involved in, and ways you serve your church and community.
- Encourage your sponsor child in their studies by asking them how school is going. This communicates that you care about their education and motivates them to work hard in school.
- Understand that it takes children time to learn how to communicate well through letters. Give them time to develop this skill, and be patient if they say the same thing to you multiple times.

Topics to Avoid

- Inviting or talking about your sponsor child coming to America.
- Asking questions about their past. Many of the children we work with have some sort of trauma or abuse in their past. Instead, focus on their present and future.
- Going into great detail about material possessions.
- Asking if they have a boyfriend or girlfriend. We do not want to encourage the need for a romantic relationship.
- Calling your sponsor child "son" or "daughter". These terms have very different meanings in different cultures, and it is important to keep healthy boundaries in place.
- Making promises you are not certain you can keep, such as plans to visit them. It is better to not make promises, in case things do not work out.
- Asking them what they would like as a gift from you. We want to encourage healthy relationships between sponsor and child, and do not want the children to be tempted to look to you for material gain.

Letter Guidelines

- You may send a small gift with your letter, but please make sure anything you send fits within a 9x12 envelope.
- You are welcome to use the Back2Back Child Sponsorship Letter template to write on, but you do not have to.
- If you sponsor a child as a group, it is best if one person writes to your sponsor child, to cut down on any potential confusion.
- Please keep letters to an appropriate length, keeping in mind that a staff person will translate it.
- You can send your letter to your sponsor child by emailing it to childsponsorship@back2back.org or by mailing it to: Back2Back Ministries, P.O. Box 439, Mason, OH 45040.