

LETTER OF THE DAY

What to do when children act entitled and over demanding

As children prepare to return to school, many parents are busy buying books, paying school fees, shopping for necessities, and ensuring their children settle well for the new term.

However, beyond the excitement of reporting back to school lies an issue that many families silently struggle with — children whose demands keep increasing beyond what is reasonable or necessary. Some ask for excessive pocket money, expensive gadgets, luxurious personal items, fashionable clothes, or unnecessary school requirements.

Children rarely become demanding overnight. In many cases, their behaviour is shaped by the environment around them. Some children are influenced by peer pressure at school. Others are heavily influenced by social media, celebrities, or the wealthy lifestyles they constantly consume online.

Parents should, therefore, look beyond the behaviour itself and understand the influences behind it. A child demanding too much may actually be struggling with insecurity, identity, competition, or a lack of values.

One of the greatest concerns today is excessive pocket money among school-going children. While parents may think they are helping their children feel comfortable at school, too much uncontrolled money can expose them to dangerous habits.

Some students use the money to experiment with alcohol, drugs, smoking, betting, or other harmful substances. Others use it to entertain unhealthy friendships or lifestyles that distract them from education and discipline.



Children should understand that pocket money is for essential personal needs, not for luxury, competition, or reckless spending. Parents who give large sums of money simply to avoid appearing “poor” before other parents or fellow children may unknowingly be financing destructive behaviour.

Some parents overprovide because they feel guilty. Busy parents may compensate for their absence by giving children excessive money or expensive gifts. Divorced or separated parents may also compete for children's affection through material things.

However, love is not measured by how much money a parent gives. In fact, children who receive everything without limits often struggle with gratitude, patience, resilience, and responsibility later in life. Responsible parenting sometimes requires saying “no” even when you can afford to say “yes.”

Many children today do not understand the difference between needs and wants.

Many children today struggle because they have never been taught financial discipline. They grow up believing that comfort is a right rather than a privilege earned through responsibility and hard work.

Parents should intentionally involve children in conversations about budgeting, priorities, and financial realities.

Some parents fear that setting limits will make children unhappy. Yet children actually thrive where healthy boundaries exist. A home without limits eventually creates confusion and indiscipline.

Some parents feel pressured to provide certain lifestyles simply because other families are doing so. Unfortunately, this creates unnecessary financial stress and unhealthy parenting decisions.

Children who grow up un-

derstanding contentment and simplicity are often emotionally healthier and more focused than those raised in constant comparison. Such children may deter corruption in adulthood.

Parents must remain observant, especially during school terms. Sudden increases in money requests, secrecy, aggressive behaviour, isolation, declining academic performance, or unexplained expenses may signal deeper problems.

Sometimes, children demanding too much are already involved in harmful peer groups or dangerous habits. Parents should maintain regular communication with teachers, school administrators, and even trusted guardians to monitor children's behaviour.

Children who appreciate small things rarely become excessively demanding. Parents should intentionally teach gratitude from an early age. Let children participate in household responsibilities, understand sacrifice, and appreciate effort.

Many demanding behaviours are symptoms of emotional distance between parents and children. Some children seek attention through material demands because an emotional connection is missing at home.

Ultimately, parenting is not about impressing society. It is about preparing children for responsible adulthood.

As schools reopen, let us not only prepare children academically. Let us also prepare them morally, emotionally, financially, and socially. The habits children develop now may determine the kind of adults they become tomorrow.

Dickson Tumuramye
tumudickson@gmail.com