

Preparing Your Children For Future Wealth: How and When to Introduce Family Wealth Conversations

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The question of when to share financial information with your children is rarely only about numbers.

For families stewarding significant wealth, the issue centers on responsibility, values, and legacy.

Parents often ask:

- When do I share financial information with my children?
- What should I share?
- Will talking about money, especially significant wealth, change them in ways I don't want to see happen?

These are some of the most common and emotionally charged questions we hear from family office clients. They are also questions with no one-size-fits-all answer.

You've spent years building wealth. Through trusts, estate planning, and long-term investment strategies, your children may already be wealthy, whether they actually realize it or not. Or they may be on a path to meaningful wealth in the future as part of your eventual estate plan. Naturally, parents worry about when to begin those conversations and how much information is appropriate to share at each stage of life.

For many families, the concern isn't really about the money itself. It's about values, motivation, responsibility, and the kind of adults their children will become.

The Light Switch vs. Dimmer Switch in Family Wealth Conversations

When families ask how and when to share financial information, I often use the analogy of a light switch versus a dimmer switch.

Some families choose the light switch approach. They wait until their children reach a certain age and then hold a formal family meeting where nearly everything is shared at once. For some families, that clarity and transparency work well.

More often, however, families prefer a dimmer switch approach, gradually sharing more information over time as children mature and reach key life milestones, such as:

- Graduating from college
- Achieving financial independence
- Getting married
- Starting a family

This gradual approach allows parents to provide context, education, and guidance along the way rather than overwhelming children with information before they are ready to process it.

Values Matter More Than Numbers When Preparing Children for Inheritance

One of the biggest fears parents have is how learning about wealth might impact their children's choices, work ethic, or sense of purpose. Will they still be motivated? Will they make smart decisions? Will they share the values that matter most to the family?

While financial education is important, it's worth remembering that values are often caught, not taught. Children absorb far more from what they observe than from what they are told. If parents consistently model responsibility, generosity, humility, and intentional decision-making, those values tend to carry through, even as financial realities become clearer.

Educating heirs about wealth management begins with reinforcing family values long before discussing account balances or trust structures.

What Age to Teach Children About Finances?

There is no single answer to what age to teach children about finances. Basic financial responsibility can begin early, while discussions about trusts, estate structures, and preparing children for inheritance often come later as maturity develops. You know your children best; no family is the same, and your

children may not even all be the same in terms of the right timing to share information. However, the education and learning opportunities can begin early, regardless of when you actually choose to share your own wealth information with them.

Create Learning Opportunities Before Sharing Financial Details

Many families look for ways to introduce wealth-related conversations without immediately sharing balance sheets or trust statements.

One effective approach is involving children in a family foundation or donor-advised fund. This creates a natural forum for discussing values, priorities, and decision-making while giving children the opportunity to participate in meaningful philanthropic choices. It also subtly reinforces the idea that the family has the ability and responsibility to give, without focusing on specific numbers.

Another approach is to make intentional gifts directly to children during their parents' lifetimes. These amounts may be modest or significant, but the purpose is the same: to create real-world learning opportunities while parents are still present to offer guidance, perspective, and conversation.

Yes, some families find it uncomfortable to make outright gifts of money to their children when they are not sure they are ready to handle it. There's always a chance a child may make a choice you wouldn't have made yourself. But those moments often lead to the most valuable discussions, and they tend to be far more productive when parents are actively involved rather than learning about mistakes after the fact.

Every Family's Timeline is Different

The right approach is the one that aligns with your family's values, dynamics, and long-term goals.

What matters most is recognizing that financial transparency in multi-generational families is not a one-time event. It's an ongoing process that evolves over time. With thoughtful planning and the right advisory support, families can approach these conversations in a way that strengthens relationships, reinforces values, and prepares the next generation for the responsibilities that come with wealth.

At HB Wealth, our Family Office Wealth Advisors work closely with multi-generational families to help them navigate decisions such as when to share financial information with their children. We integrate

family wealth communication, estate planning, and long-term investment strategy into a coordinated approach aligned with what matters most to your family.

To request a consultation with a wealth advisor who specializes in multi-generational planning, please visit https://hbwealth.com/meet-the-team/wealth-advisors/?_specialization=multi-generational-families.

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