

When children's birthday gifts are all about giving



Liz Ackroyd with her daughter Sofia, whose birthday was a boon for one charity. Picture: Justin Lloyd

LISA MAYOH

SHE'S the one-year-old birthday girl who got no presents.

Instead Sofia Barrios's parents asked guests to donate to charity, raising \$1150 and joining the trend of "do-good" parties sweeping Sydney.

Sydney Uni professor and parenting expert Rosina McAlpine said Aussie parents were starting to see a negative impact of kids receiving too many gifts — including becoming expectant and unappreciative.

"Also, when children re-

ceive gift after gift after gift, it takes away the excitement of receiving a gift," she said.

However, Prof McAlpine said gifts were still important.

"While giving to charity for a child's birthday offers so many benefits, it's important to maintain a good balance — a gift for charity and a gift for the child — this way the child feels special on their birthday too," she said.

Prof McAlpine said she loved the idea of the "do-good" parties.

"Recently my friend asked us to make a donation for her daughter's birthday ...

so we contributed towards a water well being built in a village and sent her the details," she said.

"It is a very important trend with lifelong benefits

I want to set a good example for Sofia as she grows up.

Liz Ackroyd

— for our children in terms of their own wellbeing, as well as benefits for society as a whole when our children, who are the leaders of to-

morrow, are socially aware and make a positive difference in the world."

Bronwen Simmons, from Manly children's hospice Bear Cottage, said they were receiving donations as a result of the trend: "It is particularly heartwarming when these donations have been made by a child who has decided they would prefer to go without presents and do something for children less fortunate."

Sofia's parents Liz Ackroyd and Will Barrios knew

she didn't need a mountain of toys to feel loved when she turned one. Instead they made a donation to the Children's Medical Research Institute.

"I want to set a good example for Sofia as she grows up about contributing to society," Ms Ackroyd said

