



Teaching Responsibility through Chores

Teaching children how to take responsibility is not easy and takes a lot of practice, but the earlier you start handing out responsibilities, the earlier it becomes a habit. There are many tasks that children can perform, such as:

- watering plants
- making their bed
- putting away clothes
- clearing the table after a meal
- feeding pets
- helping the kitchen

Invite your children to help when it is time to do housework. However, you need to be prepared that the job may take longer than normal, and not be done to your expectations. Make sure you praise the work that they do and don't criticize what is not done correctly.

While many parents like to give money for chores, many experts believe that household responsibilities are not the place for rewards. Young children will be happy just spending time with you and hearing your praise. This will help boost their confidence level. Save the rewards for duties that go above and beyond the daily household chores.

Instead of rewards, introduce a routine so that your child is performing a task that ends with something positive. For example, your child needs to put his pajamas on, brush his teeth, and put his clothes in the hamper before he can pick out a bedtime book to read.

Teaching your children to take care of their things will help them to foster a sense of responsibility for their actions. Try to make it fun – put a timer on and have a race to see if they can pick up their toys before the timer goes off.

Don't be afraid to let your child be upset because they didn't make a good choice. If one of their toys gets broken because they didn't clean it up, don't rush out to buy them a new one. You can offer them the opportunity to earn money in order to buy a new toy. They can do this by performing extra chores around the house. Natural consequences like this are how we all learn!

It is important to remember that the long term goal is not to make sure your children are always happy, but that they develop into responsible adults. As your children grow and mature, increase their level of responsibility. Create a list of chores for the entire family. It is often a good idea to rotate the chores so that they can experience all of the household duties. The following website contains an age appropriate list of chores that most children can accomplish: <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/chores-for-children#1>