

Elementary Activity

Kids and Chores

This activity helps build self-esteem and a feeling of competence. Your children will also begin to develop good work habits and a positive attitude about work. They will also learn that there are certain jobs that just have to get done – that they are a normal part of life.

- 1. Choose a chore for each of your children to complete on a regular basis.**
Make sure they are age appropriate jobs. Preschoolers can handle one or two simple daily jobs. Older children can manage two or three daily jobs along with one or two weekly jobs. (See the suggested list on next page.)
- 2. Train your children.**
Don't assume that since your children have seen you do the task that they can do it. Be very specific in your instruction and demonstrate step-by-step as your children watch. "Clean your room" is vague and can be interpreted in any number of ways. Instead, be explicit. "Put your clothes in the closet, books on the shelf, dishes in the kitchen, and toys in the toy box." Then let your children help you, followed by your children doing the chores as you supervise. At the point you feel that your children have mastered the jobs they can take over responsibility for them.
- 3. Write them down.**
Children need a visual daily reminder. (This compares to your need for a daily planner sheet or to-do list.) A chore chart on which each child can make daily check marks is one helpful technique. Another option is to use a pegboard made for hanging keys as a holder for tags that list a daily chore on each one. Your children can flip the tags over as they complete each daily chore. At the end of the day, a parent can check for any open tags and have the children finish up before getting ready for bed.
- 4. Celebrate with a Bonus Day!**
Once in a while, just for fun, have a "Bonus Day." Prior to having your children complete their chores, hide pennies, nickels, or dimes around the house under the items that need to be cleaned. When all the chores are done to your satisfaction, the children get to keep the bonuses!

Chore Ideas

Here is a list of ideas from which you can choose a few chores for your children. Review the list, consider your children's ages, abilities, and personalities, and select a chore or two appropriate for them. As noted above, preschoolers can handle one or two simple jobs. As children get older and more capable, they can handle more and more complex jobs.

Ages 2 to 3: Put toys away, fill pet's food dish, put clothes in hamper, wipe up spills, dust, pile books or magazines, choose clothes and dress self.

Ages 4 to 5: Above plus, make own bed, empty wastebaskets, bring in mail or newspaper, clear table, pull weeds, use hand-held vacuum to pick up crumbs, water flowers, unload utensils from dishwasher, wash plastic dishes at sink, fix bowl of cereal.

Ages 6 to 7: Above plus, sort laundry, sweep floors, handle personal hygiene, set and clear table, help make and pack lunch, weed, rake leaves, keep bedroom tidy, pour own drinks, answer telephone.

Ages 8 to 9: Above plus, load dishwasher, put away groceries, vacuum a room, help make dinner, make own snacks, wash table after meals, put away own laundry, sew buttons, run own bath, make own breakfast, peel vegetables, cook simple food (such as toast), mop floor, take pet for a walk, pack own suitcase

Ages 10 and up: Above plus, unload dishwasher, fold laundry, clean bathroom, wash windows, wash car, cook simple meal with supervision, iron clothes, do laundry, baby-sit younger siblings (with adult in the home), mow lawn, clean kitchen, clean oven, change bed, make cookies or cake from box mix, plan birthday party, have neighborhood job - such as pet care or yard work, or have a paper route.

Adapted from

Parent News, "Kids and Chores," by Elizabeth Pantley, Author of **Perfect Parenting** and **Kid Cooperation** at <http://www.parent.net/article/archive/chores.shtml>