

Getting Your Kids To Do Their Chores Is A Good Thing

from the American Counseling Association

Should children be assigned tasks to do around the house – their family “chores”? While most parents would say yes, it often becomes such a hassle to get kids to do what’s asked of them that parents just let it slip. They shouldn’t.

Getting your kids to do assigned chores can be an important factor in helping them develop in positive ways. Chores are a way for a child to feel part of the family, and to gain a sense of contributing toward the family good. They provide early life lessons that makes it easier for a person to feel like an active, contributing member of society later in life.

Chores are also a means for learning about responsibility and meeting expectations, skills necessary for success in school and, eventually, the workplace. Household chores may involve simple activities, like making a bed daily or helping with the family pet, but the lessons derived from successfully completing family chores carry over into later life.

Getting chores completed successfully, however, does require planning and work on the part of parents. It's especially important to assign chores that are appropriate for a child’s age and abilities. You want to create the opportunity for successful completion and a positive experience.

You also want to keep your expectations realistic. Act the perfectionist and find reason to criticize how every chore is completed and you’re setting your child up for failure, unable to meet your expectations. At the same time, letting your child get away with little or no effort only teaches him or her to have low expectations and about his or her ability to perform.

Talk with your child about setting up a chore system. Make it clear what the child’s responsibilities are and what will be a measure of successful completion. Then develop a system of rewards for work well done that has met the agreed upon expectations. Take the time to monitor chore activities and to offer honest praise when work is done well. Don’t make the mistake of only offering criticism for efforts that fall short.

When a child can successfully complete chores and receive positive re-enforcement for doing the work well, it helps to build self-esteem and self-confidence. Start your child early in life to accept chores and do them well, and the result will be a confident, responsible child with stronger life skills.

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words: 393