

**Tips For Getting The Kids To Do Their Part**

from the American Counseling Association

You expect your children to actively help in family life, but they often don't. While there may be multiple requests, or even threats, often it can become such a hassle to get the kids to do what's asked that many parents just let it slip or do the chore themselves.

They shouldn't.

Getting 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 way to learn about responsibility and about meeting expectations, skills necessary for success in school and the workplace. While family chores may involve simple activities, like making a bed daily, helping with the family pet, or taking out the trash, the lessons derived from successfully completing such activities carry over into later life.

Getting chores completed successfully, however, does require planning and work on the part of parents. You want to assign chores that are appropriate for a child's age and abilities so that there's 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 reach the bar you're setting. At the same time, letting your child get away with little or no effort only teaches him or her to have low expectations 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 how to measure their successful completion. Develop a system of rewards for work well done. Then 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 reinforcement for doing the work well, it helps to build self-esteem and self-confidence. Start your child early in life to accept and complete chores and the result will be a confident, responsible child with stronger life skills.

*"Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to [ACAcorner@counseling.org](mailto:ACAcorner@counseling.org) or visit the ACA website at [www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org)*

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