



## Raising Helpful Children

Teaching your kids to do chores is a good idea, not just because it helps you but also because it helps them!

“Knowing how to clean the house, cook a meal, wash their clothes, and manage time and money are all necessary skills kids need to learn,” says child psychologist Dr. Bob Myers. “As parents, we have to find ways to teach them these skills and still make them feel valued for the work they have done.”<sup>1</sup>

Despite the benefit of having kids do chores, though, getting them into the habit can be challenging. It may seem easier, for example, to just hurry and mop the kitchen floor yourself rather than monitor an 8 year old as he wields the mop as a ninja weapon. But getting kids into the habit of helping around the house doesn't have to be a chore!



Source <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/child-activities/a-new-way-to-earn-with-chores/#.WLWiDxLyvBI>



Below are some tips for planning a successful chore routine in your house, as well as some ideas for which chores are appropriate for your child's age.

- 1 Get started right away.** When you consider starting a chore routine, it may be tempting to put off the practice until kids are old enough to help with big tasks like laundry or dishes. But your kids will do those “someday chores” like laundry and dishes even better if you get them started on simple tasks today. Starting young will begin to develop their work ethic and sense of responsibility--two things that will serve them well in every stage of life to come!
- 2 Provide clear expectations.** Explain to your child what jobs you are assigning to them and how frequently those jobs need to be done. For instance, you might say, “I’d like you to pick up your toys every day and organize your bookshelf once per week.” It can also be helpful to post a list or chart with this information.
- 3 Make instructions specific.** Because we, as parents, have done chores for so long, we often assume our children know exactly what we want completed. But it can help to spell things out for a young learner. For instance, you might say, “When I say I want you to pick up all your toys, I mean that every toy needs to be off the floor and put back on the shelf or in the toy bin. When I say I want you to organize your bookshelf, I mean I want you to take out any toys or other items that do not belong on the bookshelf. I then want you to straighten the books so all of them are facing the same way.”
- 4 Show them.** The first time you assign a chore, do the chore with your child. Demonstrate each step and point out things that help you do a good job. The second time they do the chore, verbally remind them how to do it, but let them do the chore themselves under your supervision. The third time, let kids attempt to do the chore independently and check their work upon completion.
- 5 Be consistent.** Because supervising your kids takes emotional energy, it may sometimes be tempting to just quickly complete their chores yourself rather than listening to them whine or complain. However, in order to build a habit, it’s important that you require kids to do their own chores every day. After several days of doing chores successfully, you can even prompt them, “I don’t even need to remind you to do your chores anymore. When you get home from school or after dinner, you are big enough to get started on your own.” You may want to link chores to some sort of reward to increase the kids’ motivation to complete them. For example, you might say, “Once you finish your chores, you can go outside to play with friends,” or “When your chores are finished, you can play video games for a half hour.”
- 6 Put the perfectionism on pause.** Keep in mind that even another adult would probably do any given chore slightly differently than you would. With a child, expect there to be even more differences! Rather than critiquing each step of their process, try to focus on giving feedback after the job is completed. Praise the outcome...and, if needed, try to offer just one suggestion for doing an even better job next time.

# Age-Appropriate Chores



## Toddlers can...

- Pick up their toys
- Wipe up spills
- Dust
- Fill pets' dishes
- Collect items from around the house
- Stack up papers, books, or magazines
- Place their dirty laundry in a hamper
- Match socks from the laundry

## Young elementary students can do all of that, plus...

- Make their bed
- Strip dirty sheets off the bed
- Get the mail
- Empty small waste baskets
- Lay out plates and silverware for dinner
- Put finished dinner plates in the sink
- Water plants
- Put silverware in the dishwasher
- Put silverware away
- Help sort laundry into piles of like items/colors

## Older elementary students can do all of that, plus...

- Wipe down kitchen counters
- Fold laundry
- Place clean laundry in appropriate drawers
- Straighten shared living spaces
- Sweep floors with a broom or vacuum
- Load and unload the dishwasher
- Help unload and put away groceries
- Help prepare meals and prepare their own toast or cereal/snacks
- Rake and bag leaves

## Middle School can do all of that, plus...

- Clean the bathroom
- Wash down mirrors and windows
- Wash the car
- Do laundry
- Change their bed sheets
- Prepare simple meals

# Chores

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Weekly Chores for

Name \_\_\_\_\_

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Task						
Task						
Task						
Task						
Task						

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Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.”

**Colossians 3:23a**

