

CHORES

Children need opportunities to belong to their families through their contribution

Until recently, children's help around the house was essential – families were bigger and there was little technology to lighten the load.



Even though we live in a more automated age than our grandparents our lives are just as busy. The need for children to pitch in and help is just as pertinent today.

The expectation that children should help at home sends a powerful message that their contribution is valued. Children learn to be contributors rather than mere takers within their social groups.

Helping at home is an opportunity for children to make a contribution to the family, rather than their moneybox so the following ideas may help you develop the helping habit in children.

1. HELP IS HABIT-FORMING.

When you consistently expect children to help from a young age their contribution not only becomes a habit but it soon becomes a family value.

2. MAKE THE HELP REAL, NOT PHONEY.

Give them real tasks such as emptying dishwashers, collecting mail and cooking meals rather than time-fillers. (Visit our website: www.parentingideas.com.au for a list of jobs suitable for each age group)

3. DON'T DO THE JOBS ('HELP') FOR THEM.

Sometimes it is easier for parents to do the jobs themselves, but this encourages children to leave it up to their parents.

4. USE GRANDMA'S PRINCIPLE TO KEEP KIDS ON TASK.

My grandma used to put things in the right order so I wasn't allowed to watch television until the table was cleared after a meal.

5. USE THE TERM 'HELP', NOT 'CHORES'.

Image is everything. The terms 'job' and 'chore' sound like hard work and can be extremely off-putting.

6. PLACE IMPORTANT HELP ON A ROSTER.

Allocate help with children's assistance then place their names on a roster next

to the tasks. You can use symbols rather than words for pre readers. When children complete a task they can place a sticker on the matching symbol on the roster. This serves as a record of their contribution. It is a good idea to change the roster around frequently to share the less appealing tasks.

7. SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION FOR THEIR HELP.

Let them know that their contribution to the family is valued. If you do it often enough they may even show their appreciation to you in return.

8. KEEP HELP AND POCKET-MONEY SEPARATE.

It's reasonable to expect that children should help around the house without expecting a reward.

The notion of helping fits in with the philosophy that a central task of parenting is to promote a sense of generosity and community-mindedness in children. As most research indicates these core values are primarily learned at home.



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