

Housework Overload!

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Tips to get your kids to help with housework & actually do some chores!

Stop Distractions- End whatever is distracting your child. More than likely, this means the electronics get turned off, and they don't come back on until the chores are done.

Explain this to them- but keep it brief- "When you do (chore)...then you can do (whatever it is they want to do)...".

Set Time Limits- Time limits are a good way to get your child to comply with chores.

You can say: "All right, the dishes have to be done in 20 minutes."

If they're not done in 20 minutes, then your child's bedtime is set earlier. Or they lose some electronics time. This creates a cost associated with their procrastinating and can be an important life lesson.

Allowance as Leverage- If you're financially able to give your child an allowance, do it. An allowance should always be tied *directly* to the chores.

For example, if your child has to be told more than once to do their chores, they would lose a certain part of their allowance. Each time you remind them, they lose one dollar, for instance.

It is also appropriate to give that part of their allowance to a sibling who does the chore instead. This way, you're not working on the chore, you're working on the communications process, as well as your child's motivation.

Importance of Structure- Structure is very important when it comes to completing household tasks. If possible, there should be a set time when chores are to be done.

You never want to be pulling your child back from something exciting in order to do something mundane and boring. Rather, you want to get them to work through the mundane things to *get* to something exciting. Sometimes as a parent you have to ask yourself, "if my child isn't doing his chores, what *is* he doing?" You really have to be aware of how your child is using his time. If he's not doing his chores because he's playing on the computer or reading a comic book, you've got to stop that pattern.

In the end, the choice shouldn't be *excitement* or *chore*. The choice should be *boredom* or *chore*. Kids have to understand that until chores are finished, there is no fun. The alternative to doing their chores should be boredom. With this kind of structure in place, most kids will eventually choose to do their chores and then get on with the things that they want to do.

When you have multiple school age children, establish a time of day when all of them are doing their chores at once. Your 13 year old is unloading the dishwasher while your 11 year old is sweeping the kitchen floor. This way, no one feels they're "missing out" or being punished, it's just chore time.

Chores, Not Punishment- Don't use chores as punishment or a consequence. A chore is an expected responsibility, to be done no matter what. More info on consequences that work:

<https://www.empoweringparents.com/article/how-to-give-kids-consequences-that-work/>

If you try these or other strategies and your child continues to be defiant to household chores or requests, here are additional resources for effective management of defiance in children:

<https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-to-handle-defiant-children-620106>

Make it Rewarding- Adults go to work everyday for a paycheck & children will see doing chores in the same light- you do something, you earn something. Try implementing a reward system. Put a chart on the fridge with each child's name on it, & their chores listed next to their names. For example, if they wash dishes after dinner & do it right, they get an 'x' by the chore name. When they get three x's, they earn a reward. Rewards do not need to cost money! It can be anything they want or would enjoy- staying up a half hour later, one hour alone time with mom, etc. Whatever the reward, establish it firmly ahead of time to avoid any arguing or disagreements.

If they want more time on their iPad or to stay up a little later, they can earn it. This allows you different options to use as rewards other than cash and it can change just as their 'wants' change.

Do not get caught in a cycle of nagging- if you're constantly nagging your child to do chores or help with housework, then you are in a pattern or cycle of nagging and it is your job as the parent to put an end to it. Remain firm and consistent- "When you do... then you can..." Period. Negotiating becomes a disruption and allows disagreements to form- as much as possible, refrain from negotiations.

Age Appropriate Chores

Helping Your Kids Grow, Learn & Prepare

Ages 2-3

- ⊕ Clean up toys
- ⊕ Put dirty laundry in hamper
- ⊕ Pull on clothing
- ⊕ Wipe cabinets & baseboards (with wet cloth or sock on hand)
- ⊕ Feed treats to pets
- ⊕ Throw away own trash
- ⊕ Clean up spills & messes

Ages 4-5

- Any previous chores
- ⊕ Get dressed independently
- ⊕ Make the bed
- ⊕ Clean up their room
- ⊕ Set & clear the table
- ⊕ Load the dishwasher
- ⊕ Feed pets
- ⊕ Sort & fold laundry
- ⊕ Put away small groceries
- ⊕ Water indoor plants
- ⊕ Prep snacks

Ages 6-8

- Any previous chores listed
- ⊕ Wake up with alarm clock
- ⊕ Prep small meals (sandwiches)
- ⊕ Load dishes in dishwasher
- ⊕ Wipe bath sink & counter
- ⊕ Get the mail
- ⊕ Collect household trash
- ⊕ Fold laundry
- ⊕ Weed the yard
- ⊕ Manage allowance

Ages 9-11

- Any previous chores
- ⊕ Load & unload the dishwasher
- ⊕ Clean bathrooms
- ⊕ Mop & vacuum
- ⊕ Unpack the groceries
- ⊕ Prep food for meals (measure, wash, peel, cut, etc.)
- ⊕ Walk the dog
- ⊕ Put away the laundry
- ⊕ Rake leaves

Ages 12+

- Any previous chores
- ⊕ Babysit (siblings or neighbors)
- ⊕ Clean the house
- ⊕ Mow the grass & shovel snow
- ⊕ Wash the car
- ⊕ Cook small meals
- ⊕ Clean the refrigerator
- ⊕ Take out the trash
- ⊕ Make the grocery list
- ⊕ Iron

Ages 16+

- Any previous chores
- ⊕ Wash & fold own laundry
- ⊕ Cook full meals
- ⊕ Organize the house
- ⊕ Clean the garage
- ⊕ Maintain yard care (lawn, bushes, walkway, etc.)
- ⊕ Help with house maintenance (repairs, painting, etc.)
- ⊕ Run household errands (if driving)