



4-H School-Age Child Care
University of California Cooperative Extension

PARENT STYLES

Tips for Busy Parents

CHILDREN AND CHORES

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"I thought I told you to clean your room," scowled mom. "I did," retorted Suzie. "Well, this room is not clean. The bed isn't made and (opening the closet door) - what did you do - stuff everything in the closet?" "Mom, you didn't tell me to clean the closet!" exclaimed Suzie.

How can I encourage responsibility in my children?

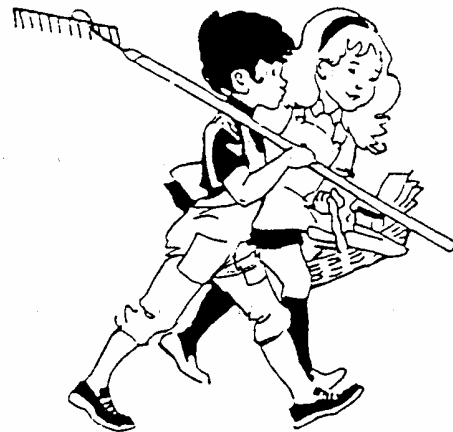
- ★ **Set an example for children to follow.** If you argue about who is going to do the dishes or put off doing unpleasant tasks you can be teaching your children to do the same.
- ★ **Expect children to give as well as receive.** Part of growing up is learning how to take care of yourself and others. Living together means sharing the load.
- ★ **Teach children how to do things themselves.** Children can take on more responsibility than many of us think. Children enjoy the feeling of accomplishment that work gives them. Their confidence blossoms as they master each new task.
- ★ **Give children time to learn.** If you take over and do things when children make mistakes or criticize their efforts, children will never learn to master the task.

- ★ **Give children responsibility that is meaningful or has a purpose.**

Children grow resentful if they are only given menial tasks, or chores that no one wants to do.

- ★ **Give clear expectations of how you want the job done.**

Often times our disappointment with children's "job performance" is because we didn't explain clearly how we wanted the task completed. Simply saying "clean the kitchen" may mean to the child only washing the dishes, when you expected the counters washed and the floors swept.



Resource: Footsteps: Teaching Children Responsibility, University of Maryland Cooperative Extension.

Kid-Sized Jobs

Children feel belonging when they can make a real contribution. Children have ownership, motivation and enthusiasm when they are included in the decision.

Getting chores done quickly is easier if everyone takes part in deciding and doing of chores.

Here's some ideas:

- ☆ Have a Family Meeting where everyone is involved in the discussion.
- ☆ Use a sign up list or chart which gives everyone a chance to choose chores for a week or month.
- ☆ Try a workwheel that is turned daily or weekly to assign everyone a new set of duties.
- ☆ Put all chores in a jar or hat and let each person draw out several.
- ☆ Post ads when special tasks need to be done.

When children see all the jobs that must be done and know that they have a say in what they do, they are more willing to do their share.