

Getting Children to Help Around the House

Pre-reading

Questions:

- Do your children help around the house?
- Do you wish you could find a way to get your children to be more helpful with the household chores?

Definitions:

- Automatic – doing something without being told to, or without thinking about it
- Consideration – to think about something carefully
- Satisfactory – doing something in an acceptable way
- Eliminate – to get rid of



Reading

Every parent appreciates a helpful child around the house, but most children are not “automatically” helpful. Parents need to take the time to teach children how to help and to find ways to make it rewarding for the children to help. Here are some ideas that you might try with your children.

Start by having a family meeting. You will need to get everyone around the kitchen table for a discussion about what chores need to be done and how each person can share in the family chores. Make a list and include the children’s ideas.

Each family member needs to be responsible for their own room. Beyond that, the family needs to decide who will do what chore. Involve everyone in a plan of dividing up chores and assigning them fairly. You will need to take into consideration the age of the children and difficulty of the chore. Preschoolers can handle one or two simple daily chores. Older children can manage two or three daily chores along with one or two weekly chores. Make a visual list or chart of the chores assigned to each family member.

At the family meeting, stress the importance of each family member doing their part. Show children how some tasks can be **consolidated**. For example, children can set the table for breakfast while putting away the supper dishes.

Encourage everyone to make the house easier to clean up by getting rid of clutter or things that are no longer needed. Try to eliminate the clutter that makes the house appear messy.

Parents will need to take time to teach children how to clean. Be very specific in your instruction and **demonstrate** step-by-step as your child watches. The next step is to let your child help you, followed by your child doing the chore as you supervise. Children also need to learn how to operate some household equipment. Children who can run complicated computer games can certainly learn how to operate the vacuum cleaner and dishwasher. Encouraging them while they are learning is very important and be generous with compliments when the chore is completed well.

The family also needs to have a family meeting to decide what they can do for fun to reward family members for helping with the chores. Having fun can include anything from a family game night to an outing to the local park. Again, be sure to include the children in the discussion and decision making. Children who know that there will be fun in return for doing chores are more likely to be willing to help!

Understanding

1. What does the story say that each family member should be responsible for? _____

2. What does the word **demonstrate** mean? _____

3. What should you encourage each family member to get rid of to help make the house easier to clean? _____

4. What does the story suggest that you do to reward family members for helping around the house? _____

5. What does the word **consolidate** mean? _____

6. What kind of a meeting does the story suggest that you have and who should be included? _____

7. How should a parent teach their child to clean? _____

Writing

Option A: If you have children, how do you get them to help with chores?

Option B: In your own words, summarize what you learned about getting children to help around the house.
