

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

Assuming responsibilities at home can enhance a child's development, as he begins to view himself as a person who is capable of making a contribution to the family. The child becomes useful and needed at an early age, with the expectation of becoming more self-reliant and independent as time passes. If a child is encouraged to assume responsibilities at an early age, the entire family will then always be involved in the collaborative effort to meet the family's daily need for nourishment, cleanliness, care of clothing, and life in an environment to their liking. Because these needs are real, the child will view his contribution as important. Since the child does not pay the members of his family for their work toward meeting the daily needs, it doesn't make sense that they would pay the child.

The suggested activities that follow, which are practical life activities for various ages, should begin at a very early age when the child is interested in imitating everything the parent does. This will occur between the ages of twelve and eighteen months, when the child is walking well. The child collaborates with the parent at first, and then is led to independent activity.

Do not interrupt or criticize the young child's efforts, as he may not be willing to return to the activity once the interruption has occurred. Represent the activity if necessary at another time, to increase the possibility of success. Even praise is an interruption of concentration and will interfere with the development of independence and self-esteem.

Elementary and middle school children can be coached as they work, so that they can learn how to accomplish a task with success.

As the child advances in age, he can continue to maintain some of his past responsibilities as well as assuming new ones; the list is meant to be cumulative, and it is meant to suggest possibilities and to be only a starting point.

Before determining how a child will contribute to meeting the family's daily needs, it would be helpful to keep some of the following ideas in mind.

1. Never do anything for a child that he can do for himself.
2. Older children should be consulted about the jobs that need to be done. After they have helped identify the work, then they must help set the standards for work, and be involved in the evaluation of the completed job.
3. Allow the children choices in which jobs they would like to do. (Not doing anything is not one of the choices). They must then follow through with their choice or experience consequences.

4. Allow the consequences to follow logically from the uncompleted job. Do not discuss beforehand what will happen if someone does not fulfill the commitment.
5. Place appropriate time limits on when a task should be completed. If the child participates in setting these time limits, he will be more willing to meet them.
6. Vary the tasks to do. Children become easily bored with the same thing. They like the challenge of a new or unusual job.
7. Use common sense in the number of tasks expected of each child.
8. Remember you are a model of "order" to your child. Do not expect orderliness from them that you do not expect of yourself.
9. Examine your own standards. Perhaps you are a perfectionist about your house, feel uncomfortable if things are slightly out of order, or are concerned about what others will think. Learn to accept the house as a place of work and communication for the members, and not as a reflection of your own personal worth.

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TWO-YEAR OLDS

1. Picking up unused toys and putting them in the proper place
2. Putting books and magazines in a rack
3. Sweeping the floor
4. Placing napkins, plates, and silverware on the table
5. Cleaning up what they have dropped while eating
6. Choosing between two foods for breakfast or choosing from two choices of clothing to wear
7. Clearing own place at the table and putting the dishes on the counter (or in the dishwasher) after clearing the leftovers off the plate
8. Using the toilet
9. Performing simple hygiene – brushing teeth, washing and drying hands, and brushing hair
10. Undressing and dressing self with some help
11. Wiping up own accidents
12. Carrying boxed or canned goods from grocery sacks to the proper shelf and putting some things away on a lower shelf
13. Dusting tables and shelves
14. Emptying wastepaper baskets
15. Watering outside plants

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FOUR-YEAR OLDS

1. Setting the table – with good dishes, too
2. Putting the groceries away
3. Helping with grocery shopping and compiling a grocery list
4. Polishing shoes and cleaning up afterwards
5. Following a schedule for feeding pets
6. Helping to do yard and garden work—weeding, raking, shoveling
7. Helping to make the beds and vacuuming
8. Helping to do the dishes or filling the dishwasher
9. Dusting the furniture
10. Spreading butter, mayo/mustard on sandwiches
11. Preparing cold cereal
12. Helping to prepare plates of food for the family dinner
13. Making a simple dessert
14. Holding the hand mixer to whip the potatoes or mix up a cake
15. Getting the mail
16. Telling parent his/her whereabouts before going out to play
17. Playing without constant adult supervision and attention
18. Polishing silver
19. Helping to wash a car
20. Sharpening pencils
21. Pouring own drink with appropriately sized pitcher and glasses

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FIVE-YEAR OLDS

1. Helping with meal planning and grocery shopping
2. Making own sandwich or simple breakfast and then cleaning up
3. Preparing the dinner table
4. Tearing up lettuce for the salad
5. Putting in certain ingredients for a recipe
6. Making bed and cleaning own room
7. Dressing on his/her own and choosing clothes
8. Scrubbing the sink, toilet, and bathtub
9. Cleaning mirrors and windows
10. Separating clothing for washing various loads
11. Folding clean clothes and putting them away
12. Answering the telephone and beginning to dial the phone for use
13. Helping with yard work
14. Paying for small purchases
15. Taking out the garbage
16. Feeding pets and cleaning their living area
17. Learning to tie own shoelaces

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SIX-YEAR OLDS

1. Choosing own clothing for the day according to weather
2. Watering plants and flowers
3. Peeling vegetables
4. Cooking simple food (boiled egg, toast)
5. Preparing own school lunch
6. Putting clothes into the dryer
7. Hanging up own clothes in the closet
8. Taking pet for a walk
9. Being responsible for own minor injuries
10. Keeping the garbage container clean
11. Cleaning out inside of car
12. Straightening or cleaning out the silverware drawer
13. Folding napkins properly and setting silverware properly

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EIGHT- AND NINE-YEAR OLDS

1. Mopping or buffing the floor
2. Cleaning Venetian blinds
3. Running own bath water
4. Helping others with their work when asked
5. Straightening own closet and drawers
6. Shopping for and selecting own clothing and shoes with parent
7. Folding blankets
8. Sewing on buttons
9. Sewing rips in seams
10. Cleaning storage room
11. Cleaning up animal messes in the yard and house
12. Beginning to read recipes and cook for the family
13. Baby sitting for short periods of time, with adult still in the house
14. Cutting flowers and making a centerpiece
15. Painting fence or shelves
16. Helping to write simple letters
17. Helping with cleaning the refrigerator
18. Feeding the baby
19. Writing thank-you notes
20. Bathing younger siblings
21. Polishing silverware, copper, or brass items
22. Cleaning patio furniture

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TEN- AND ELEVEN-YEAR OLDS

1. Changing sheets on the bed and putting dirty sheets in the hamper
2. Operating the washer and/or dryer
3. Measuring detergent
4. Buying groceries using a list, involving comparative shopping
5. Crossing streets unassisted
6. Preparing pastries from box mixes
7. Preparing family meal
8. Receiving and answering own mail
9. Pouring and making tea and coffee
10. Waiting on guests
11. Planning own birthday or other parties
12. Giving simple first aid
13. Doing neighborhood chores
14. Sewing, knitting, or weaving
15. Doing chores without a reminder
16. Learning about banking
17. Washing the family car
18. Earning own money
19. Being alone at home
20. Handling sums of money up to \$5.00 honestly
21. Packing own suitcase

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

1. Putting siblings to bed
2. Cleaning pool and pool area
3. Respecting others' property
4. Running own errands
5. Mowing lawn
6. Helping parent build things and doing the family errands
7. Scheduling for himself/herself ample time for studies
8. Buying own sweets or treats
9. Determining how late he/she should stay up during the week, keeping in mind the importance of getting necessary rest
10. Preparing many family meals, using nutritious foods
11. Anticipating the needs of others and initiating the appropriate action
12. Accepting own realistic capabilities and limitations
13. Taking responsibility for own decisions
14. Contributing to mutual respect, loyalty, and honesty in the family

