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The Benefits of Chores

Even though it is more difficult at the time to persist in having children do chores, **research indicates that those children who do have a set of chores have higher self-esteem, are more responsible, and are better able to deal with frustration and delay gratification, all of which contribute to greater success in school.**

Furthermore, research by Marty Rossman* shows that involving children in household tasks at an early age can have a positive impact later in life. In fact, says Rossman, "the best predictor of young adults' success in their mid-20's was that they participated in household tasks when they were three or four."

Doing chores gives a child the opportunity to give back to their parents for all you do for them. Kids begin to see themselves as important contributors to the family. They feel a connection to the family.

Holding them accountable for their chores can increase a sense of themselves as responsible and actually make them more responsible. Children will feel more capable for having met their obligations and completed their tasks.

One of the most frequently cited causes of over-indulgence stems from parents doing too much for their children and not expecting enough of them. Not being taught the skills of everyday living can limit children's ability to function at age appropriate levels. For example:

- 5-year-old Sara goes to kindergarten and is one of the few students who has no idea how to put on and button her own coat.
- Sam, age 7, goes to a friend's house for dinner but does not know how to pour juice for himself.
- Fast forward to Beth who at age 18 goes away to college not knowing how to do her own laundry.

By expecting children to complete self-care tasks and to help with household chores, parents equip children with the skills to function independently in the outside world.

With only so many hours in a day, parents need to help children decide how to spend their time and to determine what is most important.

If you let children off the hook for chores because they have too much schoolwork or need to practice a sport, then you are saying, intentionally or not, that their academic or athletic skills are most important. And if your children fail a test or fail to block the winning shot, then they have failed at what you deem to be most important. They do not have other pillars of competency upon which to rely.

By completing household tasks, they may not always be the star student or athlete, but they will know that they can contribute to the family, begin to take care of themselves, and learn skills that they will need as an adult.

Setting the Tone

In addition to being steadfast in the belief that it is important to have children complete chores, your attitudes can help set the tone that will increase possible cooperation in your household. You can consider how you look at your “chores” – you are your children’s most important role model.

As Barbara Coloroso suggests in her book *Kids Are Worth It*, if parents “do chores with a sense of commitment, patience and humor, our children will have a model to do likewise.”

- You can send the message that chores are a bore and something to be avoided at all costs.
- Conversely, you can send the message that these are the tasks that need to be completed in order for your household to run smoothly and that everyone in the family is encouraged and expected to participate.

Young children naturally want to be a part of the family and want to help. Ideally, you will encourage their participation (even if it takes more work on your part in the short run). By the age of three, youngsters can be assigned their own tasks, for which they are responsible, such as pulling up the sheets on their bed or placing the napkins on the table or sorting the laundry. **The size of the task does not matter; it is the responsibility associated with it that does.**

For those parents who did not begin a chore regimen when their kids were little, you can still start a plan now. You can take some time to think about what tasks you need help with, what life skills your children need to learn, and what are each child’s interests and abilities.

As your children grow, it is important to re-evaluate your chore plan. Some families use birthdays as natural markers for examining what responsibilities as well as what privileges their children are receiving. Other, naturally occurring breaks that lend themselves to instituting or revisiting a chore plan include the beginning or end of the school year or returning from vacations.

Consider:

- What chores do you want completed in your home?
- Are the ones already selected the best fit for each of your children and ones that are most meaningful to the running of your household?
- Are there life skills that a particular child needs to learn?
- Are you happy with your decision to tie/not tie allowance to chore completion?

As you contemplate these decisions, you can ask your children for their input. Children are more cooperative when they have a say. Also, brainstorm ideas for overcoming any obstacles you have faced in the past, such as children not following through, arguing, or not doing a thorough job.

Many parents hold a family meeting to discuss chores and when and how they will be starting, revising, or reinstating them. Such times together can build morale, improve relationships, and facilitate creative problem solving

Source: <http://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/responsibility-and-chores/part-i-benefits-of-chores/>