

10 Sure Fire Secrets In Getting Your Kids To Do Daily Chores... Happily

Getting your fantastic kids to help with daily chores can be as difficult as pulling hen's teeth. After begging and pleading, parents often give up or turn to the famous family chore chart for relief.

Chore charts are great... but after the newness wears off... they often become just part of the clutter on the counter or fridge. Parents have to be very clever in their parenting skills, to get kids to help cheerfully.

Kids often become overwhelmed with chores, especially if they haven't been trained how to accomplish the job. "Go clean your room," can seem like an overwhelming task to a young child, especially if the room is particularly cluttered.

Here are 10 "Tried and True" parenting techniques I discovered and found to be successful in getting my kids and grands to help with the family chores and have fun while doing it.

1. 15 Minute Tidy

Set the timer on the stove. Tell the kids, "We have 15 minutes to clean up this room. If we can do it in the time frame... we'll all go get ice cream." Keep working as fast as you can. If there's a slacker in the group, remind him that ice cream is only for the worker bees not for the king or queen bee. If they finish the general pick before the timer goes off, grab the glass cleaner and have them clean a window, or TV screen.

Now off for ice cream!

This tactic turned out best when I worked right along with my very young kids. They love to see me run around trying to beat the clock.

2. The Penny Jar Pick Up

Toss your loose pennies into a jar. When you need a room cleaned up, tell your kids you'll let them pay a penny for every item they pick up. Besides toys etc., scraps of paper count... even the tiny ones. Have them lay out their items on the table and count them. Once the items are counted, they have to put them away in the correct place for an extra ten-cent bonus. Two hundred items for \$2.00... that is a deal!

This game also works out in the yard. I have a willow tree that sheds little limbs. The grands will scurry about gathering fallen limbs and branches. It's worth every penny I spend. This game works best with young children. The older kids don't buy into it very well... they're into the "big bucks."

3. Pick up Everything That is Yours

The family room, where the TV is located, seems to collect "this and that" from all family members. When it's time to clean up... announce, "Pick up everything that's yours before you leave the room." This also includes everything they brought into the room, such as a glass, or a book, etc.

This can be a challenge sometimes because family members will deny, blame, accuse and direct others. The secret is... make this

a quite game. No talking. If anyone talks, other than asking directions from you, they get an extra chore. It doesn't take long before everyone minds their own business and gets the job done.

This tactic was one of the hardest to implement. Everyone had so much to say about what they had or had not contributed to the clutter. Once they received an extra chore, because they directed someone else or forgot to remove their shoes from the room, they were more careful the next time around.

4. The Dollar Door

Hang bills inside a cupboard door... ones and fives. Attach a sticky note to each of the bills naming an extra job you need to have done like, washing windows, sweeping out the garage, mowing the lawn. These chores could be above and beyond what they are expected to do on a regular basis. When a child wants money to go to a movie or some other activity, have them look inside the cupboard and choose a duty. When the chore is completed, they take the bill off the door. Kids love the opportunity to make a little extra cash by taking on additional tasks.

This worked great with my older boys... who always wanted a bit of extra cash.

5. One At A Time

Stand in the middle of the rubble and call out one item at a time that needs to be put away. "Find all cars and put them away." "Find all the doll clothes and put them away." "Find all blankets and put them away." Soon the room is picked up in no time at all

because it was broken down in small parts. The child is not so overwhelmed by the task.

If you have more than one child participating, say, "Tom, pick up all the cars. Ellen, pick up all the doll clothes. Mary, pick up all the crayons." They will often run around competing with each other.

My two little granddaughters respond very well to this tactic.

6. Five Chores And You're Done

When a child finishes a duty and you keep adding more and more, they become grouchy and resistant. Specify exactly how many chores they have to complete, whether it's one, two or five. When they can see the end in sight, they are more cooperative.... or little more cooperative.... depending upon how many chores are on the list, of course.

Example: "You have five chores to complete before you can go out to play. 1. Feed the dog, 2. Take out the garbage, 3. Vacuum the living room, 4. Put away your clothes that are in the laundry room, 5. Empty the dishwasher." When they complete their tasks, they report to you.

Kids are much happier doing chores when they can see the end and reach the goal.

I have to say... this tactic worked out better for me over a chore chart. If I ask my kids to do something that wasn't on the chart, they would gripe. "That's Brad's job or Emily's job." If I needed

immediate help or Brad was away from home, I couldn't ask someone to take on the task with out lots of moaning.

7. Leave No Dust Behind

Sometimes kids don't dust under and behind lamps, trinkets and other items. Place coins under or behind items that have to be moved in order to do a good job. Announce: "There is one dollar in coins hidden. You will have to move items and dust under them and around them in order to find the money."

My young girls loved the dusting game. They would dust and dust in order to find the amount of money I had specified had been hidden... often dusting through the entire house.

8. Grandma Clean

My mom had great expectation of her 6 daughters when it came to cleaning. It had to be well done... squeaky clean. In other words... there is "Clean," and then there is "Grandma Clean."

As a result of my experience, my kids would ask, "Do you want it "Clean" or "Grandma Clean". In other words, "Do you want a quick pick up or do you want a detailed clean up today?" If kids know what your exact expectation is, they are much happier because they don't have to guess.

Traditions die hard. My grands understand what "Grandma Clean" means because their folks use the term. It's fun for them to know it started with their Great Grandma DiStefano.

9. Turn Up The Music

Put on a “snappy” tune and tell the kids they must have a chore completed by the time the song ends. Perhaps they are loading the dishwasher, taking out the garbage, or tidying up a bathroom. This game will keep them on their toes in order to beat the music. Fun music lifts the spirit...and they may even sing along. This tactic is good when they have a “small” chore to complete. (You can also consider two song chores.)

My grands really love this game... it's a great one to play when they have all been at my home for dinner and their folks are getting ready to leave. Games are quickly put away and play clothes are put in the dress-up bin.

10. Let Them Be In Charge Of Their Chores.

Once a child has learned how to complete a chore... cleaning the bathroom, vacuuming the living room, making their bed, etc.... let them be in charge of the chore. As long as the task is completed, let them do it their way.

Kids often like to experiment and change things up. Maybe they want to clean the bathroom mirrors before they clean the shower. Perhaps they want to make their bed so their head will rest at the foot of the bed rather than the other way around. Possibly, they want to vacuum the family room after dinner instead of before.

Avoid being too rigid in your expectation of how and when a duty is completed. When kids are learning to complete tasks, lighten up on your expectations. The bed may not be perfect... but it will get better.

Also, when kids know they are in charge, they're more likely to complete the job with smiles on their faces

My daughter, Emily, would do her best cleaning with I wasn't around. She just didn't appreciate my constant correction. Oh my... it's never too late to learn. I'm so much better with my grands. In fact... who is that "Mom" my kids talk about?

Bonus Tip: Stay Pleasant

No one like to do chores when mom is cranky. If you can keep chores fun, you will get a much better response and results from your kids. When mom or dad start to get upset, and bossy, the working climate changes and your kids will resist in many ways.

We often take "every" chore tooooooo seriously.

You must weigh the importances. Some chores merit a different urgency. Example: Feeding a pet has a greater seriousness than sweeping off the porch.

Be patient. If the task looks overwhelming to you, can you imagine how it looks to your child? Sometimes mom and dad need to offer a helping hand... even when it's your child's responsibility.

It's most important for our kids is to see smiles on our faces when we going about our own responsibilities. Kids mimic what they see. If we want to see happy faces on our kids while they work, we need to be happy campers too.

Children are learning and preparing for adulthood. If you teach them kindly, and make working together fun, it will make all the difference in the world... for everyone now... and for the future.

When I was raising my kids, I had two "mature neighbors" who had raised big families. (8 and 12 children) Those women had a lot to offer in the way of advice for a young mom. Patience with their kids was their number one quality. Thanks, Betty Jo and Colleen, for your great example.

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