

Age-Appropriate Family Responsibility Ideas

Toddlers Ages 2 to 3

Toddlers actually WANT to help. Capitalize on this, and make it a game! Remember they're little: Start small. Make it fun: Add music, dance and sing while you do your chores together. Be patient. Help your toddler learn about teamwork by doing these tasks together. Model the job and let them practice following directions. Failure is OK. Praise them for a job well done, and celebrate when the work is complete with high fives and an extra special dance move.

- ♥ Hang up jacket and preschool backpack
- ♥ Put their own shoes away
- ♥ Put toys and games away
- ♥ Put away crayons, markers, and other art supplies
- ♥ Pile books & magazines neatly
- ♥ Wipe up spills
- ♥ Help clear the dinner table
- ♥ Straighten their bed covers
- ♥ Sweep or push a Swiffer™ (minus an extension) around the floor
- ♥ Dust low furniture/bookshelves
(an old sock on their hand helps, and feather dusters are fun!)
- ♥ Fill pet's food dish/water bowl; feed fish
- ♥ Put dirty clothes in laundry basket
- ♥ Put pre-sorted clothes into the washer
- ♥ Turn clothes right side out before/after laundering
- ♥ Match socks after they are washed
- ♥ Fold washcloths and hand towels
- ♥ Put clean clothes into correct drawers
- ♥ Water outdoor plants

Age-Appropriate Family Responsibility Ideas

Preschoolers/Kindergarteners Ages 4 to 6

Consider creating a chore chart – either print out a fresh one each week, or laminate and keep a dry erase marker nearby. Tackle one task at a time to prevent overwhelming your little one. Start raising your standards of what a job well done looks like; make sure they fully complete each task to the best of their ability. Reinforce to them how much you rely on their help to make the household run smoothly. and let them know how much you appreciate their assistance.

Any of the above responsibilities, plus:

- ♥ Make bed, periodically clear out everything from underneath
- ♥ Empty wastebaskets/recycle bins into the larger garage bins
- ♥ Re-shelve books
- ♥ Brush pet's fur
- ♥ Bring in mail or newspaper
- ♥ Carry groceries/shopping bags in from the car to the house
- ♥ Help put away groceries
- ♥ Unload silverware from dishwasher
- ♥ Set / clear the table with supervision; put items back into fridge
- ♥ Wipe the table after meals
- ♥ Help make baked goods (heavy parental assistance)
- ♥ Prepare a bowl of cereal + clean-up afterwards
- ♥ Make a simple sandwich (PB&J) + clean-up afterwards
- ♥ Sort dirty laundry by color
- ♥ Use hand-held vacuum to pick up crumbs
- ♥ Put spare toilet paper in each bathroom
- ♥ Water the garden
- ♥ Help wash the car

Age-Appropriate Family Responsibility Ideas

Early Elementary Children Ages 7 to 9

By now kids are onto us – chores aren't as fun as we first led them to believe. However, they are important and the child needs to understand how their contributions are increasingly important to the smooth running of the home. They are also starting to gain more independence and self-sufficiency in caring for their daily eating and cleanliness, and perhaps that of others (younger siblings, pets).

Any of the above responsibilities, plus:

- ♥ Tidy up bedroom
- ♥ Sort, Fold, and Put away own laundry
- ♥ Put groceries away unassisted
- ♥ Make own breakfast, snacks
- ♥ Help make and pack school lunches
- ♥ Help make dinner
- ♥ Set table unassisted (other than help getting things off high shelves)
- ♥ Help feed younger children
- ♥ Clear table and load dishwasher
- ♥ Wipe table and kitchen counter after meals
- ♥ Vacuum unassisted
- ♥ Sweep floors
- ♥ Mop floors
- ♥ Wipe down bathroom counter; scrub sink
- ♥ Bring empty trash/recycling bins back from curb
- ♥ Water houseplants
- ♥ Be responsible for feeding a pet or livestock daily
- ♥ Take smaller dogs for a walk
- ♥ Scoop cat litter box
- ♥ Pick up/dispose of animal waste in the yard (use disposable gloves)

Age-Appropriate Family Responsibility Ideas

Late Elementary Ages 10 to 12

This is where the true resistance starts to set in. Kids are OVER doing chores and will let you know every time you ask. Setting expectations of when chores are to be done helps. Think about triggers and behaviors, such as, "When you get home from school, you do your homework before screens," or, "Before you eat YOUR dinner, you feed the pets THEIR dinner," or, "When you get home from sports practice on Tuesday, take the smelly trash to the curb before you shower." Routines help tremendously in getting chores done with the least friction, while reinforcing the habits you're helping create.

Any of the above responsibilities, plus:

- ♥ Be responsible for own homework
- ♥ Take full trash/recycling to the curb for pick-up
- ♥ Do own laundry from start to finish
- ♥ Change & launder their own bed linens
- ♥ Cook simple meals with supervision
- ♥ Unload dishwasher fully
- ♥ Clean kitchen
- ♥ Clean hardwood stairs (damp cloth) or carpeted stairs (small handheld vacuum)
- ♥ Rake yard leaves
- ♥ Weed garden beds, patio pavers
- ♥ Help plant new seedlings or dig holes for larger landscaping
- ♥ Wash windows, clean mirrors
- ♥ Take larger dogs for a walk
- ♥ Baby-sit younger siblings (with adult nearby)
- ♥ Clean pet cages and bedding (guinea pig, hamster, turtle, etc.)
- ♥ Wipe down interior of kitchen appliances (fridge, microwave)
- ♥ Grocery shopping assistance

Age-Appropriate Family Responsibility Ideas

Teenagers 13+

You now have young adults on your hands, and each will respond differently to the increased number of chores and the standards by which you expect them to be done properly. Don't stop praising them – just as your 3 year old flourishes under your positive attention and kind words, so does your 13 year old. He/she may not show it outwardly, but acknowledging their efforts matters. Some of these responsibilities remain expectations of being part of the family. Others may start meriting additional allowance or one-off compensation. Do what works best for your family.

Any of the above responsibilities, plus:

- ♥ Prepare easy full family meals
- ♥ Clean bathroom including shower/tub, toilet (inside & out), and floor
- ♥ Clothes ironing
- ♥ Wash exterior, vacuum interior, and wash windows of car
- ♥ Baby-sit younger siblings on their own
- ♥ Mow lawn
- ♥ Tutor younger siblings
- ♥ Grocery shopping independently