



Chores Summary

Why Chores?

Chores allow your child/teen to play a role in contributing to the maintenance and care of your family's household. Daily chores are a way for your child/teen to learn valuable skills like timeliness, work ethic, and responsibility. Doing chores teaches a work ethic that is essential in helping children/teens persist toward any type of goal.

Tip These steps are done best when you and your child/teen are not tired or in a rush.

Tip Intentional communication and a healthy parenting relationship support these steps.

Step 1. Get Your Child/Teen Thinking by Getting Their **Input**

Consider what chores need to be done. You might start by thinking through rooms of the house beginning with your child's/teen's room.

- *"Help me come up with a list of chores. What might be some chores we should consider?"*
- *"Why are chores important?"*
- *"What chores feel most meaningful to you?"*
- *"Which ones do you think you can be successful getting done regularly?"*

Discuss challenges. In Step 2, plan to teach what they can do instead.

Write the plan.

Post the plan in a visible location.

Tip Create a checklist together of your household responsibility plan on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Children/Teens appreciate owning the list and enjoy checking off their list. And, this way you are not micro-managing them. Instead, you are supporting their independence.

Trap Be sure you create your plan at a calm time. Don't create your plan when you are either in the routine itself, are hungry or tired, or have time pressures.

Step 2. **Teach** New Skills by Interactive Modeling

- Say what you will model and why.
- Model the behavior.
- Ask your child/teen what they noticed.
- Invite your child/teen to model.
- Ask what they noticed with their own modeling.
- Practice together.
- Provide specific feedback starting with strengths using “I notice...”
- Be certain and pick a time to do this when you do not have time pressures.
- Just working side by side on a project and chatting about what you are actually doing models the behaviors, promotes reflection on what you’re doing, and helps transfer the skills to your child/teen.

Tip Your child/teen is interested in what’s happening in the outside world and making connections, so use this motivator! Experiment with having your child/teen wait on your family table. Play it out by having them set the table, take drink orders, and serve. Or, if your child/teen is more interested in meal preparation, have them select the menu, shop for it, and actively work together on cooking and preparing it.

Step 3. **Practice** to Grow Skills and Develop Habits

- Use “*I’d love for you to...*” statements: “*I’d love for you to make breakfast that has your own flair.*”
- Recognize effort: “*I notice how you brought back the garbage can from the curb today without me asking. That’s taking responsibility!*”
- Proactively remind: “*Remember what we do with the pot handle?*”

Trap Don’t move on or nag. Children/teens often need more time to perform tasks that challenge them even if you believe they are simple and don’t require much time. Be sure to wait long enough for your child/teen to show you they are competent. Your waiting could make all the difference in whether they are able to do what you need them to do.

Step 4. **Support** Your Child’s/Teen’s Development and Success

- Ask key questions: “*How are you feeling about clean up time? Do you know where everything goes?*”
- Infuse some fun! Working together as a family can be enjoyable time spent. Turn on some music or sing a song while working.
- Reflect on outcomes: “*Looks like you forgot to set the table. What could help you remember in the future?*”
- Stay engaged. Working together on particularly challenging chores can offer additional support and motivation for your child/teen when tough issues arise.
- Follow through with logical consequences to repair harm when needed.

Trap Check your own tone and attitude toward chores! If you groan when it's time to get them done, your child/teen will surely groan as well. And, it could add to your struggle to get your child/teen involved. If you approach chores with a "Let's dig in together" kind of attitude, that's how they will learn to approach them as well.

Step 5. **Recognize** Effort and Quality to Foster Motivation

- Notice even small successes: *"I noticed you put all of your supplies in their proper bins on your own in the time we agreed upon. Yes! Excellent."*
- Recognize small steps along the way.
- Build celebrations into your routine. For example, *"We'll get our business taken care of first with clean up in the evening, and then we can play a game or watch a movie or show."* Include high fives, fist bumps, and hugs in your repertoire of ways to appreciate one another.

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