



Chores Summary

Why Chores?

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

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

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

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

Ask and negotiate. You might just start by thinking through rooms of the house beginning with your 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 at getting done regularly?"*

Tip Create a checklist together of your household responsibility plan on a whiteboard or chalkboard. 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.

- Discuss challenges. In Step 2, plan to teach what they can do instead.
- Make agreements very clear.
- Write your plan.
- Post your plan in a visible location.

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

- Say what you will model and why.
- Model the behavior.
- Ask your teen what they noticed.
- Invite your teen to model.
- Ask what they noticed with their own modeling.
- Practice together.
- Provide specific feedback starting with strengths using “I notice...”
- The following is an example of how this might look between a parent and teen who are talking about mowing the lawn. *“I’d love to show you how to keep yourself safe while mowing the lawn. I will be showing you some basics, but I want you to watch for some of the things I do to keep safe. There are also a few things I will do that make things easier. I want you to see if you can catch these.”*

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

- Use “I’d love to see...” statements: *“I’d love to see how you make dinner for the family.”*
- Recognize effort: *“I notice how you brought back the garbage can from the curb today without me asking -- that’s taking responsibility!”*
- Proactively remind: You may whisper in your teen’s ear, *“Remember the ways to stay safe when moving the lawn? What are they?”*

Trap Don’t move on or nag. 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 them 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 Teen’s Development and Success

- Ask key questions: *“How are you feeling when it’s time to clean up? Do you know where everything goes?”*
- Infuse some fun! Why not make clean-up time or chore time fun? Working together as a family can be enjoyable time spent. Turn on some of your teen’s favorite music or sing a song while working.
- Reflect on outcomes: *“Looks like you forgot to finish the laundry. What could help you remember in the future?”*
- Stay engaged. Working together on particularly challenging times of the routine can help offer additional support and motivation for your 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 teen will surely groan as well. And, it could add to your struggle to get them involved. If you approach chores with a “Let’s dig in together” kind of attitude, that’s how your teen will learn to approach them as well.

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

- Notice: *“I notice you put all of the laundry away in the time we agreed upon. Yes! Excellent.”*
- Recognize small steps along the way.
- Build celebrations into your routine. Include high fives, fist bumps, and hugs in your repertoire of ways to appreciate one another.

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