

## Age Appropriate Chores

### Pre-K

- Pick up toys and put in the proper place
- Place napkins, plates, and silverware on the table (perhaps not correctly at first)
- Clear their own place at the table and put the dishes on the counter after cleaning the leftovers off the plate
- Wipe up their own accidents
- Unload utensils from the dishwasher
- Fold washcloths and socks
- Set the table--with good dishes, too
- Follow a schedule for feeding pets
- Help make the beds and vacuum
- Help wash the dishes or fill the dishwasher
- Dust the furniture
- Prepare cold cereal
- Hold the hand mixer to whip potatoes or mix up a cake
- Get the mail

### Kindergarten

- Help with the meal planning and grocery shopping
- Make their own sandwich or simple breakfast, then clean up
- Pour their own drinks
- Tear up lettuce for the salad
- Make the bed and clean their room
- Scrub the sink, toilet, and bathtub
- Separate clothes (white, color) for washing
- Take out the garbage
- Fold and put away clothes

### 1st Grade

- Shake rugs
- Water plants and flowers
- Peel vegetables
- Cook simple foods (hot dog, boiled egg, toast)
- Hang up own clothes in the closet
- Rake leaves
- Prepare their school lunches
- Gather wood for the fireplace
- Take a pet for a walk
- Clean out the inside of the car

### 2nd Grade

- Water the lawn
- Care for bike and other outside toys
- Wash cat or dog
- Train pets
- Carry in grocery sacks
- Leave bathroom in order
- Hang up clean towels
- Be responsible for lunch, backpack, etc.
- Write thank you notes

### 3rd Grade into 4th Grade

- Mop the floor
- Help others with their work when asked
- Straighten own closet and drawers
- Fold blankets
- Shop and choose on clothes and shoes with parents
- Begin to read recipes and cook for the family
- Feed the baby

**4th Grade into 5th Grade**

- Change sheets on bed
- Learn to do own laundry
- Prepare pastries from box mixes
- Prepare family meals
- Help wait on guest
- Do chores for neighbors
- Learn about banking
- Wash the car
- Sew, knit or weave
- Learn to use a sewing machine

**5th Grade into 6th Grade**

- Earn own money from simple babysitting, recycling, etc.
- Pack own suitcase (with checklist) for an overnight
- Be responsible for a hobby
- Be responsible for handling own money

**6th Grade and Up**

- Join outside organizations
- Mow the lawn
- Help a parent build things
- Help with errands
- Be responsible for own homework, projects, etc.
- Be responsible for a paper route
- Put siblings to bed and help dress them

**PLANNING AHEAD TO PREVENT FUTURE PROBLEMS**

1. Refrain from nagging and reminding. If a job is forgotten, ask the kids to look at the chore list to check if everything is done.
2. If the kids forget to do a chore, use a sense of humor. One mother brought a pot of soup to the table and pretended to ladle the soup into imaginary bowls. The table setter for the evening suddenly realized he had forgotten his job and ran quickly to bring the bowls before the soup hit the table.
3. Use mutually agreed-upon nonverbal reminders if a chore is forgotten. Many kids like the signal of an upside-down plate at the table. When the plate is upside down, it reminds the kids that part of the routine needs to be completed before sitting down to eat.

**LIFE SKILLS CHILDREN CAN LEARN**

Children can learn that they are part of the family and people need their help. They're capable and skilled and can be useful, for themselves and others.

## **PARENTING POINTERS**

1. Children aren't born with the competency to do jobs efficiently and quickly. As a matter of fact, it's usually more work to have them help. If, however, you send them out to play so you can zip through the housework, you teach children they're not really needed. Later you may complain that you have to do it all.
2. The extra effort it takes to involve and train children to help the family is worth it because they learn skills such as keeping commitments, planning ahead, following through, organizing their time, and juggling several tasks at a time.

## **BOOSTER THOUGHTS**

Three-year-old Kristin asked if she could help clean the house in preparation for company coming to dinner. Her mom asked if she would like to do the bathroom, and she said yes. Kristin took a can of cleanser and a cloth into the bathroom. When Kristin was finished, she said to her mom, "The bathroom is all cleaned up! I like helping you clean." Her mom got busy and forgot to check Kristin's work.

The guests used the bathroom several times during the evening without comment. After they left, Kristin's mom went into the bathroom. To her shock, she saw that Kristin had used an entire can of cleanser. There was white powder everywhere. Kristin's mom laughed to herself as she thought about what her guests might have been thinking when they took their turn in the bathroom. She realized Kristin needed more time for training in the use of cleanser.