

The Benefits of Kids Doing Chores

by Holly Tiret, Michigan State University Extension and Rebecca Hodges, WMU Child Development Intern

The entire family can benefit from kids helping out around the house. Even though they might complain occasionally, most children are happy and capable of helping out around the house. Establishing a chore routine and assigning chores starting at an early age will be beneficial to both parents and children. Michigan State University Extension suggests children do chores to gain a number of benefits.

Kids get more out of chores than you might think

Children who help out around the house with family chores will grow as a person. Confidence and self-efficacy can improve as your child learns and uses their abilities to achieve a chore goal. Additionally, children can learn to feel pride in their work when they are reminded that their chores help everyone in the family. Work around the house and tackling new chores also teaches children life-skills that will help them stay on task and be productive for the rest of their lives.

When children take part of the family chore load, there are benefits for everyone. If chores are divided evenly, there will be more time for parents and children to spend time together once everyone's tasks are completed. Structure and routine can also help parents build their child's self-control and, in turn, reduces power struggles with parents. Children will begin feeling more successful and confident as they master new chores, and everyone will feel proud of the work that's done.

The University of Arkansas System created an age appropriate chore chart for children ages 2 to early teenage years. This has good examples of chores that can help inform your choices when assigning chores to your kids.

(<https://www.uaex.edu/health-living/personal-family-well-being/family-life-fridays-blog/posts/images/Appropriate%20Chores%20by%20Age.pdf>)

Age appropriate chore ideas:

- 2- to 3-year-olds can put toys away, dress themselves and help put clean dishes away by sorting silverware.
- 4- to 5-year-olds can help feed pets, make their beds (maybe not perfectly) and help clear the table after dinner.
- 6- to 7-year-olds can wipe tables and counters, put laundry away and vacuum floors.
- 7- to 9-year-olds can load and unload the dishwasher, help prepare meals and make their own lunch.
- 10- to 11-year-olds can change their bedding, clean kitchen or bathrooms and mow the lawn.
- Children aged 12 and above can wash the car, babysit younger siblings and help shop for groceries with a list.

It's important to keep a few things in mind when assigning chores to your kids. First and foremost, keep chores age and developmentally appropriate and be specific with instructions when working with younger children. Consistency and patience helps children take on new chore responsibilities, so stick with the family plan!

Chores benefit children and parents alike. They are an important way for you to help children feel like they are contributing members of the family household. This, in turn, helps them to learn a sense of belonging and the value of being a contributing member of a group. This value can grow as they do. So, whether through a school project, neighborhood cleanup, showing up to soccer practice on time, or serving lunch at the local soup kitchen, all of us benefit from children taking part in chores.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>.