

CHORES

PARENTING CHALLENGES ★ PAGE 1 OF 1

I did not mix allowance and chores together. See the section on "allowance and chores" for why. Chores are done for the right to live in our home. Every single person is responsible for the upkeep and well-being of our home, so every person (even the smallest) has a chore.

It may be easier, more time efficient to "do a task yourself", and it will not teach a child how to live in the world as a responsible adult.

1. The number one rule of giving chores is: **TEACH YOUR CHILD HOW TO DO THE CHORE TO YOUR STANDARD.** A child stops doing a chore if he/she gets in trouble for not doing it right. Don't assume the child knows how to do the chore. Teach. Teach **HOW!** Teach **HOW!** Teach **HOW!** Teach **HOW!**
2. Teaching a chore is a process. If a child does a chore as requested and you "redo" or correct what the child did, the message is "not good enough". Children who get "not good enough" messages do not want to do chores. Give the child a "high five" for doing the chore. The next day, help with the chore and teach that which you want the child to know how to do.
3. Give the child a time frame in which to do the chore. Children hate to be told what to do. We are always telling children what to do. To avoid their natural resistance to being bossed around, give a reasonable time frame for getting the chore done, "Your ticket to dinner is to dust the living room and vacuum the floor. You have two hours until dinner, so plan your time wisely."
4. Make an agreement with a child about each chore. "Sometimes, I am not as clear as I would like to be. Please tell me what you are going to do and by what time you will have it done." The child will say, "I am going to dust the living room and vacuum the floor and I will have both chores done by dinner time." A high five seals the deal. Making an agreement eliminates the frustrating argument, "You never told me to do two things!" (See "agreements and consequences.")
5. We had a rule: Forget one chore, you just volunteered for two. Scott would forget to put out the trash on Wednesday. Every Wednesday, he forgot. When he came home from school I would say, "The trash didn't get out today." He would look amazed and apologize. I wouldn't lecture him. I said, "You need to empty the dishwasher and vacuum this whole area before you go outside to play." He would tell me his friends were waiting to play. I would tell him it was therefore in his best interest to get going on those jobs.

Putting a chore on "their" time (play or TV) gets their attention and gets the job done with amazing speed. When Scott argued that emptying the dishwasher was Kathleen's job I said, "It was her job until you forgot to put out the trash." Children fight doing chores--and feel a part of the family-- when they have them.