



PARENTING POSTS

A newsletter for parents of kindergarten students.

Responsible and Independent!

Children in kindergarten are old enough to learn responsibility with guidance and support from their parents and caring adults. How can you help children develop responsibility?

Invest the Time

Show your child how to do a chore. Talk about why your family shares their tasks. Work with the child until they are able to do the whole chore on their own. Turn the task over to the child while you watch. Finally, let the child do the task independently. Follow through is key! Be patient when your child wants to zip his own backpack, dress independently or learn a new task. It will save you time in the future.

Use Routines

Routines help children anticipate what you expect from them. "It's Saturday morning so I get to work with dad to clean the floors after breakfast today."

Personal Work

Children in kindergarten can be taught to pack their own backpack, lay out clothing and outerwear (winter clothes, etc.), care for and return library books, comb hair, wash hands, brush teeth, toilet independently, and prepare a simple breakfast. Assist children by teaching the task, storing supplies where they can be easily reached, and sharing reminders (verbal or pictures).

Be Realistic

Spills, unruly hair and unexpected events can be a part of anyone's day. Allow plenty of time to get ready. Recognize your child's efforts and problem solving as a success too. Avoid rescuing the child or redoing the task yourself. If the job is not up to standards, ask the child to do it again with your patient instructions and guidance. Teach one new task at a time.

Be Specific, Try Descriptive Praise

"Good job" is too general. Tell your child specifically what you are pleased about or just describe what you see. "I see you buttoned your coat and put on your hat and mittens." "I call that ready to go!" Thank the child for their help. "Thanks for helping, shoveling is more fun when we work together."



Allow and Expect Your Child to Help

Begin by working together so you can assess if the child and task are right for each other. Young children are limited by size, strength and safety as to what they can be expected to do for housework or yard work.

Turn Tasks into Small Steps

Young children may struggle with large requests such as, "Clean your room." Instead, break the task down into smaller, simpler steps: put your shoes in the closet; make your bed; put your books on the shelf. Children can do these smaller steps more easily. Give immediate, positive feedback when a task is done.

You Are a Role Model

Look around your home. If you don't pick up your clothes or make your bed, why should your child? Model the responsible behavior you would like to see in your children.

Brag, Don't Nag

Everyone likes to hear something good being said about them. If your child completes a new chore with satisfaction, call grandma or a friend and tell them about it, nice and clear so the child can overhear you complimenting their behavior to someone else.

Use When...Then Statements

WHEN we finish picking up all of the toys in the living room, THEN we will have snack.

Teach Choices and Consequences

Give children the opportunity to make choices and teach the consequences. "If we all help sort and put away the building set, we will have more time to play outdoors today."

Consistency is Key

If the house rule is "flush and wash" every time you use the bathroom, everyone knows what to expect. Communicate family rules and expectations with consistency and a fun drawing as a reminder.



Follow Through

If you expect your child to do a task, take the time to be sure it is done to your satisfaction. Be fair and firm. Help children with their jobs if you want them to help you with yours. Celebrate a job well done with high-fives, an extra story or a smile.

Make a Game of It

How many toys and papers can you put away in one minute? Keep track of how quickly the family can do a task and chart the results. Write it down for a week and see how much your group improves with practice. Shake two dice, add the spots and pick up that many out-of-place items. Take turns till the job is done.



Go here for more information on this and other topics.

www.ndsu.edu/extension

Stress Less Activity



Stress is part of everyone's life. Even young children! Try this activity with your child to help reduce stress and enjoy time together.

Cooked Play Dough

2 cups flour	2 cups water
1/2 cup salt	2 Tbsp vegetable oil
1 Tbsp cream of tartar	1 tsp food coloring

Mix ingredients in a saucepan, cook over medium heat stirring constantly until it forms a large ball and feels solid. Knead, play! play! play! Store in airtight plastic bags.

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