

Appendix B

Home Responsibilities

From “Working Towards Responsibility” by Sandra Westcott

The following are ideas for age-appropriate tasks for children:

For Two and Three-Year-Olds

(Be sure to supply tools children can handle before asking them to do the job)

- Pick up toys and put them away in the correct place.
- Put books on shelf, magazines in a rack, and newspapers in the recycling area.
- Sweep the floor with child-size broom.
- Set the table.
- Clean under the table after meals with a dustpan and brush.
- Choose between two different foods for breakfast and lunch.
- Carry his or her own dish and silverware to the kitchen after meals. Scrape plate; place it on counter or in dishwasher.
- Learn to use the toilet.
- Brush teeth, wash and dry hands, and brush hair. A sturdy stool will need to be supplied so your child can see his/herself in the mirror.
- Undress; dress with some help.
- Mop up spills or accidents.
- Put away boxes or cans from the grocery store on lower shelves.
- Accompany you to the recycling center and carry items from the car to the various bins.

Four and Five-Year-Olds

- Help with grocery shopping and suggest foods to purchase.
- Polish shoes.
- Feed and water pets.
- Assist with raking, weeding, and planting.
- Help make the bed.
- Help vacuum.
- Dust furniture.
- Begin some “cooking”, such as pouring his own drink, spreading peanut butter on bread, pouring cereal, tearing lettuce for salad, adding ingredients to a dish mom or dad is cooking, preparing plates for the family dinner, cleaning up afterwards.
- Bring in the mail.
- Sharpen pencils.
- Dressing on his or her own including selecting an outfit for the day.
- Learn to tie shoes.
- Scrubbing the sink, bathtub.
- Cleaning mirrors and windows.
- Separate the wash into various loads.
- Folding clothes and putting them away.
- Learn to answer the telephone and how to dial emergency numbers.

- Help clean the car.
- Take out the garbage.
- Begin learning social skills: sharing toys with playmates, asking before going out to play, etc.
- Begin handling money – paying for small purchases in cash and receiving change.

Six and Seven-Year-Olds

- Water house plants, the lawn, and outdoor flowers.
- Sweep and hose off the patio or deck.
- Begin using sharp knives to peel vegetables and the stove and microwave to prepare simple food.
- Carry in the grocery sacks.
- Prepare his or her own school lunch.
- Gather wood for the fireplace.
- Take dog for a walk.
- Give the dog a bath.
- Wash walls; mop floors.
- Hang his or her own clothes in the closet.
- Do simple ironing.
- Leave the bathroom in order: hang up towels, put dirty clothing in hamper, etc.
- Care for bicycle, including locking it up when not in use.
- Care for outdoor play equipment.
- Use alarm clock to get up in the morning. Go to bed at night on his or her own.
- Carry notes to and from school.

For Eight or Nine-Year-Olds

- Mop or buff wooden, tile, or vinyl flooring.
- Wax the furniture.
- Run his or her own bath water.
- Straighten out closet and drawers.
- Fold his or her blankets.
- Perform minor clothing repairs, such as sewing on buttons.
- Shop for and select his or her own clothing, along with a parent.
- Begin to read recipes and cook occasionally for the family.
- Cut flowers and make a centerpiece.
- Pick fruit off trees or bushes.
- Build a camp fire.
- Prepare food for cooking outdoors, such as hamburgers or shish kebabs.
- Paint fence or shelf.
- Begin to write letters and thank-you notes.
- Watch younger siblings briefly as long as parents are available: for example, playing a game with a sibling while parent mows the lawn.
- Know how to cross street safely and can do so without assistance.

For Ten or Eleven-Year-Olds

- Strip the bed and replace the dirty sheets with clean ones.
- Operate the washer and dryer including measuring of detergent.
- Buy groceries using a list; choose more economical brands by using comparison shopping.

- Keep track of his or her own schedule including regularly scheduled practices, doctor and dental appointments, etc.
- Receive and answer mail addressed to him or her.
- Pouring and preparing tea, coffee, and cold drinks.
- Waiting on guests.
- Planning his or her own parties.
- Know simple first aid.

For Ten or Eleven-Year-Olds, cont'd

- Learn to use a sewing machine.
- Learn about bank accounts. Begin savings account.
- Wash the family car.
- Begin earning his or her own money babysitting, mowing lawns, etc.
- Learn safety rules for staying at home alone.
- Learn to take public transportation such as the bus.
- Pack his or her own suitcase for overnight trips.
- Take responsibility for his or her own hobbies.
- Learn to handle him or herself safely and politely when in public places alone or with peers.
- Join organizations and take some responsibility for leadership.
- Dress and undress younger siblings and put them to bed.
- Run his or her own errands when reasonable.
- Mow the lawn and learn lawn mower care and maintenance.
- Work along with parents during home repair or construction projects.
- Clean the refrigerator.
- Set his or her own schedule to manage homework and instrument practice.
- Purchase his or her own treats.

For Adolescents

- Be able to determine his or her own bedtime.
- Be able to discuss and decide along with parents his curfew for evening gatherings.
- Take complete responsibility for preparing a family meal.
- Learn and understand how to maintain good health through exercise, adequate rest, eating nutritious foods, and annual check-ups.
- Begin to anticipate the needs of family members and friends and offer to help.
- Understand and accept his or her capabilities and limitations.
- Respect him or herself and take responsibility for own decisions.
- Demonstrate loyalty, honesty, and respect to others.

If you are patient with your children, add responsibility as they become developmentally ready for it, and express your appreciation for their involvement with the family, you will earn their gratitude when they are young adults. All parents want their children to become independent, competent adults. Using these suggestions will help!