



Psst! Your Child Secretly Likes Chores... Really

By Kelly Nault, M.A.

Despite what you think, children (even yours) like chores. This may be tough to believe when the majority of children fuss when asked to clear the table, "forget" to pick up after themselves and throw a "hissy fit" when you ask them to clean their room.

The Secret Truth about Chores and Children

Many children have simply forgotten how fun chores can be. Instead, they've learned that chores are something they "have" to do.

Yet to a toddler, chores are an adventure. The vacuum is awe inspiring, dishwashing is as thrilling as a bath, and the washing machine is fascinating. Children start out believing household tasks are fun, but slowly lose their enthusiasm when they are told: "don't touch," "move out of the way," and "go run and play." Soon all those cool appliances lose their appeal.

Training youngsters in the art of chores can be exhausting, especially, when it takes children ten times as long to complete tasks with results that are often less than satisfying. The folded laundry may look like a messy heap, the swept floor was somehow cleaner before, and the dishes are now covered in streaks and bubbles. Thus, parents often resort to deterring their little ones from lending a helping hand and send them off to play.

But then a funny thing happens. As our children grow, we begin to expect them to help out around the house. But when we ask them to help out they turn their noses up and say, "Nope, I'm going out to play." We really shouldn't be surprised because many of us have been training them for years to do just this.

Ideally, chores should start at the toddler stage (when they first show interest), but luckily, chores can start at any age! Training takes time and energy, but once kids equate chores with fun-well face it, you've got it made. And chores also help develop children's self-esteem. Children who are involved in maintaining the household feel a sense of pride and accomplishment.

The Three Simple Ways to Make Chores Fun

So let's start motivating our children to love chores with three simple parenting tips:

1. **Use "positive chore talk"** - Children model what they see. Bite your tongue and refrain from groaning about chores yourself. Instead of complaining, "*I have to do so much around here*" use an enthusiastic comment such as, "*Yippee! I get to do my chores.*" Sure it sounds corny (especially if it's time to scrub the toilet), but mustering up excitement can make a tremendous difference to you and your children. Try it.
2. **Turn chores into a game** - Make cleaning a fun challenge by timing how quickly and thoroughly (this is critical to add!) you and your kids can do your chores together.

3. **Make chores a team effort** - Dance your way to spotless by playing uplifting tunes. Share stories, share about your day and watch how quickly "chore time" can become "quality time!"

By making chores fun and using chores as a time to connect as a family, what once was annoying tasks can become the stuff that happy family memories are made of.

Kelly Nault, MA corporate spokesperson and award winning parenting author of *When You're About To Go Off The Deep End, Don't Take Your Kids With You* inspires moms to put themselves first—for the sake of their children. She shares time-tested tools that motivate children to want to be well behaved, responsible and happy! Sign up for her free online parenting course at www.UltimateParenting.com.

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