**Chores are a Win-Win for Parents and Children**

It has been said, “Kids today have it so easy! Back in my day, we had to do chores, but kids are handed everything now!" People of all ages and different generations, including kids themselves, have a similar view of children today: They don't earn their keep. That is certainly not true of all children and families, and it may not be true of yours; however, parenting trends have moved, over the last generation or so, toward doing things for kids that they can do for themselves. The prevailing view is often that kids have enough on their plates with school and extra curricular activities, and that forcing them to work at home, and enduring the whining and crying that will likely follow, colors already limited time between parents and children with negativity instead of joy. Additionally, for parents, "forcing" kids to do things they don't want to feels bad! It goes against how much of our current parenting advice is interpreted: Don't upset your kid or they will be scarred for life.

What is often ignored in the quest for stress-free (i.e., whine-free) family time is that having several members of a household who are capable of helping but don't is stressful for the adults, and, wait for it, kids actually LIKE helping!

**So What Do I Do?**

First things first, do you have a chore routine? If so, great! If not, how do you implement one?

There are lots of resources online that give, often conflicting, advice regarding the implementation of a chore routine. Some will tell you to give an allowance as an incentive; others will say NEVER give an allowance as it teaches children to value money over the satisfaction of working toward a goal. There is more research to support the latter stance; however, every child is different, and every family is different.

Ultimately, what will be most effective is consistency, positive reinforcement for a job well done, and consequences for lack of completion of assigned chores. If your child gets paid for completing chores but experiences no consequences for not completing chores, then they will only complete them when they need money.

Offering consequences such as an earlier bedtime, reduced screen time, removal of privileges, or exclusion from a favorite activity until chores are completed will help your child understand the importance of this responsibility. Have a plan and stick to it, *but* if it isn't working, be willing to revise it. Communication and consistency between parents and with children is key.

When assigning chores, make sure they are **developmentally and age-appropriate** and that your child has all the **tools and knowledge** to complete the task effectively. Some tasks may take several tries to get right, and **patience** is very important. Older children will be capable of more complex tasks as well as more tasks in general. Younger children will require more guidance and fewer steps. It would be inappropriate, for example, to tell your 3-year-old, "Go clean your room," and to leave them to that task without help and guidance. "Pick up your animals and put them in the toy box," is more appropriate. They will likely require supervision and reminding, as they are easily distracted. It is, however, appropriate to tell your 12-year-old, "Go clean your room," and to expect them to complete it with minimal follow-up.

**What will kids gain from helping around the house?**

* **Confidence**: When children are given age-appropriate responsibility, they flourish. Who doesn't feel more confident when they set out to achieve something and they do it? Praise your child for "being a helper," and they will begin to think of themselves in that way.
* **Self-Efficacy**: Feeling that you have the tools, knowledge, and ability to achieve what you set out to do is a great boost to self-esteem and confidence.
* **Accomplishment**: Seeing the completion of a job well done fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment.
* **Contribution**: Feeling that they are contributing to the family and making everyone's life easier is a wonderful goal. Making the chores about the entire family rather than the child will help everyone feel more connected.
* **Delayed Gratification**: In a world where they can typically get what they want within moments of wanting it, learning to work and wait is an invaluable skill.
* **Life-Skills Training**: One of the major tasks parents are charged with is teaching their child to function independently. One of the main ways this is accomplished is by making sure your child knows how to do the things that will allow her/him to be a productive and competent member of society.

**What will parents gain from having their kids help around the house?**

* **Time**: When more people help, keeping up with housework doesn't take as long! It is important that parents understand that this may take a few weeks (or longer) to attain. Kids need reminding and guidance before the house will become a well-oiled machine, and responsibilities will need to be revised as children age and develop.
* **Structure and routine**: Despite how much they may resist, children thrive on structure and routine. Young children, especially, do best when they know what to expect. If you are implementing a chore routine, expect some resistance, but they will come around if you are firm but gentle in your guidance and model the behavior you want from them.
* **Joy of confident children**: Ultimately, kids who participate in the household will gain positive outcomes, and what parent doesn't find pride, joy, and satisfaction in watching their child succeed?

Source: https://www.uaex.edu/health-living/personal-family-well-being/family-life-fridays-blog/posts/KidsCanChores.aspx