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CHILDREN THAT PITCH IN AT HOME LEARN RESPONSIBILITY

What would you do if:

- Your daughter kept forgetting to feed her new puppy?
- Your children complained every time you asked them to help out?
- Your son broke a window and blamed it on his best friend?

It's not always easy to act responsibly. It may be tempting to let someone else take the blame. Children are more likely to resist such urges if they learn at a young age that everyone needs to pitch in and help. Responsibility needs to be taught and encouraged.

Some parents have to beg and bribe their children to do chores. Others give up and do everything for their children. Neither of these methods gives children a chance to develop:

- A sense that they are a useful member of the family.
- A healthy attitude toward work.
- The ability to see a job through to the end.

Part of growing up is learning how to take care of yourself and care for others. Children who don't learn these things are not prepared for life.

Children can take on more responsibilities than most parents think. They enjoy the feeling of accomplishment that work gives them. Their confidence blossoms as they master new tasks.

Parents have a lot to do with the attitudes children develop toward responsibility. If parents argue about whose turn it is to do the dishes, put off doing unpleasant tasks, or make promises and don't follow through, it shouldn't come as a surprise if their children aren't dependable.

If you ask children to do chores at the last minute, assign tasks that are too difficult or too menial, and demand cooperation, then children will likely be resentful.

If you take over and do things whenever children make mistakes, don't bother to show how you want things done, or criticize the work completed, then children will never learn.

Instead, consider these positive ways to develop responsibility:

- Expect children to give as well as receive
- Set an example
- Enlist children a partners
- Teach children how to do things themselves
- Give children time to learn

Getting household tasks done quickly is easier if everyone takes part. There are many ways to assign tasks and distribute the load:

- Have **family meetings** so everyone can discuss the fairest way to share responsibilities.
- Use a **signup list** that gives everyone a chance to choose chores they are able to do for a week or a month.
- Construct a daily or weekly **worksheet** that assigns everyone a new set of duties within his or her level of ability.
- **Draw** chore assignments out of a hat.
- **Post ads** when help is needed for a special task.

When children see all the jobs that must be done for the family to function, and have a say in what they do, they are more willing to do their share.