

# Chores!



**Did you know that children who do chores around the house have higher self-esteem, are more responsible, can better delay gratification, deal with frustration, are better-adjusted, have healthier relationships and are more successful in their careers?**

Marty Rossmann, (Emeritus Associate Professor of Family Education, U.Minnesota) researched 25 years of data and found that "the best predictor of adults' success in their mid-20's was that they participated in household tasks when they were three or four" (2002).

No wonder that a principal at a local Catholic High School asks all prospective year 7 students what chores they do at home! Here are some reasons why doing chores is beneficial for children:

## **Self-esteem**

If your children are considered too busy with schoolwork or sports to do chores, you are sending the message that their academic or athletic skills are what matters most. When they subsequently blow a test or miss a winning shot, then they have failed at what you deem to be most important. In comparison, a household job is quick and achievable.

*I took out the stinky garbage. I'm a good helper.*

*I know how to heat pasta and add sauce and cheese. Hey, I can cook!*

## **Grit, organisational and life skills**

Doing chores helps children learn organisational skills, delay gratification and to function independently in the outside world.

*If I hang out the washing in the morning, then my uniform will be dry in time for school tomorrow.*

*Now I've emptied the dishwasher, I can relax instead of getting nagged by Dad.*

*Sweeping the garden was a bit boring, but I put music on and I got it done.*

## **Connection**

Doing chores gives a child the opportunity to give back to their parents and feel connected to the family. They start to see themselves as givers, not just takers.

*I hate cleaning the shower, so Mum does that, she hates vacuuming but I'm really good at it (I call it "mowing the carpet"). Dad does the toilets (yuck!) I feel proud when our house looks and smells clean.*

## **But it's more work for me**

Doing chores willingly requires mature judgment, less impulsivity, and awareness of others' perspectives and needs. Children are not born with these qualities, so they become pros at procrastination, excuses, resistance and refusal. Supporting your children to do chores is therefore part of your job as a parent to help develop them qualities.

## **Assigning Chores**

If your kids don't do chores yet, it's not too late. Take some time to think about what tasks you need help with, what life skills your children need to learn, and what are each child's abilities. Think about all the chores required in a month- what contribution would you like from your child- daily, weekly, monthly? Have a family meeting, ask for input, discuss the issue, make plans, review. Decide whether you want to tie pocket money or privileges to chore completion.

**Children may not thank you in the short term for giving them chores.**

**The goal is not to make your children happy; it is to teach them skills and a sense of responsibility that will last a lifetime.**