

Age Specific Responsibilities

Practical Suggestions for Responsibilities You Can Expect Your Child to Begin at Specific Ages

(Dependent in the early years on verbal/motor development)

Ryan says to his mother as he's running out the door, "Mom, I'm late for basketball practice. Would you please do my homework for me?" The teen's mother says, "No, son, it just wouldn't be right." "That's okay," replies the boy. "At least you could try."

We have failed to teach responsibility in our homes. Children expect others to do for them ? including homework. ;>

The word "responsibility" or "responsible" occurs over 60 times in the Bible. Being responsible and handling responsibility should be a character trait that is foundational to every Christian, because it is closely connected to the ideas of industry and faithfulness. Since our God is so hard working and faithful, i.e. responsible, in everything He does and promises to do, surely we as Christians should exemplify the same characteristic.

Many "Baby Boomers" were never trained to be responsible and hence they have failed to teach this important characteristic to their children. As a result children grow up without this godly characteristic and so they lack this essential characteristic for success. Both the physical world and the spiritual world require responsibility to succeed.

If we teach our children responsibility in the home, it will have the following beneficial effects:

1.

Our children will become responsible. They will be more of a joy to live with at home.

2.

Because responsible children are such a unique commodity in today's society, our children will be sought after for babysitting, lawn mowing, and other employment opportunities outside the home.

3.

Parents will find themselves with more energy, because they are doing less tasks that now are being done by their children.

4.

Because the home runs more smoothly with less stress, parents will be able to consider the option of having a larger family.

Responsibility should be taught at an early age. There are tasks which teach responsibility that even an infant can accomplish. What follows is a list of responsibilities ? tasks which teach our children to be responsible, productive, and helpful. Take look at the list. Are your children learning responsibility in your home? (The following list is cumulative, that is, each age level should include the responsibilities prior to it.)

9 ? 24 months

- Putting dirty clothes in hamper.
- "Helping" with grocery shopping (putting items in basket and on check-out counter, handing things to mom to be put away at home.)
- Cleaning with mom (give child a dust rag, child size broom, empty spray can/windex bottle for "pretend" cleaning).
- Watering plants (with pre-measured amounts!).
- Beginning to help make beds ? (begins with handing the pillows to mom until later).
- Yard work (helping collect trash and toys, etc.).
- Simple errands ("bring the diaper to mommy, please," etc.).

2 ? 3 years

- As language develops, requiring politeness on a regular basis ("Yes ma'am", "No sir", "May I please be excused", greeting, etc.).
- Generally including child in every-day activities on a regular basis (cleaning, shopping, etc.).
- More complicated errands ("Take this towel and put it in the hamper", etc.).
- Laundry (beginning to help with sorting by mom handing him things to put in appropriate piles, transferring clothes from dryer to basket, etc.).
- Learning more specific neatness qualities (putting toys in proper spots).
- Taking his dishes to the sink and helping to clear table.
- Carrying groceries in from car (give child one light item or a small bag).
- General errands (carrying diaper bag into meeting, carrying mom's purse to the car, etc.).
- Simple decision-making ("Would you like juice or milk to drink?").
- Put books and magazines in a rack.
- Place napkins, plates, and silverware on the table.
- Clean up what they drop after eating.
- Toilet training.

3 -4 years

- Making bed (begins with watching mom ? mom helping child ? mom watching child) standards must be clear and reminders frequent.
- Keeping room neat and taking daily responsibility for it.
- Regular morning routine becoming established (getting dressed, cleaning room before breakfast).
- More complex decision-making ("Would you like to wear the blue or green pants?").
- Becoming "other-oriented" (drawing pictures for someone, making

encouragement notes to dictate to mom, thank you notes for birthday gifts).

- Learning to use the telephone properly.
- Established and regular responsibilities (bedroom, getting the mail, emptying bathroom trash cans, etc.).
- Helping wash the car.
- Simple hygiene ? brush teeth, wash and dry hands and face, and brush hair.
- Undress self ? dress with some help.
- Carry boxed or canned goods from the grocery sacks to the proper shelf.

4 ? 5 years

- Taking his laundry to designated place on laundry day.
- Sorting laundry with supervision.
- Begin learning to fold laundry and put it away.
- Hang socks, handkerchiefs, and washcloths on a low line.
- Vacuuming/sweeping.
- Cleaning table after meals.
- Helping with meal preparations (learning to measure, stir and use small appliances).
- Spread butter on sandwiches.
- Prepare cold cereal.
- Help mother prepare plates of food for the family dinner.
- Make a simple dessert (add topping to cupcakes, pour the toppings on ice cream).
- Hold the hand mixer to whip potatoes or mix up a cake.
- Setting the table.
- Taking out the trash.
- Helping make decisions about meal choices, outings, time with friends, etc.
- Carrying groceries in from the car and putting them away.
- Help with grocery shopping and compiling a grocery list.
- Polish shoes and clean up afterwards.
- Follow a schedule for feeding pets.
- Help do the dishes or fill the dishwasher.

- Dust the furniture.
- Share toys with friends (practice courtesy).
- Tell parent his whereabouts before going out to play.
- Play without constant adult supervision and attention.
- Polish silver.
- Polish car.
- Sharpen pencils.

5 ? 6 years

- Unsupervised responsibilities (making bed, washing out trash cans, etc.).
- More complicated meal preparations (making frozen juice, toast, scrambling eggs, cutting with blunt knife, baking).
- Make own sandwich or simple breakfast, then clean up.
- Pour own drink.
- Prepare the dinner table.
- Tear up lettuce for the salad.
- Helping with younger siblings (changing diapers, helping with bath, bottle feeding, entertaining while mom is out of the room, feeding/dressing toddler siblings).
- Laundry (sorting, learning to use the washer/dryer, measuring detergent, fold clean clothes and put them away.) .
- Cleaning (using cleaning supplies properly, cleaning unsupervised areas like bathtub or polishing furniture, clean mirrors and windows).
- Sons ? carrying "heavy" things for mom and helping with yardwork.
- By this time child will begin to carry out responsibilities unasked and begin to offer help in areas parents don't require help in.
- Make bed and clean room.
- Dress on own and choose outfit for the day.
- Learn to tie shoes.
- Answer the telephone and begin to dial the phone.
- Yardwork.
- Pay for small purchases.
- Help clean out the car.
- Take out the garbage.
- Decide how he wants to spend his share of the family entertainment

fund.

- Feed his pets and clean the living area.

6 ? 7 years

- Simple meals prepared (making sandwiches for lunch, preparing drinks, fixing breakfast for mom and dad, preparing salad for dinner, peel vegetables).
- Regular quiet time becoming a part of daily routine.
- Totally unsupervised laundry responsibilities when needed.
- Increased responsibilities for younger siblings (dressing infants/toddlers, entertaining them for longer periods by reading to them/playing records, etc., helping school them).
- Learning the purpose and beginning usage of tools (lawn mower, hand tools, etc.) and helping with home maintenance.
- Shake rugs.
- Water plants and flowers.
- Prepare own school lunch.
- Help hang clothes on the clothesline.
- Hang up own clothes in the closet.
- Gather wood for the fireplace.
- Rake leaves and weed.
- Tie own shoes.
- Care for his own minor injuries.
- Keep the garbage container clean.
- Clean out inside of car.
- Straighten or clean out silverware drawer.
- Oil and care for bike.
- Take phone messages.
- Run errands for parents.
- Sweep and wash patio area.
- Water the lawn.
- Wash dog or cat.
- Train pets.
- Take pet for walk.
- Carry in the grocery sacks.
- Get self up in the morning and go to bed at night on own.

- Learn to be polite, courteous, and to share; respect others.
- Carry own lunch money and notes back to school.
- Leave the bathroom in order.
- Do simple ironing.

8 ? 10 years

- Complete responsibility for their rooms on a daily basis (bed making, dresser drawers, closet, vacuuming, etc.).
- Unsupervised yard work (i.e., lawn mowing, edging, clean-up, gardening).
- More complex meal preparations (pour and make tea, coffee, and instant drinks, using sharp instruments, baking, using appliances, beginning meal planning).
- More difficult cleaning projects (scrubbing kitchen floor, windows, cleaning appliances).
- Summer jobs (lawn mowing, dog sitting, babysitting, odd jobs for vacationers).
- Financial planning (computing percentages for saving, tithing, offerings, gift-giving and assuming responsibility with parental oversight).
- Beginning car maintenance (helping dad with minor repairs, learning tool usage, washing/waxing).
- Help rearrange furniture. Help plan the layout.
- Run own bathwater.
- Help others with their work when asked.
- Shop for and select own clothing and shoes with parent.
- Change school clothes without being told.
- Fold blankets.
- Sew buttons and sew rips in seams.
- Clean storage room.
- Clean up animal "messes" in the yard and house.
- Cut flowers and make a centerpiece.
- Pick fruit off trees.
- Build a campfire, get items ready to cook out (charcoal, hamburgers).
- Paint fence or shelves.
- Help write simple letters.

- Write thank-you notes.
- Help with defrosting and cleaning the refrigerator.
- Feed the baby.
- Polish silverware, copper, or brass items.
- Clean patio furniture.
- Wax living room furniture.
- Change sheets and put dirty sheets in hamper.
- Buy groceries using a list and comparative shopping.
- Cross streets unassisted.
- Keep own appointments.
- Receive and answer own mail.
- Wait on guests.
- Plan own birthday.
- Simple first aid.
- Do neighborhood chores.
- Sew, knit, or weave (even using a sewing machine).
- Do chores without a reminder.
- Learn banking and to be thrifty and trustworthy.
- Handle sums of money up to \$5.00.
- Be alone at home for short periods.
- Take the city bus to selected destinations.
- Proper conduct when staying overnight with a friend. Pack own suitcase.
- Responsible for personal hobby.
- Handle self properly when in public places alone or with peers.

11 ? 12 years

- Join outside organizations, do assignments, and attend. Able to take responsibility as a leader.
- Put siblings to bed and dress them.
- Clean pool and pool area.
- Respect others' property.
- Run own errands.
- Mow lawn with supervision.
- Help Father build things and do family errands.
- Schedule himself time for studies.

- Buy own sweets or treats.
- Responsible for a paper route.
- Check and add oil to car under supervision.

13 ? 15 years

- Determine how late he should stay up during the week. Also determine how late he should be out for evening gatherings (through mutual parent-child discussion and agreement).
- Responsibility for preparing family meals.
- Social awareness: good health, exercise, necessary rest, correct weight, nutritious food, physical examinations.
- Anticipate the needs of others and initiate the appropriate action.
- Acceptance of capabilities and limitations.
- Self-respect or individual worth.
- Responsibility for one's decision.
- Mutual respect, loyalty, and honesty in the family.