

Let's start with ourselves

We often feel resentment around household tasks without realizing that resentment is a feeling we are bringing on ourselves.

- It often comes from us telling ourselves the story that: "I am the only one who can do this." or "I am the only one who cares about this."

Instead, reframe that as the question, "What do I choose?"

- In your house you might do the grocery shopping. Did you choose this? If you did, then let go of the resentment. If not, then bring it up as something to discuss.

Also ask, "What can I let go?"

- What are the things you no longer care so much about?
- What have you stopped experiencing joy doing?
- What can you let go so you have less on your shoulders?

Kids and household tasks: Why it matters

We are raising kids to be adults

- Consider, what kind of roommate or spouse do you want your child to be?

We want adults who are responsible, independent, competent, and considerate

- If they don't get the opportunities from us, they will not get them from many other places.
- It is not the job of someone else, it is our job.

What is it that makes a kid cooperative?

Feeling connected and respected is the first step to cooperating

- Do your kids feel like they belong?
- Help their thinking go from "I don't just live here. I am an important and necessary part of the family and it functioning."
- Ask for their help. Thank them. Plan with them.

The team approach to tasks

- Gather as a family in a meeting or have a conversation at dinner
- List together the age-appropriate tasks that need to get done each day/week
- Offer choices and figure out a way to divide up the list. You could take turns, pull them out of a hat or jar.
- About 3 responsibilities per child (1 for toddlers) is a good starting place
- Record who agreed to do what
- At the end of the week, re-evaluate
 - Did this work? Why or why not? What do we want to keep or change for next week?
 - This is not the time to criticize. Instead, notice and reflect. "I noticed that the litter box did not get scooped every day. I wonder what your ideas are for getting it done."
 - For teens it is often better to avoid all their tasks being time-sensitive. They are busy and they often operate on their own schedule.

Setting kids up for success

Training

- This means showing them where supplies and materials are, what they would need, how they would use them, how they know they are done. what do they do when they're done?
- Some families use check-lists or written guidelines to help

Multiple sessions

- First time show them, second time do it with them, third time let them try

Be realistic

- Your expectations for clean will most likely not be the same as your expectations for clean. Focus on what's good and what they are attempting.

Giving feedback

- Frame your feedback as a review of the training/checklist.
- Frame it as a game "What's wrong with this picture?"

Be specific

- Clean the bathroom is very general
- Take these paper towels and dish soap, go into the shower and wash it down. Then do the same for the sink is much more specific.

Encouragement

- Act "as if" they will get the tasks done. "What is your plan for getting the vacuuming done?"
- Show appreciation while you redirect—"Your hard work really shows on the faucets. I wonder if you can get the mirror that clean." or Wow, those faucets look good! When you have a moment, will you give those mirrors another wipe? I appreciate you working hard in this bathroom."

Pitfalls to avoid

- Punishment—this breaks the connection and respect that is needed to elicit cooperation
- Bribes (if you do X then you get Y) and threats (if you don't do X then you won't get Y)—cleanliness and shared responsibility are expectations not exceptions and don't need consequences attached to them.
- Thoughts on allowance (not encouraged by PEP)
 - The family is not an economic system or a business. It is a social system.
 - Instill the value of helping for the sake of helping. Social systems rely on people contributing and not because they are expecting financial remuneration.
 - We all use the bathroom and use the dishes so we are all responsible for these tasks.
 - If there are jobs that fall outside of the normal family routine and function then these could be jobs that are reimbursed—washing the car or mowing the lawn

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