



Getting kids involved in cleaning house

The holidays are over and you've finally rid the carpet of pine needles. Your house looks great—how can you keep it that way with a busy family?

Get the kids involved. Age-appropriate tasks build confidence and a strong work-ethic.

Preschoolers can begin with routine-based simple tasks like cleaning up their blocks or putting away their crayons. Ask them to repeat the task every day. This makes it easier to build the chore into their list of responsibilities. For example, every evening before dinner, you could ask your child to place paper napkins on the table.

Over time, the chores can become a little more challenging. By then, preschoolers will be used to pitching in to help. Be sure to show that you're grateful for their assistance knowing they've made things easier for mom and dad can be a big motivator for kids this age.

Elementary school students may take on bigger tasks with proper supervision. It's important to praise your child for completing these more challenging chores—even if they only make it part-way through without needing your help. Kids respond well to breaking big tasks into many small pieces—they see success more often than just waiting for the whole job to wrap up. Don't make the goal seem unattainable from the start and they'll be more willing to stick with it.

Of course, cleaning up is more fun when you make it a party. Consider turning on dance music before you get out the feather duster or providing an extra allowance "tip" when your kids go out of their way to carry down the trash. Don't get disappointed when things turn out differently than expected. Even the best-intentioned kindergartener is going to make a big mess trying to clean the litter box. Compliment the effort and redirect that energy to something more age-appropriate.

A clean house is even more important when you're planning to sell! If you're in the market for a new home, contact Mindy and Darla at mindyanddarla@howardhanna.com or visit mindyanddarla.com.



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