

Age-Appropriate Chores

Do you know which chores your child can do?
by Sheila Seifert - Focus on the Family

What chores are important for your children to learn, and what are they capable of doing? First, recognize the difference between a chore (an ongoing task that benefits the household) and a life skill (an activity that children should know how to do before living on their own, such as managing a checking account). The following list does not include life skills. It is a list of chores. Second, remember that every child matures at a different pace. Adjust this chart to what you know about your children's skills and talents, and realize that no child should do all of the chores listed below every day. With those two qualifiers in mind, here are some general guidelines for personal and family chores. This list is only meant as a guide and reflects the types of chores that many children in these age ranges are capable of completing:

Ages 2 and 3

Personal chores

- Assist in making their beds
- Pick up playthings with your supervision

Family chores

- Take their dirty laundry to the laundry basket
- Fill a pet's water and food bowls (with supervision)
- Help a parent clean up spills and dirt
- Dust

Ages 4 and 5 *Note: At this age a family chore chart would be helpful.*

Personal chores

- Get dressed with minimal parental help
- Make their bed with minimal parental help
- Bring their things from the car to the house

Family chores

- Set the table with supervision
- Clear the table with supervision
- Help a parent prepare food
- Help a parent carry in the lighter groceries
- Match socks in the laundry
- Answer the phone with parental assistance
- Be responsible for a pet's food and water bowl
- Hang up towels in the bathroom
- Clean floors with a dry mop

Ages 6 and 7

Personal chores

- Make their bed every day
- Brush teeth
- Comb hair
- Choose the day's outfit and get dressed
- Write thank you notes with supervision

Family chores

- Be responsible for a pet's food, water and exercise
- Vacuum individual rooms
- Wet mop individual rooms
- Fold laundry with supervision
- Put their laundry in their drawers and closets
- Put away dishes from the dishwasher
- Help prepare food with supervision
- Empty indoor trash cans
- Answer the phone with supervision

Ages 8 to 11

Personal chores

- Take care of personal hygiene
- Keep bedroom clean

- Be responsible for homework
- Be responsible for belongings
- Write thank you notes for gifts
- Wake up using an alarm clock

Family chores

- Wash dishes
- Wash the family car with supervision
- Prepare a few easy meals on their own
- Clean the bathroom with supervision
- Rake leaves
- Learn to use the washer and dryer
- Put all laundry away with supervision
- Take the trash can to the curb for pick up
- Test smoke alarms once a month with supervision
- Screen phone calls using caller ID and answer when appropriate

Ages 12 and 13

Personal chores

- Take care of personal hygiene, belongings and homework
- Write invitations and thank you notes
- Set their alarm clock
- Maintain personal items, such as recharging batteries
- Change bed sheets
- Keep their rooms tidy and do a biannual deep cleaning

Family chores

- Change light bulbs
- Change the vacuum bag
- Dust, vacuum, clean bathrooms and do dishes
- Clean mirrors
- Mow the lawn with supervision
- Baby sit (in most states)
- Prepare an occasional family meal

Ages 14 and 15

Personal chores

- Responsible for all personal chores for ages 12 and 13
- Responsible for library card and books

Family chores

- Do assigned housework without prompting
- Do yard work as needed
- Baby sit
- Prepare food — from making a grocery list and buying the items (with supervision) to serving a meal — occasionally
- Wash windows with supervision

Ages 16 to 18

Personal chores

- Responsible for all personal chores for ages 14 and 15
- Responsible to earn spending money
- Responsible for purchasing their own clothes
- Responsible for maintaining any car they drive (e.g., gas, oil changes, tire pressure, etc.)

Family chores

- Do housework as needed
- Do yard work as needed
- Prepare family meals — from grocery list to serving it — as needed
- Deep cleaning of household appliances, such as defrosting the freezer, as needed