

Joyful Jobs

Despite living in the 21st Century where technology continues to produce amazing additions to our modern lifestyle, we still face domestic drudgery. Sure, the washing now takes an hour a load instead of a day. But it still needs doing. We may have dishwashers and dryers but it still takes people power to load and then put away. Short of having full time domestic help, domestic chores still take a significant amount of our time. As our babies grow and we have little people running around, the work load just seems to increase.

Why Train Children in domestic jobs?

- Creates confidence
- Develops perseverance and a concept of work
- Spend time together productively
- fairer contribution to the household
- reduces boredom
- helps them to stay active- burns energy
- develops physical and thinking skills

Jobs can be joyful:

- When children have job satisfaction
- Families work together and talk together
- More time for fun once the work is done!

The concept of work is a wonderful complement to the concept of play. Play without work can end up being ultimately unsatisfying. Work without play becomes torture. So used in balance work for children is an important aspect to their developing lives.

Reward Systems and Pocket Money

The ultimate reward is a job well done. Well, we would say that wouldn't we! We're the grownups! Maybe some short term rewards are needed to get into the work habit. Some families use pocket money to encourage participation in particular jobs. On the other hand some families maintain that jobs are just part of being in a family and shouldn't be treated as something out of the ordinary. If you use a reward system, it has to be simple to use. Keeping track of who's been paid what should keep family pay disputes to a minimum! Rewards don't have to be financial. Children can earn stickers for a behaviour chart instead, leading up to a reward once they have earned a set number of stickers- this could be time

doing their favourite activity with you, going to their favourite place, or having a friend round. See what works best for you.

Praise

Make sure your child knows how proud you are of their efforts. Sincere praise and encouragement goes a long way to encouraging your child to know their work efforts are valued. Point out to others in the household or to your friends the good work of your child.

Resistance

Of course your efforts to introduce your children to work around the home may not meet with instant approval. This often happens when children have been used to not doing very much and are of an age where other options e.g. computers and game consoles are highly attractive. Be prepared to ride out their protests and stand your ground. Keep reminding yourself and perhaps them of at least some of the benefits of working.

Common Tactics Children might try to avoid doing jobs:

- Passive Resistance- they don't say no, but it doesn't happen either
- Slow to finish- so you just end up doing it yourself to save time
- Sloppy quality- so they won't get asked to do it again

Don't fall for these tactics! Children might be cunning when it comes to avoiding work but don't forget who is the adult! Your counter-tactic is that you hold the keys to the car and all those other treats and activities your child depends on!

Principles for Effective Training

- Start with interest level- e.g. Kitchen if they like to cook, garden if they love outdoors
- Pick appropriate jobs for the age and abilities of your child- check out their height and size to do tasks safely.
- Teach the steps involved in a variety of ways e.g. show them, talk about them, write out the steps.
- Be prepared to re-teach the job (many times may be necessary)
- Provide supervision that is encouraging
- Remind your child that it's ok to make mistakes so that we can keep learning (remind them that you have made lots of mistakes and have now had lots of practice)

- Be aware of negative behaviour and deal with it calmly but firmly e.g. I can see you only did half of the job, when it's all done you can go and play.
- Be clear about the standard of the job or the quantity e.g. I want you to do the bottom shelf of the dishwasher.
- Inspect what you Expect- let children know that you care about the finished product.

Suggestions for Jobs

Bedroom

Job: **Make Bed.**

Skills Involved: Large arm movements.

Job: **Dressing Independently.**

Skills Involved:

- Perceptual skills to orientate clothes.
- Fine motor skills to do fasteners eg. buttons, zips, studs
- Strength to pull on socks and tights

Job: **Put Toys Away.**

Skills Involved:

- Large arm movements.
- Persistence
- Following categories eg. 'put all the soft toys on your bed, put all the building blocks in the box'.

Bathroom / Toilet

Job: **Wipe down countertops, hand basin.**

Skills Involved:

- Following a sequence of steps
- Hand muscles to use spray bottles and to hold cleaning cloths.

Job: Clean Toilet.

Skills Involved:

- Following a sequence of steps
- Hand muscles to use spray bottles and to hold cleaning cloths.

Job: Clean Bathtub / Shower Cubicle.

Skills Involved:

- Large arm movements

Kitchen

Job: Carrying groceries.

Skills Involved:

- Large arm movements

Job: Putting groceries away.

Skills Involved:

- Concept of place
- Space relationships for stacking.
- Fitting into correct space

Job: Using the microwave.

Skills Involved:

- Individual finger control
- Safety issues.
- Time concepts

Job: Making simple sandwiches.

Skills Involved:

- Wrist action to spread butter etc.

Job: Cook's Helper.

Skills Involved:

- Following instructions
- Fetching and carrying for the cook.
- Learning about cooking through looking and listening

Dining Room

Job: Wiping up.

Skills Involved:

- Two handed task
- Judgement of pressure to handle breakable items

Job: Lay the table.

Skills Involved:

- Counting
- Orientation
- Memory

Job: Clear the table.

Skills Involved:

- Walking carefully whilst carrying objects

Job: Wipe down the table or work tops.

Skills Involved:

- Crossing the midline of the body
- Two handed task

Job: Putting away items within reach.

Skills Involved:

- Judgement of space to stack well
- Judgement of pressure to handle breakable items

Job: Replace bin liners.

Skills Involved:

- Small finger muscles to tear off bags and to separate layers of plastic

Job: Sweeping the floor.

Skills Involved:

- Crossing the midline
- Working sequentially

Job: Dustpan and brush.

Skills Involved:

- Two handed task

Job: Empty rubbish bins.

Skills Involved:

- Muscle tone
- Carrying objects whilst walking down stairs with perhaps both arms full

Laundry

Job: Sorting washing and checking pockets.

Skills Involved:

- Sorting concepts
- Small hand muscles for turning clothes inside out

Job: Carrying washing to washer / machine.

Skills Involved:

- Muscle tone in arms, heavy work

Job: Pegging clothes onto cloths line / airer.

Skills Involved:

- Small hand muscles
- Orientation of clothes
- Judgement of Space
- Large arm movements to reach and cross midline of body

Job: Removing clothes from line.

Skills Involved:

- Small hand muscle strength
- In-hand manipulation

Job: Folding clothes.

Skills Involved:

- Perceptual skills
- Movement planning skills

Job: Putting clothes away.

Skills Involved:

- Care and attention
- Possibly carrying without view of feet

Outdoor Jobs

Job: Weeding.

Skills Involved:

- Small hand muscles
- Visual discrimination between weeds and not weeds.

Job: **Feed pets.**

Skills Involved:

- Measuring skills
- Hand skills to open containers

Job: **Car washing.**

Skills Involved:

- Large movement to cross the midline
- Small hand muscles to hold cloth or hosepipe

General

Job: **Cleaning floors - vacuuming, sweeping or mopping.**

Skills Involved:

- Large arm movements
- Crossing the midline.
- Attention to detail

Job: **Dusting.**

Skills Involved:

- Using light pressure