

Learning the ABCs for Training Kids to Do Chores

Regardless of what might be going on in the world, parents often struggle with how to help their kids enjoy the best academic success with their schoolwork. One technique to meet this challenge might surprise some of you—ensure that our kids are contributing to the family by consistently helping with housework, yard work, and other duties.

Kids in the habit of successfully completing chores are far more likely to develop the habit of successfully completing academic assignments.

In one of my books, *From Bad Grades to a Great Life*, I describe how chores meet an essential human emotional need—the need to feel needed. When we treat our kids like guests in a five-star, all-inclusive resort, their true self-esteem plummets and they develop attitudes of entitlement. Low self-esteem and entitlement go hand in hand and together they equal low achievement motivation. To prevent this from happening, or to begin the process of healing if it has already happened, use Love and Logic’s ABCs for training kids to do chores:

A: Assign every member of your family some meaningful contributions.

Ask yourself, “What am I doing that my kids could do on a regular basis?” Many parents find it helpful to post a list on the refrigerator door, complete with names next to each contribution. Caution: Don’t say, “Do it now.” This will just create power struggles. Instead, allow them to have a deadline for each contribution.

B: Be quiet.

Avoid reminding or nagging. Remember that kids who have to be nagged into doing their chores will also need to be nagged into doing their schoolwork and homework.

C: Consequences preceded by sincere empathy will do the teaching.

When their children refuse to do their chores, forget to do them, or do them haphazardly, many parents find it helpful to complete the chore for their children and then expect them to repay the time and energy expended to accomplish those contributions.

Sometimes this means doing extra chores for the parent. Sometimes this means staying home or doing without some privilege so that the parent has time to rest and relax. Other times this means paying the parent or a professional to do the job. A memorable example involved a teen who had to pay a maid service to complete her housework contributions.

The key to success hinges on sincere empathy! Remember that anger and frustration create resentment, while sincere empathy creates responsibility.

More insights into helping kids learn how to do chores can be found in our MP3, *Didn't I Tell You To Take Out the Trash?!*

Thanks for reading!

[Dr. Charles Fay](#)