

Chores and kids

- Chores should be fair.** Rotate chores so that one child or another does not get stuck always doing the same chore.
- Chores should be safe and age appropriate.** We don't want a three-year-old washing dishes alone.
- Be reasonable in your expectations.** While it is important to follow through and give children feedback so that they know that they have our attention — still we do not want to crush any young or fragile egos. This is all about building a sense of competence. Keep in mind; it is not what you say, but how you say it. Home should be a safe haven in which to make mistakes, make adjustments, and learn.
- Whenever possible, find a reward system other than money.** I prefer tokens, which can be accumulated and traded for things that each particular child holds dear. In this way children don't develop a feeling of entitlement — that they should be paid for every favor they do around the house. It is better to help your children realize that they are an integral part of a team. On the other hand, there are times when a money reward is warranted, such as a period in which we are teaching our children how to manage money, value it, save it, and spent it responsibly. The key here, as in all other forms of conscious parenting is a balanced approach.
- Set a standard for excellence, and keep it within your child's reach.** Don't make the mistake of being too hard to please. We all have memories of jobs not taken for the fear of failure. This is all about teaching life skills. Madam Montessori got it right when she built chores into the daily curriculum of her school. She realized that love and work build a centered child who transfers that feeling of self-worth and trust into the outer world.
- Engage your child in the discussion.** Come together as a family and share intimate time together while planning what chores need to be done around the house so that it runs smoothly for the whole family — who should do what this week and what the reward tokens will be worth when they are cashed in.