

# Raising a Confident Child



## 5 Easy Ways to Teach Responsibility

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**We all want to raise our children to become responsible people.** The kind of children who will do their homework and be kind to their friends, the kind of teenagers who will respect the rules and return the car on time, and the kind of adults who will keep a good job and visit you in your old age. But how in the world do you start to teach responsibility to those wiggly little wide-eyed hurricanes in your care right now?

The good news is, once a child can follow a one step direction and do things with even a little independence, it isn't too early to start!

### Take the Time

The first, and perhaps sometimes most challenging thing, is for the grownups to slow down. It could be so much easier to toss the toys into the box yourself, or whip the dishes off the table and into the sink after lunch to move on with your day. But if you can slow down, and guide your young toddler through helping with these things (even if it isn't every time), then you will begin to lay the foundation for responsibility.

At this age, it is really great to play up the “Mommy and Daddy’s Little Helper” angle. Show your child how much they are helping you out and thank them for their efforts. Kids really grow and glow on that kind of feedback.

### Give A or B Choices

Another great way to teach responsibility is to phrase your requests for help in a way that elicits some sort of “yes”. This isn’t easy when the “NO!” stage is in full effect, or if you have a elementary age child trying to exert some independence, but it is one way to lessen the battle a little. Instead of saying, “Would you like to help clean up your room?” instead say, “It is time to clean up! Would you like to put your stuffed animals away or would you like to put away your books? Mommy will help with the rest!” As the child gets older, they can take more than one job. Make sure your child follows through on their end of the bargain too! Consistency in whatever you do is key.



### Reward Work

As a child gets older, you may want to try putting stickers on a [chose chart](#), or a token system where they can earn rewards for a job well done. In addition, Signing Time’s DVD: [Helping Out Around the House](#) gives great ideas for ways small children can help with daily tasks.

### Be Mindful of Manners

Besides contributing to things like chores, also think about how you want to start teaching your child to contribute to society some day! It is never to early to start teaching some manners, and signs like [PLEASE](#) and [THANK YOU](#) are some of the first a child will often pick up.



### Cultivate Kindness

If you feel like doing a little decorating, consider starting a “kindness chain” to hang in your child’s bedroom. The idea here is to build a chain out of paper strips (the kind you may have decorated with for the holidays once upon a time). Each time your child does something kind or thoughtful, like shares unprompted with a sibling, does something sweet for you, is “caught being good” at school, or is kind to a neighbor or stranger out in public (like holding the door), the child earns a piece of paper. Write that act of kindness on the piece of paper and add it to the kindness chain. Watch it, along with your child’s character, grow and grow!

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## SOURCES

- <http://www.parents.com/kids/responsibility/teaching/the-chose-challenge/?page=1>
- <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/teacher-made-activities-teaching-responsibility>
- <http://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/818185/Teaching-responsibility>