

## Ms. J's 411

Jacksonville, Tx. -Sometimes our lives seems like nothing but work. We work when we are at work, and we keep on working once we come home, cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, dishes etc. When will we find the time for our most important job: being a parent to our children? One way to share more time with your children is to involve them in household work. Treat chores as a normal part of life, not as punishment. When children help with family chores, they seem to enjoy it gaining self-respect and learning competency. Kids also feel good when they see how they contribute to family life, and when everyone helps with household chores, there is more time for favorite family activities. All family members can help in some way, no matter how young. Toddlers can carry clothes to the laundry. Preschoolers can carry their dishes to the sink after dinner and put their toys up at the end of the day. With a little training from mom and dad, older children can assist more complex household tasks. Vary the work assignment to keep your children interested up. Try one of these strategies: Kids Choose- Chores can be laid out in choices, with selecting which they will do. Disagreements are a good time to learn about turn taking and compromise. Luck of the draw- Write each chore on a piece of paper in a can or small tissue box, each family member chooses one or two slips of paper. This is an easy way for all to take turns with the least and most like jobs. 10 minute pick up- Give each family member a work area to clean, make sure everyone has the cleaning supplies they need

## Plan family fun

to do their jobs, Set the timer for 10 minutes and shout "Go"! When time is up, allow a few minutes for last minute touch up. Then stand back and join in a round of applause for all who did so much in such a short time. A great lesson of family teamwork. Cooking time is for everyone- Some families develop favorite meals because there's a role for everyone. Tacos make a great meal for this reason-even the youngest children can wash and tear the lettuce, school age children can grate cheese and cut tomatoes, and older children and teens can cool beans or meat. Work-N-Talk-Remember the conversations you had as a child with parent, sister, or brother while you washed dishes or cleaned room together? Try sharing jobs with your children so you can use work time for family tasks. Its a natural time to share the darp events or to bring up some of the serious matters you need to raise with your children or just share jokes and laughter together. Praise and hugs- Its the effect that counts most when kids do family chores. A childs version of a job may not be as tidy as an adults but it deserves praise and an extra hug. Help your children stay on tasks by following chore time with a favorite family activity, board game, maybe a chapter in the family reading book, a walk with the dog or treats while watching T.V. shows. Family members can join in the fun once their work is done. These are just suggestions. Until next time take care of yourself.

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