

You are the Experts of your Family!

Learning to take responsibility involves the development of a number of skills, such as following through on tasks, taking accountability for mistakes, and looking out for others. These skills can be enhanced with lots of practice and guidance from caring adults.

When children understand the reasons behind the expectations placed on them, they are more likely to follow through.

Clear Expectations:

Children do want to follow rules and respect parents' wishes. Understanding what is expected and why will help children make the decision for themselves to follow through on tasks. As children get older, they are learning to consider the impact of their actions.

Children who do not understand the reasons for the rules placed on them will be less likely to follow them. Giving children responsibility is important because it shows them that they are trusted. Children learn a lot about responsibility by following the behaviour of parents and other important adults in their lives.

Mistakes are a part of learning! Turn "mistakes" into "miss-takes", so children discover that they can learn and try again.

Accountability:

Children are learning more about the impact of their behaviour and the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. Allow children to take responsibility when they make a mistake and help them find new ways to deal with the situation next time.

As children get older, they learn to make choices for themselves. Through guidance and role modeling from parents and caring adults, children will learn the right choices to make. When children make mistakes, they will realize how they can use the experience as learning to do things differently next time.

Adults can model respect and responsibility to show children how they can make good choices for themselves and others.

Social Responsibility:

Help your child consider the needs and well-being of other people. Respect for others is an important part of becoming a responsible citizen. As children develop empathy, they learn to see how their choices impact other people.

Help your child learn to think about other people's perspectives to promote a sense of empathy. Children also learn how to consider other's points of view by watching the actions of adults around them. Empathy takes a while to perfect, so children may need some prompting from time to time.

Learning to be Responsible:

Planning Ahead

Children can practice making good choices before facing a difficult situation. Help your child plan ahead and develop ways he or she will face an upcoming challenge.

Building Confidence

Parents can help children develop and awareness of their ability to make choices for themselves. Help your child develop a sense of self-awareness and personal power success so he or she will be prepared to manage conflict or stress, even when you can't be there to help.

Taking Perspectives

"Children, who feel listened to, who feel understood, become better able to listen and understand others. Perspective taking is an essential skill in parenting and that to practice it; [parents] have to put aside their own reactions" (Galinsky, 2010). Most children fully develop the ability to consider other people's perspectives by the age of 9 or 10.

Children who are self-aware will be able to evaluate the effects of their choices.

Service can mean advocating for the safety of others.

Give children opportunities to help out around the house to build responsibility.

Make time for reading together as part of your daily routine.

"Children respond to the situation they're in. If they're praised for their effort and for their strategies they're using, they're more likely to want to learn and to try harder" (Galinsky, 2010).

Taking on Responsibility through Developing Strengths

Patience and Listening:

Parents who are patient with their child's efforts tend to encourage more and become frustrated less. Children need to talk out problems. Listen intently to your child's stories to show support.

Confidence:

Children feel responsible when they have confidence in themselves. Help children identify their own unique strengths and skills so that they feel more confident in their abilities.

Accountability:

Being responsible means you can be trusted to follow through on your promises and that you know what it is the right thing to do.

Clear Expectations:

When expectations are clearly explained, it is easier for children to keep track of responsibilities and be accountable for them.

Routines:

Children develop the ability to take on more responsibility at different rates. Use gentle reminders or set specific times to carry out a task to help responsibilities become habits.

Encouragement:

Children who feel loved and supported are strengthened and encouraged to overcome challenges, make healthy choices, and take on more responsibility.