

Raising responsible, confident children

One of the best ways to help your child build self-confidence is to regularly give them opportunities to feel proud of what they can do. Interestingly, one of the easiest ways to do this is to give them tasks to complete on their own.

While many parents' instinct is to make life as easy as possible for their children, giving kids responsibilities can actually help build resilience.

Managing regular tasks (like clearing up their toys, washing up or walking the dog) helps build their self-confidence and self-esteem. It also helps them learn how to manage their time, honour commitments and think through how to solve problems on their own. And all that helps them grow into responsible adults.

Use the worksheet on the back to identify things your child or adolescent can do.

Decide what to add to their to-do list: Consider their age, maturity level and how much time each task will take to complete. The goal is to give them small but meaningful action items to do on a regular basis without stressing them out.

Consider things that will give them useful skills (and help ease your to-do list) such as:

- Put away my toys every night before bed
- Brush my hair and teeth every morning and evening
- Make my bed in the morning
- Water the plants on Saturday mornings
- Sweep or Hoover the kitchen floor after dinner on Fridays
- Set out my clothes for the next day every evening
- Complete my homework on time every day
- Put dirty clothes in the wash basket
- Put away clean clothes
- Bonus: Surprise my parents by doing something they didn't ask me to

Track progress: If they're already completing tasks on their own, you can still fill in the worksheet to help them keep track.

Consider giving them coloured pens, stickers or another fun way to mark off each completed task. Over time, they will see how much they've accomplished.

Make expectations clear: For each responsibility they take on, make sure they understand what's expected. Explain what the task is, why it's important and offer step-by-step instructions (or recommendations) for completing it.

At first, it might seem easier to do it yourself, but letting them try helps them grow.

Also, even after they get the hang of it, they might not do it exactly the way you would. After all, part of taking responsibility for something is taking ownership, and making it your own.

Celebrate accomplishments: Keep track of each completed task. At the end of each week, praise them for what they did well and ask whether they have any questions or need help understanding how to do something.

As they make progress, think about ways to reflect on their successes. For example, you could ask them confidence-boosting questions like:

- How did you feel when you marked off a completed task?
- Look back on the week, what are you most proud of?
- Did you learn anything new?

The Optum logo, consisting of the word "Optum" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font.

Sources:

Child Mind Institute, [Pushing kids without pushing too hard](#), 4 Dec 2024.

Harvard, Making Caring Common Project, [The everyday tasks that make responsible and caring kids](#).

The British Psychological Society, [Doing more chores linked to better executive functioning in kids – but direction of effect is unclear](#), 2 Aug 2022.

My responsibility list: _____ Age: _____

Task	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
Bonus task:							