

Happy Kids

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"What does your child do that someone else relies on?"

Most people shift a little uneasily when I ask this question in parenting seminars!

It's not meant to make you feel guilty. It's meant to provoke some thought and make a point about developing responsibility in kids.

I'm often asked by parents how to develop responsibility in kids.

The answer is simple – give responsibility to them! Let them feed the family pet, empty the dishwasher, clean up the living area at the end of the day.

Most kids rise to a real challenge when it's sincerely given, and backed by realistic expectations.

We tend to give responsibility to the kids who don't need it – the easy kids. But we often ignore the kids in our family who really would benefit from giving them some trust – the difficult kids, those that require following up, or some parental work.

Kids belong in two ways to families – they either belong due to their **positive contribution** or they belong through **poor behaviour**. The family pest has as much cache as the responsible child – their parents know they are around!!!

It makes sense for parents to work hard to provide opportunities for kids to contribute to their family so they feel valued for what they bring to their family, rather than for what they take.

Here are three practical tips to promote a sense of responsibility in your kids:

1. Start early: Children as young as three are keen to help and take some responsibility but we often push them away and say, 'You can help when you're older.' Train your kids from a young to help themselves and others.
2. If a child forgets then no one else does the task: If a child doesn't empty the dishwasher then it still there when they come home from school. Sounds tough but that's how the real world operates. When you empty it, it becomes your responsibility.
3. Don't give kids jobs where you have an emotional attachment: Give them tasks that you know that you can live without if they are not done, or not done to your standard.

Another thing! Many parents call this type of responsibility 'jobs' or 'chores'. I prefer to call it 'help'. It's just a little rebranding, but it reflects what it's about.

Update your parenting library

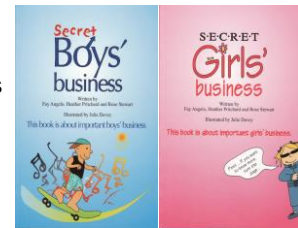


Finding it hard to get your message across with teenagers? **Ten conversations you must have with your son** by Tim Hawkes has some brilliant communication ideas for parents as well as 10 great conversations you should be having with your son. **Find out more.**



“You have described my family” is the most common response I get from readers of my birth order bible **Why first borns rule the world and last borns want to change it**. Discover how your children’s order of birth impacts on their behaviour, attitudes and relationships as well as on your parenting. **Find out more.**

Secret Boys’ Business and **Secret Girls’ Business** are essential books for parents with kids in early to middle primary because they talk about ...well, that’s a secret. **Find out more.**



Take care,

Michael Grose

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