

**Chore list template for family**

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If you get easily overwhelmed by the mess in your home and the thought of nagging your kids to try to help makes you want to curl into a ball in the closet (instead of actually fixing the problem), I totally get it. The solution for you could be as easy as be a printable family chore chart. In the past, I would think, “This year, things will change. The house will be perfect all the time.” I made some progress, but then I fell off the wagon. One big problem? I never had a family chore schedule; I tried to do everything myself. Disclosure: This article contains affiliate links. You can read my full policy here. A few years ago, it came to a head. I was pregnant and always felt like I’d been hit by a truck. We had three kids running around, and it felt like they were always leaving messes behind them. I just flat-out gave up on the house. My husband did his part, of course, but with him working full-time, it’s not like he could do everything (nor would I expect him to). So finally, we had a conversation a few weeks before back-to-school. I told him I needed some kind of structure. We brainstormed and came up with a chore chart for the whole family. My husband put it together (which I really appreciate). With some adjustments, this chore chart has worked beautifully for our large family. So if you’re wondering how to make a chore chart for the whole family, I’m excited to share our free printable family chore chart template with you (and why it works so well). How to make a family chore chart Whether you need a chore chart for a large family or a small one, you’ll use the same process to make a chore chart. My suggestion is to make creating a chore chart as simple as possible. We initially used a whiteboard (you can see below), but do whatever works for you. If you like Excel or Google Sheets, making a chore chart on a spreadsheet is super easy and organized. (And if you’re not into making your own spreadsheets, I’ve got you covered. You can grab our weekly customizable chore chart by clicking here.) Want to see how easy it is to customize your chore chart for your family after you get it? Watch the short video below: Regardless of how you choose to make your chore chart, you basically need a grid: The rows contain each person’s name in the family, and the columns contain the days of the week. Each block is filled in with an age appropriate task for each person. Our easy printable family chore chart When I first thought about a chore chart, I had one of those adorable, Pinterest-worthy charts in mind. You know, the ones with the fabric background and perfect decorations that takes hours to make? But let’s be real. Those are usually too complicated, and they just don’t work for people like me. You know what we got? A white board and some markers. Done (so if you’re looking for example chore charts, here you go). Then, we made a grid and made a row for Mommy, Daddy, and each child (yes, even the two year old). Each person has their chore written in the grid for each day. Boom: Perfect chore chart for a family of 5. Want to make it even easier? I’ve since printed out a cute chore chart I made online. It’s easy to update as the kids age into new chores – no special software or programs needed! Subscribe for your own customizable chore chart template. Why this chore chart for your family WORKS As I said, when we first started the chore chart, I was nervous, but I have been pleasantly surprised. The chore chart has been a game changer, and we’ve been able to keep up (even after the school-year routine began). The first week with a family chore chart: The “hard reset” Fortunately, the first week of our chore system was before the new school year, so we were able to do an extra-good job and catch up with all the backlog of clutter and dirt. We made it clear to the kids that we were going to use a new system for cleaning. Each person had a job to do, and it was non-negotiable. So they knew what to expect. Plus, we trained them on how to do each of their chores. For example, scrubbing the kitchen is on our list of chores twice a week: I do it once on Wednesday, and my husband gets it on Sunday (we keep up with dishes between times). I had the first go at the kitchen, so I really doubled down: I scrubbed out the sink, the microwave, and made the stove top look good. My husband finished off the “hard-core” kitchen stuff on Sunday: Cleaning out the gunk at the bottom of the dishwasher, wiping down the cabinets and fridge. Now, when it gets to kitchen scrubbing day, we still have the basics of dishes and wiping down counters, but if that’s all we get to, it’s okay. If we do manage to do a few of those deep-clean tasks, it’s great! I plan to do one of these “hard resets” quarterly or so. That way, things that we may have become lax on (because life is relentless) can get caught up on. Each person has one simple task per day Like I said, my biggest worry about a chore chart was whether I’d be nagging kids every day about doing their chores. Fortunately, that (mostly) hasn’t been the case. When we first started, my husband and I presented a united front: We discussed that the house wasn’t staying as neat as it needed to and that we were concerned, and that to solve the problem we would work together as a family (after all, one of our family rules is “Families help each other”). RELATED: The only three rules you need toddler to teen The beauty is, each person only has one task per day, and each task has really clear boundaries. Several days a week, the girls’ task is either to clean up the living room or to clean up the play room. They know exactly where they are supposed to be working, and they know what everything should look like when they’re done. UPDATE: My husband got me a Roomba for Christmas (yes, I’m the kind of girl who asks for a Roomba for Christmas). It has been a huge help! Not only does it do the vacuuming for us, but it gives us a good reason to tell the kids that yes, they really do have to get everything out of the floor. Our floors have stayed much tidier since Christmas! That’s not to say that my kids are exempt from doing anything besides their daily chore. Often, they’ll be asked to put their clean clothes away after I fold them or to wipe down the table after dinner. They know that they can be asked to do a few other small things each day. A family responsibility chart keeps you encouraged and motivated Now, there are always at least a few rooms I can look at and feel good about. The living room (before, one of the biggest eyessores) is cleaned at least every other day. And since there’s not so much “stuff” in the floor, I can actually vacuum without having to work around toys and remote controls. And even when a room is cluttered, I know that it will be cleaned within a few days. Just that knowledge makes me feel better. My kids seem more motivated to put things up as they go, too (maybe because they’re realizing it’ll make chore time easier). And if there’s other daily tasks I have a hard time with, I add them to the chore chart. My six-year-old has nightly spelling words, and to keep us accountable (I have to guide her, after all), it has been added to the board. That way, I have to look at it when we check off chores for the night. Our cleaning system is flexible I even though this is a weekly family chore chart, I sometimes change which chore the kids will be doing on a given day when I need to. For example, if they’re supposed to clean the play room on a day when it really looks okay, but their room is a wreck, I just tell them to clean their room instead. This system works pretty well. And yes, there are occasions when we skip chores. I limit these days to once a week, usually when getting home is extra-hecktic. I don’t have many skip-days though, because I don’t want us to get out of the habit. Benefits of a weekly family chore chart Not only is the chore chart good for keeping a cleaner, tidier home, it’s helpful for our whole family. The chore calendar reduces stress for everyone Now, the clutter is no longer staring me in the face, and I’m no longer completely overwhelmed by our home. It’s such a relief. On top of that, my stress used to spill over on the kids and family, but by getting everyone involved, that anxiety and resentment is gone. RELATED: Stop yelling and become a calmer mom Chore time usually takes around 20 minutes each evening. That small bit of time each day is a good trade for the reduced clutter and stress. The chore chart makes us a team I’ve seen printable chore charts for kids and printable chore charts for moms. I don’t often see a chore chart for the whole family. I like the arrangement in this printable family chore chart because it lets kids know that we are all responsible for the house together. Everyone has to pull their own weight for things to run smoothly. Chores teach kids responsibility Getting the kids involved in the home on a daily basis teaches them that they have a place in our household. In addition, they learn how to tackle jobs independently, instead of shutting down due to stress (like I was doing before). For example, my four-year-old does tend to get overwhelmed by chores still. If it’s her turn to clean the bedroom, she might say that it’s too hard and she’s “too tired.” But if I go in and point out things one at a time (take these toys to the play room, put these books on the shelf, these clothes go in the hamper), she can get it done. RELATED: How to give your kids a growth mindset Tedious? Yes. But I’ve already seen improvement from her (and I’m so proud!). She’s starting to be able to break down her chore into smaller, bite-sized tasks. This skill is only going to improve with practice. Our chore chart can grow with our family These ideas work whether you need a toddler chore chart, a preschool chore chart, or want to make daily tasks for older kids. Each child is given chores based on their ability. For example, our two-year old has tasks such as “Clean your room,” “Make your bed,” or “Put clean forks and spoons into the drawer.” As he gets older, he’ll get more responsibility. RELATED: 28 chores for 3 year olds My girls (4 and 6) are responsible for a whole room each night. And my oldest is beginning to pick up on doing laundry. Right now, she knows how to transfer laundry from the washer to the dryer and turn it on. Yesterday, she even brought a (light) load of clean laundry up the stairs to me without being asked! I’m looking forward to the day when I can have the kids do their own clothes, hopefully within a few years. UPDATE: The then-6 year old is now 8, and with reminding, she’s able to carry laundry up and down and go through the whole process of washing, drying, and putting things away. I’m still folding most of the laundry, but the kids fold towels. Progress! As the kids get older, their chores can become more complex. Doing laundry from sorting to putting away is one big task, but we can move to letting them put up dishes (they just need to get taller), mowing the lawn, scrubbing bathrooms, and even cooking dinner. RELATED: How your child can help with meal prep (Tasks by age) Get your own free copy of my printable chore chart template here! It’s totally customizable (you don’t have to be a graphic design pro – just fill in the blanks) to fit your family’s needs. Why mess can overwhelm you In the past, when the house got to a certain point, I would A. freak out and fall into a sobbing disaster, before going into an angry cleaning frenzy, or B. just shut down and ignore the mess, letting it get worse until I eventually collapsed into Option A. Not pretty. But I think it’s important to delve into the mindsets that kept me trapped in a messy house and stressed-out state. Hopefully these thoughts can help you too. All-or-nothing mentality with chores doesn’t help Mindset has been my biggest problem around cleaning. I remember being told as a kid, “If you’re gonna do something half-assed, you may as well just not do it!” Keeping anything clean and tidy for long is an impossible task in my house (see: three kids six and under). So there’s no way to keep things “whole-ass” cleaned, at least not at this stage. Therefore, I subconsciously decided that I may as well give up before I even started. And of course, my anxiety about a cluttered, dirty house grew. When we would work together on the house, I told my husband I was too overwhelmed to know where to start. I was just paralyzed. He didn’t really get it. “Just start...somewhere! Anywhere!” But in my head, I was defeated before even trying. I had to have a new mindset around cleaning, one that allowed for less than perfection. Don’t let the mess get out of control without a family job chart I was an only child growing up, so my messes were pretty contained. The house was never in too bad of shape. My mom liked to have one big cleaning day, where we vacuumed, scrubbed bathrooms, dusted, everything, in one big chunk of time (usually on Saturdays) between loads of laundry. That system worked for her. But when you have three kids under the age of seven, cleaning for hours on end simply won’t work. If I try to get everything done at one time, I end up feeling defeated and cranky, and most likely my kids are cranky by that point too. Beyond that, there simply aren’t enough hours to do all the laundry for five people in one day. Why moms may resist a family chore chart Even though you know something has to change, you may be afraid. Beliefs it or not, there are many possibly worries around family responsibility charts. Fear of failure with chores Having a chart “commits” you to accomplishing tasks (or into convincing your kids to do their responsibilities). Even if they’re tasks that have to be done, they can still be intimidating. After all, what if you don’t have time that day? I mean, if you work outside the home, get home by 5:30 or 6:00 and have to do dinner, homework, and a bedtime routine, when are you supposed to do anything around the house? And if your primary occupation is a homemaker, well, you understand that having your kids at home all day leads to constant new messes. So that might be even worse. What if I don’t feel like cleaning? What if a kid is sick? What if my brain can come up with another crazy excuse? You can probably see the rigidity of my mindset in all these questions. After all, missing one day shouldn’t ruin everything. But still, these concerns are real fears for a lot of moms and dads. Worry about “one more thing to keep up with” The other thing that may keep you from wanting a chore chart is knowing that you have to lead your kids in it. I mean, if you’re having a hard time being motivated to do basic cleaning tasks, how much harder would it be to get three four children involved on a daily basis? Maybe to you, getting the kids involved in cleaning didn’t look like a way to delegate responsibility for the house. It looks more like one more (difficult) chore for yourself! But think about it: What you’re doing (or not doing) already isn’t working. What do you have to lose by trying a new thing? Conclusions on weekly family chore charts If you’re like me, and want to avoid the stress of a messy house, but also don’t love cleaning, I have good news for you. You can try implementing a chore chart in your own home. It may take some getting used to, but it’s been a total game changer for our family. And, if you need help getting started, I’ve got a free printable template for you. Just subscribe here and I’ll send it right over. Samantha Radford has a PhD in Chemistry from Emory University (Atlanta, GA). She is an exposure scientist who focuses on maternal-child health. Samantha has years of research into learning about how chemical exposures affect both unborn babies and children, as well as how toxicants and medications are passed through breastmilk. Samantha also studies the effect of exposure to hormones induced by personal experiences, for example, cortisol in babies who are stressed or oxytocin in mothers bonding to their infants. Through the years, Samantha has expanded her academic and personal studies to how exposures to different parenting styles affect the mental and physical health of children as they grow to adulthood.

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