

# How to Teach Children Responsibility Pledge Hand Craft

Children who are taught about responsibility learn to work with others, gain skills needed to organize and complete a task, and may learn a new skill or improve on another. Parents also benefit from teaching responsibility by sharing the workload with children, allowing more time for family fun and activities.

A key point to remember about sharing responsibilities, especially of household tasks, is that it is important for all members of the family to be involved in the *decision-making*. Give children opportunities to make decisions within the limits of their ability. If they are more involved in the planning, they are more likely to "buy in" with the plans. Communicating clearly is very important. Parents need to make sure the child understands what they say. Everyone should have the chance to express opinions and make suggestions. Here are some ideas to help start the process.

- **Create a chore list.** Identify daily, weekly, and monthly chores, both inside and outside the home.
- **Offer choices.** When possible, give children choices of the jobs they want to do.
- **Diversify responsibilities.** Although there is sometimes a perception of a chore being a "man's job" or a "woman's job," it is important for family members to learn a variety of household tasks.
- **Rotate chore assignments.** Switch chores occasionally, especially for the tasks no one really wants to do. Anyone can get bored doing the same thing over and over.
- **Do not expect perfection!** Children need to learn what is expected of them. Then they need time to learn the skills. Parents can easily do lots of tasks more quickly, such as making a bed. However, then children lose out on valuable "on-the-job" training.
- **Give guidance.** Remember that even though we may have done the task too many times to count, children still need help and direction when they tackle a new job.
- **Teach about consequences.** Be sure children understand both negative and positive consequences of their actions. Some parents believe in monetary or actual rewards for completing chores, while others believe in the values children learn, such as cooperation, participation and a feeling of responsibility.

Children's learning about responsibility is a long process that needs regular reinforcement. As a result, however, each family should have more time to share and play together, making the home a place where everyone is valued and cooperates.

## CRAFT ACTIVITY

Discuss the word "pledge" (pledge = promise) and talk about how people make a public pledge (like holding a hand over the heart) when they are deciding to do something important. Together, with your children pledge a few things that you could all do to act responsibly, such as putting the dishes and laundry away before bed time, being nice to siblings, and picking up toys after you use them. Trace your child's hands on a piece of paper, have him/her color them in and write the word "Pledge", then cut the hand out. Simple! Just a little physical reminder of what "pledge" means and how we can pledge ourselves to responsible behavior.