



# TEACHING CHILDREN THE VALUE OF WORK

By Christy Monson

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

*Here are some ideas to help your children roll up their sleeves and experience the blessings of work.*

**H**eavenly Father has taught by example that work is a divine principle (see Exodus 20:9–11; Moses 1:39). As we teach this principle to our children and provide opportunities for them to apply it, they can experience a sense of accomplishment and belonging, learn needed skills to become self-sufficient, and prepare themselves for greater responsibilities, including Church service. Here are nine tips to help you in your efforts:

## Include children in creating a family work plan.

In a family council, discuss the work that needs to be done to maintain the home and yard. Talk about how these duties can be shared among family members. Children will be more motivated to help if they are part of this process. Be mindful of children's ages and capabilities, but give them opportunities to try hard things.

## Help children experience success.

Discuss (and demonstrate if necessary) each new job. Kindly reassure children that they can complete the task. Show patience and stay positive. Resist the urge to complete the job for them.

## Find a fun way to track progress and reward their work.

Have everyone place a cotton ball (or some other item) in a jar when a task is finished. When the jar is full, go on a family adventure. Or make a pizza chart and have each child color a slice when their work is done. When the chart is full, have a pizza party.



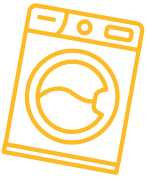
### Work together.

Rather than send everyone off in multiple directions, tackle jobs together, like weeding the garden or cleaning out the car. Working alongside your children gives you opportunities to strengthen relationships and have conversations.



### Make it fun.

Put on some music. Or turn the chore into a game. If folding laundry together, you might say, "Who can put the most sock pairs together in 30 seconds? I'll get my stopwatch."



### Praise their efforts and avoid criticism.

Commend everyone as they work. "Great job clearing off the cabinets. Now you just have the table left." Teach as you go, staying positive. "Way to go with the sink. It's spotless. Now as you wash the mirror, I'd recommend using a different, clean cloth."



### Allow children to experience natural and logical consequences.

Set consequences as you assign tasks and follow through. "We can't have family movie night until all the chores are complete."

Job-specific consequences might also help. If a child has failed to wash the dishes as asked, you might kindly say, "I'd hate for us to eat dinner tonight on dirty dishes. That would be gross. Could you please finish the dishes?"



### Be a positive role model.

Show by your example that work can be joyful, even when strenuous. Smile. Whistle. If your children experience setbacks, show patience, stay calm, and lovingly discuss the challenges as a family.



### Serve others.

Serving others is a very joyous kind of work (see Mosiah 2:17). As you roll up your sleeves as a family to help others, testimonies of service and strong work ethics will result. ■

