



Family Focus on Responsibility¹

What is Responsibility?

Responsibility is taking care of self, taking care of possessions, caring for others, and caring for animals, plants, and the environment.

“You can count on me!” How many of us have said that? Do we always mean it? Do we always carry through with what we say we will do? People of character are responsible. They mean it when they say, “you can count on me!”

Becoming responsible is part of growing up and becoming a person of character. Being a person of character means that we act the way we really are. Our true character is the way we act even when no one is looking. We do good things because it is who we truly are, not because we might get credit or praise for doing them. To have good character, we must do more than just say we are responsible. We must take action. Responsible people take care of themselves, as well as others, and can always be depended on to do the right thing, even when the right thing is the hard thing to do.

Responsibility Challenge:

The responsibility challenge given to youth this month at their meeting was to be responsible for a household chore for one month. They are to report back next month about that experience.

One way to teach responsibility is through household chores. Children can learn to share in the work load, learn housekeeping skills, contribute to the family, and learn to be responsible. To avoid hassles as you use household chores as a teaching opportunity, be sure the chores are appropriate for the child’s age, expectations are clear, and that children are allowed choices and flexibility. There will often be three levels of involvement with a chore:

- child helps adult with task
- child needs reminding or supervision to complete task
- child does task satisfactorily, as well as alone, with no reminding

For more information about teaching children responsibility, contact your local Extension Office and ask about the educational program “Raising Responsible Kids” that was developed by the Family Life Educator Team.

Responsibility Quote:

“In the final analysis, the one quality that all successful people have . . . is the ability to take on responsibility.” — Michael Korda

¹Debbie McClellan, *Raising Responsible Kids*, University of Illinois Extension, 2002.