

# Cleaning with Kids!

You might think cleaning with kids is more effort than it's worth, and fear it leads to cleaning up twice!

But you probably also know that teaching kids to help you now will make cleaning easier later, while also building their abilities and self-esteem.



There are many important early learning skills that can be practiced through cleaning.

(Plus young kids love to help!)

## Practice self-regulation:

- Holding directions in your head
- Following multi-step directions
- Turn taking
- Switching between different tasks

## Learn literacy:

- Practice letter recognition
- Distinguish beginning letter sounds of words
- Match initial word sounds and their letter names
- Practice breaking words into sound segments
- Vocabulary: (colors, prepositions, labeling)

## Build math skills:

- Proportions (bigger, smaller, more than)
- Counting
- Sorting and matching items
- Measuring
- Shapes

## Develop motor skills:

- Carrying and balancing
- Pinching and grasping, dexterity
- Coordinating movements and working with others

## Tricks to make cleaning easier:

- Break tasks down and sequence a few steps. Instead of, 'clean your room', start with: 'first put away all the books, then put the dirty clothes in the hamper', etc.



- Try using timers and set challenges. Make it cooperative to see how fast you can go as a team, or race children against each other; either who can go fastest, or who can put away the most in a set time.

- Spray bottles, dusters, squeegees, and other "tools" are like catnip for kids!



- Put items away based on color, the sound that starts its name, or other criteria: "Put away everything that starts with 'b'", or "everything that has letters on it."



- Use incentives: let kids watch a movie, but the movie only runs when they are folding clothes.

- Make it visual: give kids a list, or create a challenge chart of chores like a game board; they get to put a sticker on each step to complete the challenge.



- Make it a family event. Everyone works together as part of the team to clean, then everyone has family game night afterwards, or you get to order pizza for dinner.



- Let kids be the boss and direct the cleaning: what to do next, what to listen to while you clean, where to put things, etc.

Take breaks and reward effort along the way! It's hard not to focus on correcting, but when kids feel appreciated they will be motivated to keep trying!



SOAP