

the Wellspring

early childhood
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Stewardship at Home

As we settle into our new rhythm, we suddenly find that 'home' has taken on a new meaning. It is now the center of all of our activity—where we find rest and comfort in the night, but also where we exercise all of the vitality and productiveness of the days that were once spent away at school, at work, or at play. How we manage our home environment becomes a task of great importance, as it has such an impact on how our families are able to inwardly organize themselves and remain grounded and emotionally healthy in these extraordinary times. As parents, we cannot do this work on our own, but must call upon our children's healthy will to help us steward our homes.

The work of the home has many gifts: it strengthens our sense of life because it is rooted in rhythm and rhythmic activities. It builds the child's muscle of self-regulation, and it nurtures their growing sense of service, empathy and self-esteem.

Especially now, when life is a bit unbalanced and unusual, home activities that provide rhythm can bring inward balance to all. You can find a daily and weekly routine of tasks that work for your family. Every member of your clan, even the toddlers, can be of service. Knowing that they have meaningful work, from which they can experience direct results and for which they can get direct feedback, is grounding. It can sustain them now that they are not receiving that feedback from classmates and teachers.

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Chores for your Busy Bees

Ages 18 months to 3

- Put toys away
- Stack/put away books
- Put dirty laundry in the hamper
- Put trash in the garbage & recycling bins
- Wipes spills
- Stir recipe ingredients
- Feed pets
- Help to move clothes from washer & dryer
- Sort laundry by color
- Sweep
- Fold simple laundry

Ages 4 to 5

- Make their bed
- Tidy their bedroom
- Water plants
- Set and clear table
- Fold most laundry
- Sort underwear
- Clean windows
- Carry groceries in from car
- Help to put groceries away
- Replace toilet paper rolls
- Gardening
- Sort and put away clean silverware

Ages 6 to 7

- Hang laundry to dry
- Put laundry away in drawers
- Load and empty the dishwasher
- Help with meal preparation
- Wash dishes
- Take out trash
- Prune plants
- Change bedding
- Make toast and butter bread





Without the hum of the classroom and the reinforcing social influence of their classmates, the work of the home will also provide children with opportunities to immerse themselves in helpful tasks independently and of their own initiative. The self-regulatory practice of housework is invaluable. Children learn how to begin a chore, sustain it, and complete it—and with meaning and joy!

You can also take up weekly household chores that serve the whole being of your family. Our homes and how we function in them are an archetype for human relationship that our children carry into their lives. By working collaboratively to

steward our homes, our children learn to share the weight of the work and to make space for the needs of the others in their family. They can contribute, share, and make a difference in your life together.

It is particularly important to give your child tasks that are age appropriate and that they can successfully accomplish through imitation and without your constant assistance. Engaging in the work of the home in times such as these can pull children out of the focus on their own discomfort and engage them in healthy will. Service creates meaning. Doing for others nurtures empathy and a self-esteem.

To really nurture these human qualities may be one of the gifts of this time.

Presence

Time seems to move so fast these days and now, we have suddenly been asked to slow down and be present. Our modern lives are so full of activities, work, and constant social engagement on media, that many of us feel rushed in every sphere and never fully able to sink into anything or find times of quiet. Our children feel it even more. As the adult world swirls around them, they, too, feel our lack of stillness and are always asking for our presence. Now is our chance to slow down, to engage in each task of the home with the intention and joy that we wish to see in our families. We can practice quieting our adult anxieties and concerns for the future, so that we can truly listen to our children and address the needs that are right before us in the present. We don't need to rush from one thing to another, at least for this short time, because there is nowhere to be but home.

“Helping out at home raises self-esteem. When parents insist that children do their chores, they are letting them know that they're not just loved, they are needed.”



Nourishing Resources

https://www.waldorflibrary.org/images/stories/Journal_Articles/GW62_spitalny.pdf

<http://www.waldorftoday.com/2011/11/daily-rhythm-at-home-and-its-lifelong-relevance-by-helle-heckmann/>

<https://kimberton.org/children-and-chores/>

<https://acornwaldorfschool.tumblr.com/post/176103632219/how-to-get-your-kids-to-do-chores-without>