



the family values toolkit

For Children Birth to Age 2

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Responsibility**

Responsibility is the value that enables us to take care of ourselves, our families, our friends, and the greater community. Being responsible means that others can rely on us to do what we've promised. For kids, taking responsibility may mean doing something difficult or tedious, like studying for a test or doing family chores when they'd rather go out with friends. Or it could take moral strength--such as saying no to drugs. Ultimately, being responsible benefits us all--in terms of health, relationships, work, and building a better world.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Introduce the idea of responsibility, and give kids experience with decision-making.

Infants have no responsibility except to survive, expressed instinctively in crying to be fed and to have their physical needs met. As children approach age two, however, they can begin to be asked to take responsibility for their own behavior--to sit quietly at a restaurant, for example, and to hold back from running into the street. But their natural impulsiveness and their urge to experiment work against this, so they need constant adult supervision. Parents can begin gently exposing their children to the concept of responsibility in small steps at this stage of development.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Give your toddler an easy chore**, like clearing non-breakable items from the table. Be sure to praise him or her for being responsible.
- ✓ **Allow your child simple choices**, such as deciding between two T-shirts while getting dressed in the morning.
- ✓ **Make a "Lost-and-Found Box."** Once a day, pick up stray belongings around the house and drop them in a carton or big plastic cube. After dinner, each adult and child takes turns going through the box to find what belongs to them and put it in its right place. Make sure young children have pegs, drawers, and shelves at their level where they can keep their things.

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

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