

Tips for Helping Kids Get Rid Of Stuff . . .

1. Pick a charity that they might find interest in – this could be a church, a domestic violence shelter, a homeless shelter, a fund that supports animals or their school
2. Find a friend or family member that has a child 2-4 years younger than your child. 2 kids is even better. Then the child knows exactly where his or her things are going. Give them a choice, “Do you want this to go to Mica or Sophia?”
3. Set limits on the number of toys/clothes/art supplies/whatever that can be in a space, or on the amount of space these items can take up. For example, when the Barbie box is full, no more Barbies unless one goes away. Or when the limit of 8 sweaters is reached, one must be donated or tossed. Be firm on this or it is useless.
4. Use “either, or” questions. As in, “Would you like to keep this one, or this one?”
5. Help them sell their old items at a yard sale, or on Craig’s List. Then they can keep the money and use it for something else.

Tips for Having Kids Help Around The House . . .

1. Lead by example, and talk to your kids about why we keep things organized and our house clean (we can find what we need and we don’t hurt ourselves walking around).
2. Use “threats” in a way that is realistic. For example, if toy is stepped on it will get broken and have to be thrown away; if the swimsuit is not hung up to dry, it will get moldy; or if action figures are left around, the dog will eat them.
3. Set rules about chores/tasks and what needs to be done before playtime or a fun activity. This can be hard but once a child has missed a playdate or lost TV privileges, they are much more likely to be cooperative.
4. Create a tasks/chores chart with rewards (not my favorite type of plan but works well for many kids).
5. Make clean up and organizing easy for kids by organizing in a logical fashion, and creating zones and centers for things that need to be done. For example, a lunch making center in the fridge and/or pantry, labeled bins for art supplies that fit neatly on a shelf, hanging cubbies in the closet that store the clothes for the week.

Keep in mind that it takes time, and repetition for kids to really catch on to the “why’s” but not so much for the “how’s”. If systems are set up properly, kids can use them and will, once they get the hang of it. Remember, that nagging is not useful, but reminders and consequences are.

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