

Who makes the beds?

Some parents don't mind making their children's beds, doing their dishes, cleaning their rooms, taking their plates off the table, or even completing their homework for them. Some help especially when they are learning is fine, but if we don't let them do things for themselves they'll never learn responsibility or develop the confidence that comes with trying – and failing – on their own.

Decide as a parent what you feel is a reasonable expectation for your child and at what age. A general guide is thinking ahead to what skills they need to know by what age. For example, a child starting school needs to be able to pack up their lunch box and put it away, the same as with their clothing. So 6 months before they start school, you would need to be teaching and supporting your child to do this. Explain that now they are 4½ they need to learn to put their plate off the table, put their belongings away, etc. When your child is about to leave the table remind them that they need to take their plate to the bench. If they are about to throw their shoes wherever they take them off – remind them to put their shoes where they belong so they will be easy to find next time they want them. Don't forget to give them praise when they do as you ask.

Sometimes your child won't complete the task to the level you would do it yourself. You need to just accept that they have done their best and leave it. A good example of this is bed making - a child will pull the duvet up and that is made – that's fine. It is them that has to sleep in the bed. Once a week perhaps you could make it properly for them, getting them to assist so they learn how to make it better.

So if you're a 'doing all the action' sort of parent – sit on your hands for a bit. Your children are waiting for the opportunity to feel capable, operate as a team player and learn tenacity.