



HELP YOUR KIDS HAVE FUN CLEANING THEIR ROOMS

Getting your kids to clean their rooms can be easy with the right approach. ***Make cleaning time fun by getting organized and talking to your kids in a way that engages them.***

Organizing Techniques:

1. **Develop realistic expectations.** Children often view their room as the space they can control. This is especially true for pre-teens and teens, who are often seeking privacy. You do need to guard against any health hazards, especially if your kids have dust allergies. ***On the other hand, it's okay to value a happy family life over keeping every surface pristine.***
 - Don't worry - most kids who throw their clothes on the floor still grow up to be responsible adults!
2. **Set a good example.** Kids always pay more attention to what you *do* than to what you *say*. If you put away your clothes, they're more likely to follow your lead eventually. ***By taking care of your belongings and creating an orderly environment, you send a message that these are good habits.***
3. **Ban food in the bedroom.** Except for water, keeping food out the bedroom will prevent many messes from ever happening. Eating in the kitchen and dining room also encourages more family time and less excessive snacking.
4. **Clear away clutter.** It may be difficult to clean if you've got too many possessions. Make a family tradition of regularly getting rid of unused or worn-out items. Let kids help pick the charity where they want to donate their old toys. Alternately, have a garage sale and share the profits with your kids.
5. **Invest in storage solutions.** Make it easy for kids to keep everything in its proper place and you can all spend a lot less time straightening up. Put frequently used items on lower shelves and hooks where small children can reach them. Get big bins for large

items and small bins to keep items with multiple parts organized.

6. **Teach your kids how to clean.** Kids will be less resistant to cleaning if they feel confident about basic tasks. Praise them for helping you dust or make the beds so they'll learn by observing and imitating.
7. **Break cleaning sessions down into manageable chunks.** Children have limited attention spans. Cleaning for 10 or 15 minutes at a time will often get better results than marathon sessions.
8. **Do some regular maintenance.** It's easier to keep a neat room tidy. Make morning or evening pick-up times a daily ritual. Do a little dusting before your Saturday outings.

Communication Techniques:

1. **Invite your child's input.** Help your child to value their surroundings by giving them a voice in decorating their room. They can help shop for storage systems or choose wall art they like.
2. **Work together. *Household tasks can be a time for you and your child to enjoy each other's company and conversation.*** Small children need plenty of guidance when cleaning. As they get older, you can back off a little on supervising and just do some spot-checking.
3. **Develop educational games.** Cleaning games are a great way to entertain and educate small children. Drill them on vocabulary by naming household items, or play counting games as you roll up socks.
4. **Offer choices and rewards.** Everyone likes to be given choices. Ask your child if they want to clean their room before or after soccer practice. ***Use positive praise and rewards to reinforce good behavior.***

Most children have messy rooms from time to time. ***Set reasonable standards and communicate effectively to make cleaning fun and efficient.*** You'll be rewarded with a better relationship with your kids and a neater home.