

Whose Responsibility Is It?

by Kathy Slattengren

Children are often capable of more responsibility than we give them. When parents take on responsibilities which their children really should be handling, they are likely to feel overwhelmed and underappreciated.

One mom complained about all the extra work she was doing now that her 3rd and 6th graders were back in school. In just one day, she did all these extra tasks:

- Tried to pick daughter up early from school to take her to her piano lesson but daughter forgot and took the bus home. Lectured daughter on the importance of remembering her piano lessons.
- Dumped out kid's backpacks and sorted through school papers.
- Worked on making dinner while being interrupted numerous times to help with homework.
- Reviewed graded schoolwork with children.
- Ran to the store to buy purple shirts after children announced that they need to wear purple tomorrow for Spirit Day.
- Read note from teacher that some school supplies are missing and due tomorrow. Ran out and bought the missing supplies. She also had the cashier give her lots of change so her daughter could use it for her math homework.
- Attended the school open house. Guiltily signed up to help with various activities.
- Packed forms, supplies and planners into each child's backpack.
- Asked kids if they needed to return books to the school library and then spent 10 minutes looking for the books.
- Packed lunches for the next day.
- Did a load of laundry after one child reported having no clean socks.
- Told kids to GO TO BED NOW!
- Got youngest a drink of water.



Mom then collapsed into bed. Anyone would be exhausted after a day like that!

It is very easy for parents to take on responsibilities that their children could be handling. What tasks do you think this mom could let her children handle? Are there tasks you're doing for your children that they could be doing? When we stop doing something for our children, they learn to do it for themselves. They will probably not show great appreciation for their new responsibilities; however, it's essential to their growth and our sanity!

Kathy Slattengren is a noted parenting speaker, trainer and founder of Priceless Parenting. PricelessParenting.com provides an [online parenting class](#) which teaches effective discipline techniques for positively dealing with misbehavior.

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