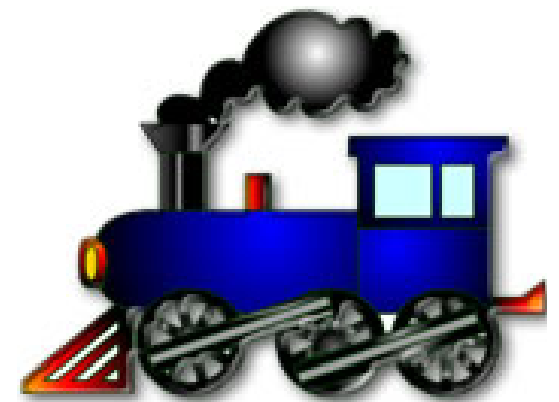


Teaching Young Children Responsibility



What we can expect of children...

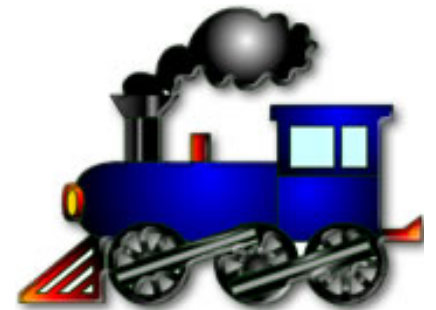
- Do not under estimate the capabilities of young children.
- An eagerness to be involved when they are already interested.

It is through active participation in events or activities that children learn and develop skills that lead to acting appropriately.

- A natural need to belong.

Catch a child doing the right thing – makes them feel special, significant and provides a sense of belonging. A child needs to know the parts well performed as well as the poorly performed tasks explained.

- A lazy mother picks up after her children (and husband)!



The importance of our attitude and method when assigning responsibility to children.

- If a child knows what is being asked...- clear expectations and modelling. Show how to, maybe set a deadline. Use the terminology of setting and achieving goals as part of the learning process to teach children that they can succeed. Maybe track their record
- Give training with love, encouragement and support. Create an environment for children to make choices actively. That is be involved in the planning e.g. Do you want the blue or red cup? Shall we go to the park in the morning /afternoon?
- Start small and build on. Model first, then help out.
- Have a routine for responsible behaviours to be carried out. Tasks are timetabled. E.g. setting table, feeding pets, tidying toys, personal hygiene.
- Ensure expectations are meaningful.
- We still want kids to be kids. Playing sports encourages self motivation, team building, builds self control.
- Determine the consequences. E.g. time out position, then give control of decision to return when ready to cooperate.
- Questioning techniques. Problem solve together. Do you...? Will you...?
- Reporting progress/giving praise Use a calendar/journal/star chart/sticker or verbal If it works for you apply payments.
- Letting go! (Don't let them see you fix things up!)
- Remember responsibility is a lifelong skill – begin now to teach it.



What might be done when children don't respond?

- Encourage a habit of reflection.

Ask simple questions.

- Carry through with the negotiated consequences.

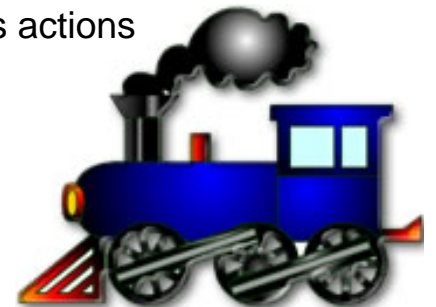
As a child grows older their thinking skills help them to connect their actions and consequences which provides them with a bank to make decisions to act appropriately in future similar situations. Often 4-8 year olds are not ready to tie past actions to the future so be patient.

- Avoid engaging in power plays, struggles with children.

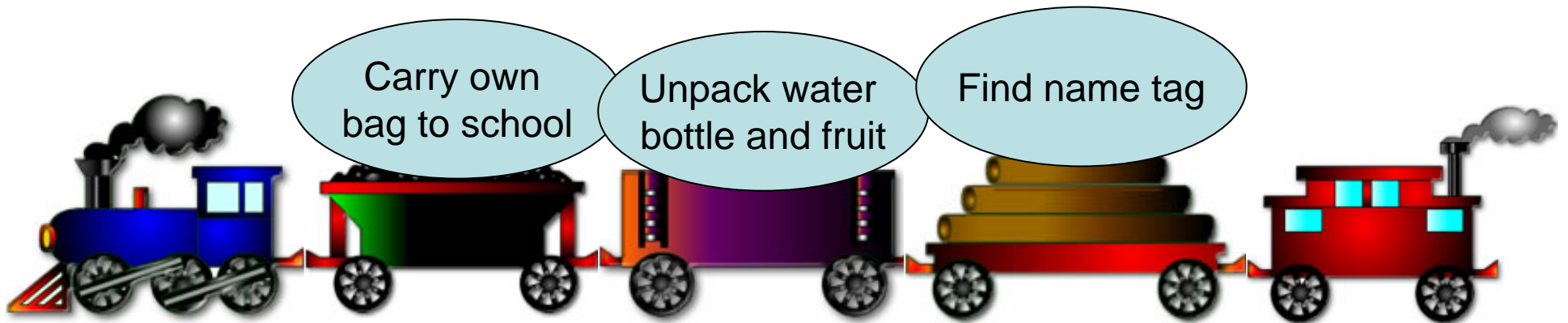
Avoid tones of guilt, blame and anger. Reflect on the bigger picture – how the child's actions contribute to your family.

Teach yourself to see a negative situation as a problem to be solved.

“How can we solve this problem?” Even a small child can contribute to a solution if they know you value their ideas.



- Teach: I think I can....The Little Engine
Being positive is a choice... never say I can't



Teaching your child to be responsible is like stacking a pile of blocks. Each block adds a skill towards acting and making responsible choices. Remember the stack can fall from time to time!



A story to remember:

A young boy would come home, walk in and say “What’s for dinner?”

His Mum, the genius that she was, told him if he wanted attention and food sooner he needed to come in and say “Hi Mum, I’m hungry for dinner. What can I do to help?”

Responsible children

- Develop self confidence, are intrinsically motivated and feel valuable.
- Set goals and track their achievements.
- Are autonomous, committed, and cooperative.
- Make you proud.
- Grow up to be admirable citizens and usually are hard workers in their homes and employment.

