

What should I do when my child is not responsible?

Establish rules for getting along at school and in the neighborhood. Show your child how to put things where they belong and how to return borrowed items in the same condition as when they were borrowed. These rules should be consistent and followed by everyone in the home.

Reward your child for following the rules. Rewards include verbal praise, such as “Thank you for putting your dirty clothes in the hamper!” or “I’m so proud of you for finishing your homework before watching TV!”

Consider your child’s age and experience before assigning responsibilities to them. Show your child how to return things to their proper place, return borrowed items, and complete chores, before expecting them to perform the responsibilities on their own.

When your child is not responsible, explain what they are doing wrong and what they are supposed to be doing and why. For example, it is 8:00 pm and your child has not started their homework. Go to your child and tell them that they have not done their homework and that they need to be doing their homework because bedtime is at 9:00 pm.

Allow natural consequences occur due to your child’s failing to be responsible. For example, forgetting to do homework will result in a poor grade. Establish a certain time each day for your child to take care of his responsibilities. Have your child feed the dog and complete homework right after school everyday.