

# ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

## FAST FACTS

### ASSET #30: Responsibility

*Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they accept and take personal responsibility.*

**63%**

*of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

### What Are Assets?

*Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Responsibility" is one of six positive-values assets.*

\* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

## Responsibility: The 4 Keys

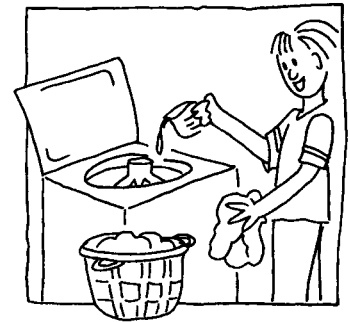
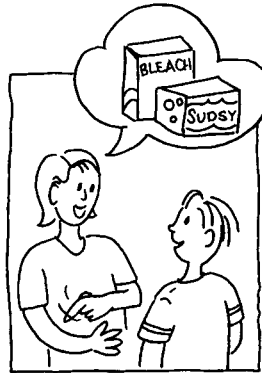
In *Raising a Responsible Child*, authors Don Dinkmeyer, Ph.D., and Gary D. McKay, Ph.D., point out four keys to instilling the value of responsibility in your child.

**Key #1**—Let your child do it. Too many parents do tasks for their children, instead of letting their children do them. Why? Some parents think that their children are incapable of accomplishing the task (which is true if they're never given the opportunity to learn). Also, our busy lifestyles often keep us from taking the time to let our children learn and master skills.

**Key #2**—Expect it to take time. The best time to teach children responsibility is when you're not in a hurry, and you both have no pressures to be elsewhere doing other things. Children will become discouraged, self-conscious, and uncooperative when they sense they are being rushed, or are not living up to a parent's unrealistic expectation.

**Key #3**—Ask, don't demand. Instill responsibility by invitation. Begin by asking your child to help you with something, such as doing laundry. Do it together. Gradually teach your child so that your child can do it by her- or himself.

**Key #4**—Use consequences. When your child does not follow through with something that he or she is solely responsible for, stop talking and nagging. Let natural and logical consequences occur. For example, one family said each family member should take responsibility for putting their things away. Anything that wasn't put away would be put in a box in the garage. Children gradually took responsibility for putting things away because they got tired of walking outside to



the garage to dig through a box to find their belongings.

Another important way to encourage responsibility is to model it yourself. Follow through on your commitments, especially to your child. When you can't or don't do something you should have, don't make excuses. Talk with your child about how you plan to avoid getting into a similar situation in the future.

## time together

*Three ways to help your child become more responsible:*

- 1.** *When you make a commitment, follow through. If possible, deliver even more than you promise.*
- 2.** *Create a chart of family chores, listing everyone's responsibilities, including yours.*
- 3.** *Don't rescue your child if he or she has done something wrong. Let your child accept responsibility and face the consequences.*

