

# Work yourself out of a job

**A major challenge for parents** is to find ways of safely moving children from being reliant on adults to a position of independence. This can be tough because your natural instinct is to nurture them.

Training for independence starts from a young age and continues into adolescence. Developmentally, children are ready around the age of two to learn the skills of independence so it makes sense to begin these habits early.

Encouraging independence is one of the best ways to promote self-confidence. When you teach children to do jobs for themselves you send a powerful message that you believe that they are capable. Your actions speak louder than your words.

Children are capable of doing complex tasks if you show them how. It is useful to break complex jobs into simple tasks. For instance, a young child can begin making a bed by arranging teddies and pillows, progressing to smoothing out a doona and so on.

Children will often make mistakes when they assume greater responsibility so it is helpful to adjust your standards to accept their genuine efforts and also be supportive when they make mistakes.

It is difficult sometimes to know when to allow children to assume more responsibility for their own well-being. It is useful to continuously assess your children's capabilities and consider letting go when they appear ready.

The most effective way to promote responsibility in children is to give them responsibility. When you give them more responsibility you are making yourself redundant, which is the main aim of parenting!



## Quick Parenting Quiz

- 1. Tantrums affect approximately what percentage of two to four year olds?**
- a) 20%
  - b) 40%
  - c) 60%
  - d) 80%

- 2. According to children the greatest contributing factor to a good father-child relationship is:**
- a) The ability to talk to each other
  - b) The time spent together
  - c) The number of activities they share
  - d) The amount of pocket-money a father provides

Answer: 1 d) 2 a)

## Vitamins for parents

Four responsibilities to give children that promote independence:

1. Preparing and choosing snacks and meals
2. Choosing clothing appropriate to the occasion
3. Getting up in the morning
4. Looking after a pet

## Bright idea



## Don't focus on children's mistakes

Welcome children's honest efforts even though they make mistakes. Focus on what they do well, rather than on their errors. A realistic attitude to mistakes will promote confidence, which is a key to successful development and learning.

## Wise & Witty Words

"Never do regularly for a child the things a child can do for him or herself."

*Maurice Balson*

"Raising kids is not unlike harness racing. All you can do is put those constraints in place, not too tightly, not too loosely, and hold your breath."

*Peter Black*