

Household Activities for Your Littles

Most of you know, I'm the proud mama of three amazing little babes. Nora is three and a half, going on 13. Mila is two; going on 12 and Baker Ty will be 9 months tomorrow! As my girls have gotten older, they've both become more interested in the house chores that I do. In the past, I used to get annoyed and just want to get all the chores done so they'd be done and I was so OCD about how things needed to be done, I didn't want to bother including the girls. I know that sounds crazy, but I also was struggling (immensely) with depression and anxiety. I had a short fuse about everything.

The transition of a new baby brother made my girls cling to me even more and want to be involved in EVERYTHING I was doing. In the beginning it was incredibly difficult. I didn't want them hanging around me and I didn't want them "in my way" when I was trying to get stuff done around the house. But then I had a chat with my own mama when we brought Baker home from the hospital. I was struggling and snapping at my girls A LOT. She told me, instead of being bothered and annoyed by the girls wanting to help, I needed to include them in decisions and embrace this time.

Easier said than done at the time; however now, especially with this quarantine going on, I honestly do love including them in my day-to-day activities around the house. Nora is really into it; Mila...not so much right NOW but she IS showing a little more interest. Here's a list of a few things we do around the house together!

1. Putting away folded clothes. I will be the FIRST to admit that my OCD self had to let loose a little bit to be okay with this one. Normally I would love to get everything put away and organized neatly without any help, but when Nora looked at me with her big, beautiful brown eyes and asked if she could help me, I took a deep breathe and let her help. Now, when I fold clothes, Nora and Mila both genuinely LOVE taking piles of clothes upstairs. I never know what room clothes are going to end up in (or if they'll even be folded anymore), but that doesn't matter – they love it! I love hearing them both say, "We're such good helpers." It makes my mama heart swell.
2. Setting the table for supper. Again, my OCD self had to learn to breathe and let go a little bit. The table isn't always set perfectly, but my girls LOVE being able to help out. Nora usually "instructs" Mila to get things out and tells her where to put things. It makes me giggle, but listening to them help each other and set the table with the "big forks for Daddy and Mommy" is truly quite amusing.
3. Organizing and cleaning out the toy box. Once every 6 months or so I try to purge our toy box, because it's likely there is a birthday or a holiday coming up where my babes could get new toys. I've turned it into a "project" of sorts with my girls. Before Christmas, we went through the toys and I told Nora how some kids around the world don't have as many toys as she does and we need to donate some so other kiddos can have toys too. (I'm a huge minimalist, so too many toys makes my brain crazy!) She listened intently while I told her this and soaked it all up. Now, she even brings up cleaning out the toy box...not sure if it's because she wants to donate or if she knows she might get new toys, but I'm happy she likes to help me clean stuff out.

4. Vacuuming. Mila is terrified of it, Nora loves it. So, I'll plug in our little Shark vacuum and Nora goes to town. She isn't necessarily the most thorough, but she LOVES it and it makes me laugh. The kid's got the same intensity I do, what can I say?
5. Watering our houseplants. Again, more of a job Nora likes to partake in...Mila, not so much. We have good discussions about why plants need water and sunlight (my Biology nerd heart LOVES this) and Nora is pretty good at reminding me when she thinks the plants need water (which is about every other day).
6. Loading the dishwasher - makes a huge mess, the dishes are so scattered but seeing my girls' proud little faces when they finish this chore makes me smile. Also, Nora is REALLY big on putting the soap in the dishwasher, pushing the button to start it, and shutting the door. Don't worry, she's supervised at all times while doing this, but she LOVES to help with the dishwasher.
7. Last, but not least...helping out with their brother. Both of my girls fight over who can take a dirty diaper to the trash, or get me a fresh one! They both love to get his diaper cream, and Nora's even pretty good at getting Baker a new onesie or a sleeper if I need her to. Of course, they never tire when it comes to the constant loving and hugging and kissing on him.

Obviously every home is different and every family is different, but I have found that life REALLY does get a little bit easier and more stress free when I work to include my babies in my day-to-day chores, as opposed to being annoyed and trying to keep them out of the way. I love their curiosity and I love the fact that they WANT to help. I think to myself, how will they establish a work ethic if I don't let them help me with stuff? Kids really teach you patience...something I'm continually working on!

TODDLERS