

# RESILIENT KIDS

NEWSLETTER by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator

## Taking responsibility - the mark of leadership!

**Personal responsibility is the mark of true leadership. However shirking responsibility or shifting the blame to others is a national sport in many western countries.**

"Its not my fault" can be heard in court rooms, political rallies and in sporting tribunals everywhere as blame for a transgression is shifted away from the individual and placed on a scapegoat. It is little wonder that many children are experts at shirking personal responsibility.

Lack of personal responsibility is shown when children find excuses or blame others for their misbehaviour. It is shown when siblings are blamed for starting fights, parents for children's school lateness and classmates for misbehaving at school. Anything or anyone but themselves is to blame!

"Its not my turn" is another way of shirking responsibility.

Most parents want their children to be responsible for their actions. Taking responsibility means that a child sees a problem and fixes it. A child who takes responsibility helps out regardless of how many times they have helped before or who causes a situation.

When a child complains that the toilet roll is empty then he or she can be invited to take responsibility for it. Similarly, if the bread bin is empty, the fire is out or the living room floor is a mess then the message could be that they should 'do something' about these situations.



When a child is late for school, forgets to hand in homework or deliberately hurts a classmate even though some teasing occurred then he or she needs to shoulder the blame and take responsibility for their actions.

Sounds tough but this is the approach to take if we are to promote a true sense of responsibility, initiative and accountability.

In families some children become adept at ducking their responsibilities. It is smart management to share the load using rosters and other organisational strategies.

But in the myriad of informal situations around the house where someone needs to take responsibility then it is helpful to take the "don't tell me, please fix it" approach.

Next time a child responds to your request for help with that classic line "but it's not my turn" look them straight in the eye and say, "You know, you may be right but isn't it lucky that you are so willing to help" and simply walk away. No buts, no arguments.

## WHAT'S YOUR CHILD LIKE?

### DOES YOUR CHILD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY?

#### DOES HE

1. Usually help at home without being reminded? **Yes [2] No [0]**
2. Take the initiative and fix things or help even if he won't receive recognition? **Yes [2] No [0]**
3. Blame others when things go wrong? **Yes [0] No [2]**
4. Own up straight away if he has done the wrong thing? **Yes [2] No [0]**

5. Start games and initiate activities at home or at school? **Yes [2] No [0]**

#### SCORE:

- 10:** What a responsible child! Leadership potential.
- 6-8:** Knows about taking responsibility but needs an occasional reminder!
- 0-4:** Needs someone on his shoulder all the time! May need to be given more responsibility.



## TRY THIS...

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**To promote personal responsibility in your child:**

1. Help them **identify** BUT NUTS and BLAME GAMERS.
  - BUT NUTS look for excuses such as tiredness, moods or other people when things go wrong. "BUT I am too tired to help."
  - BLAME GAMERS blame others when things go wrong. "It's not my fault. Sarah started it."
2. Make sure they have some **jobs** at home so that others rely on them.
3. Use a **roster** for jobs and place responsibility on children to do tasks without being reminded.

## ACTION PLAN

**First Step . . .**

**Next Step . . .**

For more ideas about promoting resilience in children visit [www.parentingideas.com.au](http://www.parentingideas.com.au)

## QUOTE

*"The reason people blame things on the previous generations is that there is one other choice."*

DOUG LARSON