



Helping Pre-schoolers Learn at Home

While you go about your daily chores your pre-schooler will love nothing better than to get involved and 'help' you whenever he gets the chance. Obviously, your chores shouldn't be the responsibility of your pre-schooler, so if he's happily involved in his own game, don't drag him away to fold the washing!

In the kitchen they can:

- Make a sandwich. You can keep a small supply of plastic knives for this task and show him how to spread toppings onto bread.
- Help you to plan dinner - although this will probably mean that you'll be endlessly eating his current favourite food.
- Help measure, pour and stir the ingredients when you make a cake together.
- Make pizza. This is a favourite with pre-schoolers as not only are they being helpful, they also get to be creative with food!
- Make icing or whip cream to decorate a cake. This is another food favourite, probably because it's sweet and looks pretty.

While you do the washing and cleaning they can:

- Count the pegs as he hands them to you.
- Sort the clean clothes into piles before you fold them - by colour, or by family member, or type of clothing.
- Sort the socks into pairs (good in theory though everyone knows that there's always one or two socks left without a mate!)
- Wash some of teddy's clothes in a bucket filled with soapy water
- Sort toys, puzzles and games back into the right boxes
- Follow you with a damp cloth as you do the dusting
- Help with the drying up and the putting away of cutlery after a meal.

In the garden they can:

- Make a cubby house - even if you can't get up a tree (or don't have a conveniently located tree in your backyard), you can always make a great cubby in a big cardboard box.
- Kick and throw a ball. Many pre-schoolers love to be chased with a ball and even gently tackled.
- Do some gardening. While most children can't tell the difference between a weed and a much loved plant, your pre-schooler can help plant things and do some raking and mulching. He'll also love hunting for snails and worms.

During water play they can:

- Fill a sink with warm sudsy water and let him do some washing up - he may enjoy cleaning his own plastic cups and plates
- Blow bubbles for him, and try to teach him how to blow his own bubbles

- Ask him to help you water the garden. Considering we should all be water conscious, a good way to do this is to fill up a bucket and then fill smaller containers from the bucket, which he can then carry to the plants.
- Let him jump in some puddles. On one of those rare days when it rains, get your preschooler into a pair of gumboots and let him go wild.

Children always need constant supervision when playing with or near water, but not all water play needs to happen in the bath.