

Tips for Parents by Susie Kohl

Spring Is Time to Clean and Declutter

GET YOUR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN SPRING CLEANING. Traditionally, we have the urge to rejuvenate as this new season of expanding light emerges. Why not involve children? Cleaning up helps organize the mind and, given the right tools and encouragement, you will be amazed by the energy children pour into a task. Even the youngest preschooler can become a cleaning wizard when offered a scrub brush and a bucket of water. Demonstrate how to use a toothbrush on baseboards and your house will sparkle. Empty shelves, clean under the couch, and talk to children about making a fresh start, and they will take the idea of seasonal refreshment with them into adulthood.

Another aspect of spring re-energizing is showing children how to make more space in their rooms by passing things on to others that they no longer need. In her bestselling book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing*, Marie Kondo advises readers to keep only objects that bring them joy. Choosing items they associate with happiness ignites a new awareness in children raised in our materialistic culture.

We don't have to own more than we need, and having lots of possessions doesn't make us more special. Decluttering, sorting for the objects we love and want to care for, provides children with the opportunity to experience the joy of giving items to others and imagining the pleasure they will take in using them. As you pass toys on, take time as a family to visualize the new life they will have in a fresh environment.

You can leave gently used toys, books, and children's clothing outside the Office door for the White Pony Express Free General Store.

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