

Let's Make Clean-up Fun!!



A common challenge at home and childcare is to convince children to clean up their toys when play is done. It doesn't have to be stressful!

Bonus!

As children tidy their toys they experience:

- *Independence
- *Responsibility
- *A sense of accomplishment as they start and complete the task
- *Teamwork when they work with another child

And they learn about:

same/different, empty/full, size, colour, shape, quantity and so much more!

Try some of these ideas:

Set children up for success! Limit the number of toys/play materials available at one time so there is less to clean up. Have clearly defined and easy to reach spaces for the items to be stored.

Offer help! What may seem like a small job to adults can seem overwhelming to our little ones. Having help makes the job much more do-able! Encourage children to help each other too!

Allow for plenty of time for children to tidy. We all work at different paces, and that is ok!

Provide choice within the task. We all like to have some control in a situation. Give this to the children by offering choices. "Do you want to pick up the blue blocks or the red blocks?"

Give lots of warning that it will soon be time to clean up. It is not fair to expect children to suddenly stop what they are doing when they are immersed in an activity. Give a 5 or 10 minute warning and let the children know they will want to start to finish up their activity. Remind them throughout that time period that it is time to wrap up. ("just a few more minutes!")

When children are constructing something (for example a lego structure) it can be heart-breaking to have to tear it down! If possible, allow them to set it aside in a safe space to complete at another time. If the structure cannot be saved, take a photo of it and print it for the child so they can 'keep' it in that way.

Make clean-up fun and interactive when possible. Here are some suggestions:

Present a fun challenge! How many things can they pick up by the time the adult counts to 30?

Ask them to pick up toys as they move and dance to a favourite piece of music.

Add a fun physical component to the task:

- Can they pick up the cardboard blocks with their elbows and carry them to the shelf?
- Can they balance the book on their head and walk it to the shelf?
- Can they carry the item behind their back?
- How many bounces does it take to get the ball to the bin?
- Can they take dinosaur steps as they carry the cars to the basket??