

Let's Clean Up

You're putting the rattle in your basket.



Make clean-up time a game by naming the toys your child chooses to put in the clean-up basket.

Having choices during clean-up time may make it easier for your child to learn about taking care of his belongings.



Why this is important

Giving your child a chance to make choices during play and cleanup helps him learn about taking care of his things. When the choices he makes during simple tasks bring a positive result, such as helping you, he gains trust in his own ability to make decisions. As he has opportunities to make more choices, he builds confidence and independence.

What you do

- Invite your child to help you clean up toys after playing. At this age, don't expect him to really clean up things by himself. Sit beside him, show him a container such as a toy box or basket, and drop in one of his toys. Talk about what you are doing. *It's time to put the toys away. Mommy put the car in the basket.*
- Hand him a toy and ask him to put it in the basket. If he does not drop it, help him release it into the basket. Then, hand him the toy again and let him have another try.
- Repeat the game until he understands what you want him to do. Offer encouraging words when he drops the toy in the basket. *You put the ball away!*
- Invite him to choose a toy to put in the basket. If he chooses an object not intended for the basket, give him another place to put it. *Only toys go in the basket. You can put the magazine on the table.*
- Talk about each toy as it goes in the basket. As he has more practice with cleaning up, count the toys as he puts them away. *One, two, three. You put three green cars in the basket!*

Let's read together!

I'm Dirty!
by Kate and Jim McMullan

Another idea

Use different containers for storage to give your child more choices. Try putting toys away in a large plastic bowl, a shopping bag, an egg carton, or a backpack.