

how to
Declutter with Your Kids



A CHECKLIST OF STRATEGIES TO TRY
TO GET YOUR KIDS ON BOARD WITH
DECLUTTERING THEIR BELONGINGS

BY KIM SMITH

Is it a battle to get your kids to let go of toys and other personal belongings that they've completely outgrown?

If so, then let me share two things with you: 1) You are so not alone with this struggle and 2) Your children *can* begin learning how to declutter with some gentle support and guidance from the one and only Y-O-U.



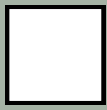
the honest truth...

Oftentimes our own frustration with the clutter our kids' toys create causes us to *demand change* rather than *encourage it*; however, the way we approach decluttering with our kids *is* the "make or break" factor.

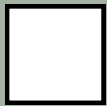
In order to get your kids on board with decluttering their toys and other unused, outgrown personal belongings, it is important to **start small, provide choices,** and **offer praise for any decisions that are made.**

The checklists on the following pages will offer actionable strategies and guidance on how to include your children in the decluttering process starting *today*.

Strategy List for Littles (4-7)



Prime the environment. Sort a few of your child's belongings into what you feel are "Keep", "Donate", and "Discard" piles.

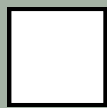


Establish control. Use the following script to make your child feel that he or she is in control of the process.

>> "I need some help to put your toys away."

>> (point to "Keep" pile): "Can you show me where to put these things?"

Proceed by working with your child to put the items away.



Use facts to encourage discarding. Move onto the "Discard" pile and share facts about the condition of each item (ie. "I noticed this one is broken and has a sharp edge. Is it ok that we say bye-bye to it so that you can stay safe?"). With his or her permission, discard the item.



Use facts to encourage donating. Move onto the "Donate" pile and share facts about the item (ie. "You played with this when you were much smaller. Can we share it with another baby to make room for your big kid toys?"). With his or her permission, donate the item.



Offer praise. Praise your child for working hard and for any of the discard/donate decisions he or she made.

Strategy Checklist for Middles (8-10)

Share your feelings without blame. Fill in the blank of the following statement to let your child know how his or her clutter is making you feel.

"I feel really _____ when I see all of these toys around and I need your help to make some decisions on what to do with them."

Establish expectations in a fun way. Share with your child that you would like to challenge him or her to pick ___ amount of items to declutter. Pick a number that you feel he or she can handle; you know your child best!

Establish control. Encourage your child to state or write a rule to follow for discarding and donating. For example:

>> **"If it's broken or missing lots of pieces, then I'm allowed to throw it away."**

>> **"If I don't play with it anymore because I like new and different toys now, then I'm allowed to donate it."**

Offer praise. Praise your child for working hard and for any of the discard/donate decisions he or she made.

Include your child in the donation drop-off. Invite your child to assist with the donation drop-off to help him or her to feel like a helpful community member!

Conclusion and Next Steps

This guide provided a list of ordered strategies you could try using in order to include your child in the decluttering process. Please know that the more you model decluttering in your home and the more you gently assist and encourage him or her to practice, the better the family *as a whole* will become in creating and maintaining clutter-free spaces. *The most important factors are to start small and to be supportive of any progress your child makes!*

If this guide motivates you to start your decluttering and organizing journey, I'd love to keep sharing tips and information with you! You can find me here!



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Thank you!