

# *Your Possible Home*

Building Meaningful, Enduring Family Bonds in the Age of AI

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## **The Training Before Independence Checklist**

### **A worksheet for parents**

This is the smallest resource in the set, and it's probably the one that prevents the most conflict in a home. Most chore battles aren't really about the chore. They're about a child being asked to do something they were never actually shown how to do, by a parent who assumed the task was obvious, with an expectation of an outcome that was never demonstrated. The child resists, the parent gets frustrated, and a task that should have taken ten minutes becomes a forty-minute argument about whether the child is capable, willing, or trying.

The fix is almost embarrassingly simple. Before you hand a task off, you train. You demonstrate it, you practice it together, you make sure the child knows what "done" looks like, and you treat early mistakes as part of the learning instead of evidence that the handoff failed. If you can answer yes to the four questions below, the handoff almost always goes well. If you can't, the resistance you're hitting isn't defiance — it's information that the training step got skipped.

This checklist is meant to be filled out once per task per child. Keep the completed sheets together if it helps you, or throw them out as soon as you've used them. The point is the conversation, not the paperwork.

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## The task you're handing off

Question	Your answer
What is the task?	
Which child is taking it on?	
What stage are they moving into — ownership, leadership, or independence?	
When does the handoff start?	



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## The four checks

### Have we demonstrated it together?

Before a child can do a task on their own, they have to have seen it done — and seen it done by you, in your home, with your standards. Watching someone load a dishwasher on a YouTube video is not the same as watching their parent load it on a Tuesday night. The demonstration step is where the standard gets set, and skipping it is the most common reason a handoff falls apart.

Question	Your answer
Have I shown this child the task from start to finish, at least once?	
Did I narrate what I was doing and why?	
Did I point out the parts that are easy to miss?	
When did this happen, and where?	

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## Have we practiced it together?

Demonstration is not enough. The child also has to do the task with you in the room, while you're available to answer questions, redirect when something goes wrong, and let them feel what the task is like in their own hands. Practicing together is the bridge between watching and doing, and most parents skip it because it feels redundant. It isn't. It's the step where the child builds the muscle memory that carries them through when they're doing the task alone.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Your answer</b>
Has this child done the task at least twice with me nearby?	
Did I let them lead, or did I take it back when they got stuck?	
Did I answer their questions without rushing the answer?	
Are there parts of the task they're still hesitant about?	

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## Does the child know what "done" looks like?

This is the question that prevents the largest share of chore conflict. A parent who asks a child to clean the bathroom and a child who hears "wipe the sink" are operating on completely different definitions of done, and the argument that follows is inevitable. Before you hand the task off, you have to make the standard explicit — not in the abstract, but with a concrete picture the child can carry in their head.

Question	Your answer
Have I described what the finished task looks like, in specific terms?	
Have I shown them the finished version at least once?	
Could the child describe "done" back to me in their own words?	
Is the standard reasonable for this child's age and skill level?	

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## Are mistakes treated as learning?

The first time a child does a task on their own, something will go wrong. The laundry will have a red sock in it. The dishes will have a missed spot. The lawn will have a strip of grass left uncut. How you respond to that first mistake determines whether the handoff actually works. If you redo the task, criticize the result, or take the responsibility back, you've taught the child that the standard is unreachable and the work will revert to you. If you treat the mistake as part of learning the task — name it calmly, show them what you noticed, let them fix it themselves — you've taught them that competence is something they're building, not something they have to prove.

Question	Your answer
Have I committed to not redoing this task after the child has done it?	
Do I have a plan for how I'll respond when something goes wrong?	
Can I name a mistake without making it mean something about the child?	
Am I willing to let the child fix their own mistakes rather than fixing them for them?	

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## The honest reflection

If you answered no — or “not yet” — to anything in the four checks above, that's where the work is. Don't move on to the handoff until those gaps are closed. The five extra minutes you spend training now will save you hours of conflict later, and the child will end up with real competence instead of a task they resent.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Your answer</b>
Which check is the weakest right now?	
What's the one thing I can do this week to close it?	
When am I going to do it?	

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## **A note on what training is not**

Training is not lecturing. It's not standing over the child while they work and pointing out what they're doing wrong. It's not making the task feel like a test. The whole point of training is to give the child a clear picture of the work, the time to practice it with support, and the confidence to do it on their own when the support steps back. If your training feels like a performance review, the child will resist the task itself — not because the task is hard, but because the relationship around it is.

The simplest test for whether you're training well is the child's posture. If they're leaning in, asking questions, and trying things, the training is working. If they're flinching, going quiet, or trying to escape the room, something about the way you're teaching is overwhelming the lesson. Slow down. Soften. Try again tomorrow.

## **Closing thought**

Most parents I talk to are doing too much for their children, not because they want to, but because they never learned how to teach the handoff. This checklist exists to make the handoff teachable. Run it once for the task that's been bothering you most this month — the laundry, the dishes, the room — and see what changes. The change is usually faster than you'd expect.