

The Online Parenting Newsletter vol.5 no.4 Mar, 2004:

SPRING CLEANING

Remember how our mothers scrubbed and polished the house from top to bottom when spring rolled around? Most of us are too busy to even think about spring cleaning but if you are about to embark on a cleaning spree I have some suggestions for you.

1) Involve the children. Even the young ones can sort through toys and decide what gets thrown out. Older children can dust and sweep and vacuum. Parents often tell me the kids get in the way and are more work than help. But even if the task takes you a few minutes longer you are providing your children with two vitally important bits of parenting. First, you are acting as a role model so they watch what grownups do to clean up the place. Second, you are giving them an important task and taking them seriously so they can proudly feel, "Hey, I count around here!"

2) Sure getting the cobwebs off the chandeliers is important, but what most families today need is a massive DE-CLUTTERING. Clutter and noise are what stress me out and I'm sure I am not alone. Use this time to look at what is cluttering every room. Ask yourself about each piece of clutter: Do we really need this? Is there a place we can put this other than the living room floor? Is it time to toss it or give it away?

3) If you are like me the best cleaning you can do is to SIMPLIFY your life. Think about every task you do at home. What can be left out? What can be done less often? More efficiently? What can you ask or pay someone else to do? The time you save by sweeping such tasks out of your life can be spent with the kids.