

KID-APPROVED CHICKEN CHORES

Children and poultry:
a natural pair



How do these chores compare with yours?



Raising chickens AND children? Read this



By Patrick Biggs, Ph.D., Purina chicken nutritionist

Backyard chickens might be the perfect starter animal for homesteading families. They're small, friendly, big on personality and relatively harmless. Many kids quickly bond with their chickens and are excited to help care for them. Kids can help with all phases of chicken raising:

Flock planning

Check out different chicken breeds on hatchery and farm store sites and let kids pick your chicks. Orpingtons, Plymouth Rocks, Cochins, Brahmas, Australorps, Polish and Easter Eggers are quiet, gentle breeds for families. Kids are also great at naming chickens!

Brooder and coop prep

From helping set up the brooder and filling it with bedding, to searching for coop plans and helping build the coop, older kids can assist with all the preparations before your chicks arrive. Younger kiddos can help assemble and

fill waterers, place feeders in the coop, and safely pass you tools and building supplies.

Feeding and care

Most older kids can feed and water your chickens without supervision, clean out the coop and help with routine health checks. Younger kids can fill feeders and waterers and feed occasional treats.

Egg collecting

Youngsters can place eggs in and out of baskets, while older kids can collect eggs from nesting boxes and even start an egg business. It's a great first job to instill discipline, business smarts and a strong work ethic.

Do's and Don't's of Handling Chickens

Keep your chickens and kids safe by following these best practices:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after collecting eggs or handling birds.
- Clean and disinfect equipment and tools.
- Pet your birds, but don't kiss or snuggle them with your face.