

## **Habit 1-Be Proactive**

Tired of reminding your child ... Homework? Cleaning their room? Picking up?

Wouldn't it be great if they just did it on their own?

**Habit 1 is Be Proactive-** "I am in charge of me." This Habit is the key to moving from dependence to personal responsibility. This means the child is in charge of their choices, the consequences of those choices, how they respond in every situation, and their personal belongings. Do not feel like you need to "water it down" for younger children. They can understand and often will surprise you how eager they are to take charge of some of their own life.

### **Ways to apply at home:**

**Allow choices:** would they like the blue plate or the yellow, would they like to go to bed now or in 10 minutes, would they like to read or do a puzzle. It doesn't matter how large or small the choice, practice matters. They can begin to take charge of what is going on in their own life.

**Set clear expectations, then let them succeed.** Have you ever been frustrated by an assignment you were expected to complete without clear instructions? It can feel the same to your kids. Even if you have done this before, review and clarify. Where does their backpack go when they get home? Shoes? Coat? When you talk about a clean room, what does that look like? Just toys put away? Bed made? Laundry? (Make sure your expectations are appropriate for your child's skill level.) When does the task have to be completed by? This should always be discussed in a calm tone and in a co-operative manner. If the child forgets the first few times, resist the urge to remind them, wait until the agreed upon completion time then ask if they forgot the agreement? Remind them at *that* time that they are in charge of their item/space and you are counting on them to take responsibility for that- to Be Proactive.

**Let them be Center Stage of their own life.** Each of us is writing the script of our life. Role-play with your kids: They don't get to do something they want. Someone calls them a name or teases them. They forgot their homework. What words or actions can the child choose to use? Explore both positive and negative and talk about likely outcomes of both choices.

### **Words to use:**

"Would you like \_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_? Good choice."

"Thank you for being proactive and putting your coat away."

"Did you remember to 'stop and think' before you responded that way? What might have been a better way to respond?"

"We agreed your room needed to be clean before you could go to your friend's house. It does not look like what I picture a clean room to be. Were my expectations unclear?"

"That sounds like you have a problem. What do you think you could do about that?"

"Tell me what you are thinking here."