

# Remember to press fast forward through chore time

It always amazes me how quickly children can move when it comes to tackling and completing a household chore.

For example, every Saturday morning at our house, the duty roster includes cleaning bedrooms and tidying the playroom loft.

I turn to the third page of my newspaper at about 9 a.m., pour that most necessary second cup of coffee and announce it's time to get to work. After several minutes of arguing, whining and protesting, my kids realize they aren't getting out of their weekly task.

The job is simple. It entails removing all objects from all surfaces, dusting, then

returning all dusted objects to their rightful spots.

Beds are made, windows are opened, floors are vacuumed and then damp mopped. My younger offspring—a cute four-year-old and the messiest one of the pair—is on loft duty. Her job entails picking up the one million toys off the floor and returning them to their proper bins, barrels, buckets and baskets.

Organizing the zillion stuffed animals to the play couch and picking up the thousand or so Barbie shoes, panties and party paraphernalia and stuffing them in the camper van (Barbie's, not ours.)

An average adult could assume the most energetic of



Tracy Kibble

human beings could likely complete said tasks, without interruptions, in one solid hour. Barring any sticky popsicle juice surprises or the discovery of discarded peanut butter toast to scrub and clean, it might even take a mere 45 minutes.

With the children at work upstairs, I return to my newspaper.

And for a few moments I hear the magical, soothing rustles and bustles of my busy little beavers.

But those few glorious minutes are short-lived as the heavy footsteps of my eldest child, Kody, clamber down the stairs.

"Done mom," he announces confidently, GameBoy in hand.

"Done? Done?" I repeat, dumbfounded the task could possibly be completed in just seven minutes and 36 seconds.

"I did it. Everything you said. What time does wrestling start?" he asks. Unbelievable. This, from the boy who takes at least 45 minutes just to gel his hair. This, from the boy who

spends 10 minutes getting dressed and longer still searching the kitchen for the perfect snack.

But he can dust, mop, vacuum, wipe, pickup, clean and make a bed in seven minutes and 36 seconds without breaking a sweat. Incredible.

Well, at least my daughter is upstairs diligently stuffing toys neatly into one corner of the loft so at least it will appear neat. I head upstairs, only to find her dressed for the party of the century—

purple feather skirt, sequined tube top, hot-pink leopard heels and yellow butterfly earrings.

I step squarely on a red piece of Lego, turn my ankle and swear under my breath.

Exasperated, I head downstairs for another coffee and witness my son staring blankly into the freezer.

"What are you doing?" I ask, even though I already know the answer.

"Looking for a freezie." Incredible.

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