

**It's not just about doing chores. Chores are a great way to make kids feel capable but lets face it they are just less motivated to do them.**

So let's look at other activities that may be more effective for helping your child feel capable. You get much more mileage when it involves a risk. But when parents hear me use the "R" word, they get scared and instinctively want to avoid those risks and protect their child. And I get it. But rather than avoiding the risks, teach your child to handle the risks. Some of these activities will involve a progression of steps before they are done independently. As parents you might need to take a LEAP of faith because it is scary, really scary. But the alternative is even scarier. The unintended consequence of trying to protect your child from risks is that your child may not feel safe in the world. Think about it, the message that goes along with "I need to protect you" is "the world is not safe".

A very short and brief list of ideas for children of various ages:

### **1. Cooking**

- Using a microwave
- Using a toaster
- Using the stovetop
- Let them serve themselves
- Let them serve others
- Using a knife to make things or cut things (start with something like PBJ and move onward to cutting fruit etc)
- Let them try cooking something

### **2. Using appliances and using tools**

- Learn how to put on the dishwasher
- Learn how to use the dryer or the washing machine
- Learn to use tools from a scissor to a saw

### **3. Errands**

- Go down an aisle by themselves to get a food product
- Let them hand hold your wallet and find the money for the cashier and get the change
- Go into a store and let them do the shopping

### **4. Making phone calls**

- Calling to gather information
- Calling to place a food order, make an appointment

### **5. Being in charge of money**

- Teach them about finances with savings, expenses, income and charity

### **6. Walking, riding their bike, playing independently.**

- Playing in the yard without you
- Going to the playground with another parent
- Walking to a friends house
- Riding their bike on their own

As the parent you may need to ask yourself what is the threat or fear of letting your child do something that involves a risk. Many parents believe that the world is more dangerous than it was 50 years ago. But the fact is, that it is not. And yes children will make mistakes along the way and they may get hurt along the way. Learning from your mistakes and learning that you CAN handle hardships is parenting gold. It is how a child builds self-confidence and resilience.

Figure out where you can take a few leaps of faith. Move yourself from one spot on the continuum of overprotection to a place that's just beyond your comfort zone.