

## DAILY LIVING

## Relax – It's Just Pesach

Most of my mom's friends have a love-hate relationship with Pesach. They love spending time with their families and the days off from school and work but they hate (hate!) the cleaning, the cooking and (dare I say it again?) the cleaning. I find that my friends and I have a more neutral relationship with Pesach – we're looking for *chametz*, not dust. And *good enough* is an excellent mantra.

Say it with me. *Good Enough*.

You know what's *Good Enough*? Vacuuming behind the curtains is *Good Enough*. Taking down the curtains and washing them? That's too much.

You know what else is *Good Enough*? Looking through the big bin of Lego for pretzel pieces is *Good Enough*. Washing each piece of Lego? That's too much. And if you really feel the need to wash the Lego – and that's an okay feeling to have – how about locking up the Lego for Pesach

instead? Or washing only some pieces so your seven-year-old won't miss it, and putting the rest away?

The way I see it, I have two choices: I can clean weeks



in advance, and Spring clean my entire house – and then yell at my kids anytime they so much as look at a cookie – or I can wait and then clean very quickly and thoroughly two days before Pesach. I always choose the second option; I don't like all the yelling.

I am a big believer in a very thorough but very quick clean. I know where my kids eat and I know where they don't eat and I know where the hot zones are. I also know that no one can clean in a vacuum\* and around this house, everyone pitches in; it makes no difference how old you are. We all live here, we all help.

Here, a few tried and true and kid-tested *Cleaning with Kids* rules to live by:

**Be happy while you clean.** If your kids see you smiling and laughing with them while you clean, they will too. Put on some music and get to it. Cleaning for Pesach isn't so bad. Remember, you're looking for crumbs, not dust. Do you eat on the ceiling fan? No? Good. Move on, you can clean the fan next month.

**Make a list and check it twice.** No really. Make a list of everything that has to get to done and then break that list down into smaller lists, one for each kid, and one for the husband too. My kids love a list. And they love checking things off the list. Bonus points for the mom who hands out clipboards with the lists. And the last item on the list? Go for ice cream. Everyone deserves something to look forward to at the end of a long day of cleaning.

**Give the kids the tools they need.** If you want the floor behind the couch swept by a four-year-old – who, by the way, is totally capable of doing that – then that four-year-old needs a child-sized broom. Pick one up for a buck at the

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dollar store and you've just turned your little one into a helper for life.

Another good investment? A dust-buster. My five year old can clean her room, but a full size vacuum is much too heavy for her to push. Enter the dust-buster. She loves it, she's happy to help and she even knows how to empty it when it gets full. With her trusty dust-buster in hand, she's been known to walk from bedroom to bedroom, asking if she can clean under the beds and in closets. Sometimes she even wears a cape because she's a SuperCleaner!

**Race the clock.** Work together as a group to empty the toy box to check for crumbs. But do it before the timer buzzes! My kids will do just about anything to beat the timer, even my oldest and he's at that pre-teen age where he thinks most everything I say is, you know, worthy of an eye roll. And just for the record, I don't like that.

**Meet your new best friend.** Baby wipes. These little guys can do everything. Hand them out to the 2-6 year-old set and get them working. My kids clean the kitchen floor with baby wipes in between moppings and they love it. It might sound weird, but I taught them how to kneel on a dishtowel if their knees start to hurt and for some reason, it cracks them up. But you know what – my kitchen floor is clean, so all I can say is *whatever*.

When you're making the kids' cleaning lists, you might want to consider adding these chores – there's a lot of shaking on this list, but that's okay. A little exercise never hurt anyone.

1. Shake out the pockets of the coats in the closet. Bonus: they get to keep any money they find.

2. Shake out all their books. Crumbs like to hide between the pages. But remind them not to sit down and read all the books. They can read on Pesach.

3. Look under the beds with a flash-

light. My kids will do anything for a flashlight.

4. Empty and shake out their backpacks outside. Just a note: You might want to take a quick look inside the backpacks too; they may need a quick trip through the washing machine.

Now that your lists are made and you've picked your day (or two) of cleaning and circled it on the calendar, we can take a minute to be totally honest: At the end of the day, it's much easier to clean when the kids are napping or in school or at night when everyone is



sleeping. It might even be easier to send the kids to a babysitter for a day or two as well. But the truth is, we're not just cleaning for Pesach here. We're teaching life skills – and the younger a child learns that being a member of the family means being part of a team, the better it is for him, for you and for the person that that child ultimately marries.

And remember – dirt, it's cool. It's fine. You can clean dirt all year long. These days, we're going after *chametz*, pure and simple. Don't turn Pesach cleaning into something it's not.

*\*Get it? Alone? In a vacuum? Not with a vacuum? Okay, I was laughing.*

Jennifer Wise blogs at [www.thecrumbfactory.weebly.com](http://www.thecrumbfactory.weebly.com) and she loves visitors.

