

Boys, pocket money and chores

By Ian Lillico



Boys can be given a retainer because you love them, but if they want extra pocket money to purchase something special there are some dos and don'ts.

It is important to agree on a mutual set of chores or tasks. Offer them about 10 and have them bring you down to about 6 through negotiation. Put these in a prominent place such as the fridge door, which gets a lot of use if you have sons. Once the tasks have been identified it is important to agree on a standard of achievement of each task - i.e. the boy has to agree on how well the task has to be done before he is paid.

One of the concerns in Australia is that boys are being paid money by parents for work that is slipshod and rushed. The parent often has to re-do many jobs that the boy is being paid for. As an example parents often pay sons for feeding the dog and making their beds, but my experience is that a number of parents have to clean up after such tasks are done and actually are doing more work themselves. They often have to put the dog food away or find where the spoon has been left. Boys ideas of making beds is often very different from ours and Mums often have to re-do this task as the sheets etc are often in disarray even though the quilt is pulled up!

Another example is sweeping the patio. Girls actually do the job whereas a number of boys go through the motions, but the sand and dirt remain - or he doesn't actually pick up the swept material!

When he finally gets to the front of the job queue and his boss tells him to sweep the work area etc; if he does the same slipshod job he does at home he will not last in the position and may get the sack. As parents we must ensure that we are not making our boys unemployable by paying them for jobs they are doing poorly.

By showing your son how a task should be done and having him agree that this is the required standard, we are actually doing them a favour. Tasks are often set but the boy or his parents actually forget or give up and pocket money is paid out anyway. This is not good training for your son and does him no favours when he enters the workforce. If we really seek the best for him and want him to compete in the workforce when he gets older we must ensure he does things well.

