

## **Wannabe Minimalist Show Episode 4: How to Declutter Your Kids Stuff**

You're listening to the Wannabe Minimalist Show, Episode Number 4. On today's show we're talking about how to declutter your kids stuff without a fight, meltdown, or pushback.

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Welcome to the Wannabe Minimalist Show. I'm your host, Deanna Yates and each week on the podcast we will talk about what it really takes to be a minimalist with a family. I believe minimalism is a mindset for how we see stuff, but more importantly, being mindful of the items we let into our lives, homes, and relationships. Let's do this!

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Well, hello there. Welcome back to another episode of the Wannabe Minimalist Show. I'm your host, Deanna Yates. Today we are going to talk about a subject I get asked about ALL THE TIME..."How do I get my kids to declutter their stuff?"

But, before we hop in and talk all about how to get your family onboard with this minimalism journey, I want to tell you a little bit about our sponsor for today's show, which is Curious World.

Curious World is the #1 early learning app for parents who want to fuel their child's curiosity, boost academic skills & build a lifelong love of learning. But, what I love the most is that it is ad-free.

That's right. In today's age with tablets, phones and screens constantly available, it can be hard to shield your child from inappropriate ads (ask me how I know). But that's why an app like Curious World, aimed at toddlers and children ages 3 to 7 years old, is so important.

A Curious World subscription unlocks unlimited access to hundreds of educational games, books, videos and activities updated weekly so your kids will never be bored. The focus is on developing life skills including math, literacy, creativity, executive function and social and emotional skills.

You know you're going to need a tablet now and again with your kids (no judgement here!) so why not alleviate some of that mom guilt and use an app you feel good about. You can sign up for a free 7 day trial at LittleGreenBow dot com forward slash curious. That's Little Green Bow dot com forward slash curious.

Alright, let's get back to talking about how to get our kids to declutter their stuff.

Now, I know kids come with a lot of stuff. When they're babies it's diapers, multiple changes of clothes each day, bottles, toys, highchairs, the crib, the stroller, a car seat, a travel crib...the list could go on. And while babies do need a few specialized items, I believe we are the ones that perpetuate this IDEA that they actually NEED all this stuff.

I mean, people have been having babies since the beginning of time and I'm pretty sure they didn't have the BlueSmart Mia Smart Baby Feeding System back then. Heck, they didn't even have that 6 years ago when my daughter was a baby. It makes you wonder how we survived as a species.

Then as our babies grow up into toddlers and little kids, we have even more things to buy like toys and full wardrobes each season as they grow faster than weeds. He have to baby proof the house and transition to older toys.

And rom my experience it gets worse when your kids enter grade school and can compare what THEY own to what their friends have. It's a challenge! I get it and I am dealing with this struggle right now.

My best advice is to be a role model for your kids and display the kind of behavior you want to see in them. Not earth shattering advice, I know.

But, let's look at some examples of how do you do this in real life?

And if you want a cheatsheet for this episode with a checklist for the action items we're discussing today, you can find it at [LittleGreenBow.com/subscribe](http://LittleGreenBow.com/subscribe). This will give you access to the vault where you will find this printable along with lots of other amazing freebies and goodies. Today's checklist will be found under Episode 4 of the Wannabe Minimalist Show.

First, let's take a look at the:  
**KID THAT'S ALWAYS LOSING THINGS**

Do your kids constantly lose things? Are they always looking for a toy or a stuffy? Perhaps getting out the door is a struggle because they can't find their shoes?

Now take a look at yourself. Do your things have a home or a specific place you put them day in and day out? If so, you can model what it means to know where everything is when they need it and gently demonstrate how you are able to find anything you want at a moment's notice. If not, this is a great time to work on this yourself and involve your kids in the process.

An example is to set up an entry zone. Create a space in your entry way where you keep keys, sunglasses, handbags, backpacks, shoes, and anything else you are generally searching for on your way out the door. Get your kids involved so they know where their things are to be kept as well. Then, and here's where the real work comes in, make sure to keep the items here. Put them in the right spot the minute you walk in the door. It only takes a couple extra seconds, but it's life changing.

What are some of the areas in your home you can set up to make your day-to-day life easier? Perhaps it's the entry way. Or maybe you need a lunch station where you put all of the lunch containers and pre-packed foods for their lunch. This is where the lunch boxes from the previous day get put away and where you pack the next day's lunch. Or maybe a homework area with all of the pencils, pens, papers, calculators, and other supplies your kids need in order to concentrate and get it done is something that would help your family the most.

Whatever your hot button is, think about how you can create a home for the necessary items around that task and make it easy for everyone to participate.

Next, let's discuss:

#### THE KID THAT NEVER CLEANS UP

Does your home look like a tornado came through at the end of the day? Our home used to and honestly we still struggle with this sometimes. If this is a struggle for you too, I recommend a 15 minute pickup party before getting ready for bed. If you need motivation, maybe you do the pickup session before dessert as a family. Set the timer, put on some good tunes, and get going. Make it fun and your family will want to join you.

After 15 minutes, your home will be much cleaner and you won't feel like you have to do it all yourself. I promise your kids are capable. They clean up at school and daycare so there is NO REASON they cannot do this at home with you. It's about setting the expectation.

It is also SO MUCH EASIER to get your family to help clean up when everything you own has a designated place to go. This is the biggest reason our homes get messy. When items do not have a place they belong, it's hard to know where to put them at the end of the day. To put that another way, your family is more likely to help clean up and put things away when they know where they go in the first place. Let's repeat that again...Your family will help clean up and put things away when they know where the things go.

If your family is struggling to get on board, think about implementing the "JailBox" idea. I talked about this on episode number 3 - 5 easy decluttering methods for when you're feeling stuck. This is when you take items that were left out and not put away and instead of putting them yourself, you put them in "jail". In order to get these items back, a chore must be completed. It's an easy and quick way to have a consequence for not picking up rather than nagging or yelling, which never seems to be as effective as we think it will be. :)

How can you make it easier for your family to help with clean up in your home? Will you try out the 15 minute pickup party for a week?

Finally, let's bring up the elephant in the room and talk about:

#### THE KID WITH TOO MANY TOYS

Does your kiddo have more toys than FAO Schwartz? I mean, you might even have a big stuffed elephant sitting in the corner. If so, I have some tough love for you today.

First, I'm going to go out on a limb here and guess that your kids were not the ones who purchased these toys with their own money.

Am I right?

Of course they didn't buy the toys themselves!

It's the adults in their lives that have contributed to this overabundance. Whether that is you, their other parent, the grandparents, or aunts and uncles...someone is using things to show love. Yes, gifts are some people's love language, but that's probably not what's going on here.

All of this is to say that when you're looking at the toys in your kid's room, I need you to remember that is not your child's fault that they have too many toys.

Remember, they are not the ones that purchased the toys.

Okay! :) Now that we have that out of the way, we can look at some solutions.

One of our favorite ways to declutter an abundance of toys is to have a donation day. Talk to your kids about how there are other children in the world who do not have as much and by donating toys they no longer play with, they will be making another kid super happy. That has worked well for us and is perfect around the holiday season.

Donation days are also pretty easy when children are younger because they are growing so fast and their brains are developing quickly. Toys they loved a year ago, may no longer hold their interest so it's easier to let those go.

But, sometimes our daughter is not ready to let go of something even if she has outgrown it. In that case, I will box these items up and store them away for a while. After a little while, and if it seems like she's tiring of the current toys, we rotate out the stored toys and it's like getting new things. And sometimes that break is enough for her to see the toy next time and be ready to get rid of it.

Make sure to bring a big dose of empathy with you when you ask your kids to part with their things. Sometimes kids are fearful of letting toys go because they are not sure what life will be like without them. It's a lot like what we adults experience when decluttering. For some of us, it can be scary. If that's the case, your child needs to see that life is okay with less before fully committing. This is when I recommend boxing items up and storing them away before donating them.

On the other hand, if your child is ready to part with a toy, hold your emotions in. You might be surprised at how their decisions affect you. Do not pass judgment on their choices. Instead box up the item and remove it. If you think it's a decision they will regret or it's a family heirloom, you can store it away. But remember, your child deserves to make their own decisions and should not be forced to keep toys because of YOUR emotional attachment to them.

Once you've got a handle on the current toys, the best thing you can do for the future is to limit new toys coming into your home. Try to swap things for experiences. This holiday season consider getting tickets to the zoo, the science museum, or amusement park. Or you can use the 4 Gift Method. With this method you purchase only 4 gifts for your child, which are one thing they want, one thing they need, one thing to wear, and one thing to read.

I would caution against going into your kids room and throwing away all of the toys without their input. Sure it works for some, but it could really backfire. If you are tempted to do this, just store the items in the garage for a few weeks. If your kids end up wanting something you took away, it

will be easy to retrieve it without having to buy it again. After a couple of months, you'd probably be okay donating the toys without guilt.

So, if your child struggles with having too many toys, which of these strategies are you going to implement? Are you going to try a donation day? Is it so bad that you're just going to declutter it all and see what happens (storing it all away until you determine there's no meltdown of course). Either way, I can't wait to hear what you try.

And that wraps up how to declutter your kids stuff. So to recap,

1. If your kids are always losing things, start a habit of giving things a home. I recommend starting with an entry station so that things get put away as you walk in the door and are ready to go during those stressful moments of trying to get out the door on time.
2. If your kids never clean up, implement a 15 minute pick up party every night before getting ready for bed. If you need more motivation, have everyone pick up between dinner and dessert. This of course will be so much easier if everyone already knows where their things belong so make sure you are also working on giving everything a home.
3. The last issue we touched on was the big one...if your kids have too many toys. The immediate solution is to get the items out of your home through either a cooperative donation day or to pack up the toys and put them in storage on your own. The long term solution is to put the breaks on buying more toys. Give experiences as gifts instead of things or implement the 4 gift idea for the holidays.

If you found this helpful, I would love it if you would subscribe to this podcast or newsletter at [LittleGreenBow.com/subscribe](http://LittleGreenBow.com/subscribe), again that's little green bow dot com backslash subscribe. I have a ton of freebies including a free 30 day simplicity calendar that I think you'll love. Plus, I'll be sure to share with you all of our future Wannabe Minimalist Shows.

Next week on the podcast we'll be discussing a very timely topic - clutter free holiday gifts. You won't want to miss it. See you then.

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So, this episode is might be over, but we don't have to say goodbye just yet. Head over to my website, [LittleGreenBow.com](http://LittleGreenBow.com) for tons of great resources, freebies, courses, and a link to join my free Wannabe Minimalist group on Facebook. Let's tackle this thing together.

And if you loved this episode it would be really helpful if you left a rating or review so more families can find the show.

You're awesome!

Thanks and see you next week.