

- What role do educators play in teaching manners?
- Using rhyme to teach manners.
- Properly honoring our National Anthem.
- Manners in the school cafeteria.
- When invitations are brought to school.
- Writing thank-you notes.

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Do Manners Matter?

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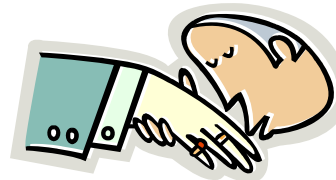
AUGUST, 2009

Mastering Manners

In an interactive poll of 12,707 opinions asked, 66% of parents feel that the most important facet of etiquette is to teach their children respect for elders and teachers (Family Education, 2009). Of concern is that 30% feel this is secondary to treating peers with respect, using good table manners and writing prompt thank-you notes (Family Education, 2009). "Unfortunately, American adults are exhibiting less civility toward one another, and children are following suit with teachers and peers in the classroom" (Education World, 2009).

Does mastering manners make a difference in the classroom? Psychologist John Rosemond believes that manners and respect are inseparable. "Children can never learn to respect themselves unless they learn respect for others – beginning with

adults" (Education World, 2009). Teachers who "teach" manners have "noticed a real difference in student' attitudes, in the way they treat one another, and in their schoolwork" (Education



R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Aretha Franklin sings for it.
(Education World, 2009)

World, 2009).

When classroom rules are observed, most fall under the umbrella of courteous social intercourse. "Etiquette today is based more on treating everyone with kindness, consideration and re-

spect. It is mostly just basic common sense" (Kids' Turn Central, 2009). *Wait your turn. *No name calling. *Say, "Please" and "Thank you." *Clean up after yourself. *Be a good sport. *Respect differences. Without social skills, conversation becomes chaotic, feelings may be hurt, and expectations are simply lowered.

Delores Hawkins, an elementary teacher, says that educators are taking good manners off the back burner. Educators have found that focusing on manners in the classroom is not an option - it's a must" (Education World, 2009).

This academic school year, rest assured that your classroom expectations of good manners and courtesy are necessary and that over sixty percent of your parents support the social standards you have in place.

Why Have Manners?

In 1999, the ABC News released a survey revealing that 73% of Americans feel our manners are worse today than they were 20 or 30 years ago (Education World, 2009).

The Child Development Institute has listed the three rea-

sons why we use good manners today: custom, consideration, and common sense (Child Development Institute, 2009). Customary manners are those that have survived generations, such as shaking hands. Consideration is simply treating others how you would like to be treated.

Common sense is sitting in the middle of the backseat of a car and realizing it would be impolite to climb over someone trying to get out first.

If we use custom, consideration and common sense daily, we are sure to act with good manners.

An Interview with Dr. Alex J. Packer



Be an example of the behavior you hope to see in your students. (Education World, 2009)

Educator and developmental psychologist, Dr. Alex J. Packer does not hold back when he describes our society's "manners meltdown." "We see this on the macro level, where our own government behaves like the school bully, running roughshod over the rights, privacy, and property of others. We see it in television, where humiliation is served up as entertainment. And we see it on a daily basis in our own lives with basic courtesies becoming an extinct spe-

cies" (Education World, 2009). Packer feels that students, especially teens, need to recognize that good manners hold underlying values, like respect, consideration and empathy.

Through his work, Packer has found that schools with positive climates and a commitment to shared values tend to be safer, happier places for students (Education World, 2009). Packer encourages staff to reward responsibility in-

stead of punishing misbehavior. "Staff and teachers should be prepared to stop whatever they are doing to deal with incidents of unkindness, intolerance, and/or bullying. Time spent doing this will not take away from learning; it will enhance it, since kids learn best in safe, respectful environments" (Education World, 2009).

Manners in Rhyme

Encourage students to learn the simple manners rhyme below; older students may enjoy creating their own rhyme using the following as an example:

We say, "Thank you."

We say, "Please."

We don't interrupt or tease.

We don't argue. We don't

fuss.

We listen when folks talk to us.

We share our toys and take our turn.

Good manners aren't too hard to learn.

It's really easy, when you find.

Good manners means

JUST BEING KIND!

(Education World, 2009)

The Josephson Institute (<http://josephsoninstitute.org/quotes/>) has a quotation bank filled with resources on character and ethics. Asking older students to research and quote ancient Greeks will lead to the discovery of manners and their historical relevance.

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

-Aesop

Honoring our country in a respectful manner.



Our National Anthem

Once school begins, students will attend school events where our National Anthem is sung. Students will need to know the following:

- Stand up tall, facing the American

flag. Place your right hand (palm open) over your heart.

- Place your hand over your heart when the first note is played and remain standing in this position until the last one ends.
- If you are wearing a hat,

remove the hat and hold it at your left shoulder with your hand over your heart.

The National Anthem is a time to reflect on our freedoms and those who defend and honor our country by serving in the military.

Cafeteria Courtesies



Eating with friends or classmates can be relaxing, but some manners need to be exhibited no matter who you're eating with.

*Reaching over someone is not polite. If you need something, ask

Remember your table manners in the school cafeteria.

- for it to be passed to you.
- *If your food is hot, allow it to cool instead of blowing on your food and others around you.
- *If you chew on something that you do not want to swallow, reach for your napkin. Spit out your food into the napkin and throw the napkin away. It is not necessary to discuss it.
- *If you are asked a question, place

- your hand up to show that you will need a few seconds. It is not polite to speak with your mouth full.
- *When eating,, raise your food to your mouth. Bending your head down to your plate is not necessary.
- *If you have something stuck in your teeth, ask to be excused. Picking at your teeth at the table is impolite.
- *If you or someone next to you spills something,, remain calm and clean it up. Mistakes happen.

“Up until around age 13, parents really need to be involved in the writing of thank-you notes.”

(Big Apple Parent, 2009)

Thank You Notes

Thank you notes should not be regarded as a chore. Thank you notes are an opportunity to show gratitude for a thoughtful gift or remembrance. Students can learn an easy, three-step formula for thank-you letters.

- 1) Mention what you are thankful for by name. *“Thank you for the blue sweater!”*
- 2) Appreciate the “effort and energy the giver put into select-

- ing, purchasing, or making the gift” (Family Education, 2009). *“I know you put a lot of thought into my gift and your kindness is appreciated.”*
- 3) Mention how the gift will be used in the future. *“I can’t wait to start reading the book this evening”* or *“I plan to wear the shirt to school this week.”*

When a gift of money has been

given, it is not necessary to mention the amount given; referring to “your generous gift” is appropriate.

When students are appreciative and have the tools and knowledge to thank someone properly, they will discover that the gratitude is met with delight and maybe another gift in the future!

Invitations

It happens every school year. A child brings party invitations to school, leaving some feeling left-out and disliked. The excitement and details of those attending bring unity to a selected number, often causing others to be hurt in the process.

While some schools have implemented school-wide policies re-

garding invitations, others have not. If you do not have a campus or school-wide policy in place, make your invitation expectations known to students as well as parents.

Educators cannot control who is invited to a party and who is not. However, the means of invitation dispersal can be handled through email correspondence or postal

delivery.

As you are well aware, social activities outside of the classroom can influence attitudes within the classroom, sometimes with a negative impact. Students need to fill their social calendar outside of the classroom, not inside.



Invitations need to be mailed or delivered outside the classroom setting.

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Daphne Morris, M.Ed., met Trevor Romain in 1992 when he visited a school as a guest speaker. Impressed by Trevor's profound and meaningful impact on students and educators, Daphne joined The Trevor Romain Company in 2006. A former elementary school principal, Daphne holds two Master's degrees in education.



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