

- Social etiquette.
- Manners in the home.
- Interactions between children and adults.
- Manners start at an early age.
- Dining out.
- Displaying sportsmanship.

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Manners Do Matter

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But Why?

Common courtesies and manners have changed from one century to another and each generation seems to feel that manners are worse than ever (About.com, 2009). In 1999, the ABC World News Tonight reviewed a poll indicating that 73% of Americans thought our manners were worse than 20 or 30 years ago (Education World, 2009). Why have manners changed? Why are manners important? Is it a waste of time to teach children manners?

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). Rosemond suggests teaching

manners with positive feedback, prompting courtesy by encouragement and by setting a good example. While Rose-



"Nearly all good manners have an element of common sense." (Child Development Institute, 2009)

mond believes we should be tolerant of a child's mistakes, he does not believe mistakes should be dismissed.

Letitia Baldrige, an etiquette

author, believes manners are critical to developing self-esteem and self-confidence in children (Education World, 2009). Baldrige encourages parents to advise children of social expectations ahead of time, to acknowledge observed manners, and discuss situations that could have been handled differently (Education World, 2009).

Kids who exhibit good manners are instilling qualities of respect and tolerance. Kids who display poor manners are less likely to be successful adults in work settings and at social events (About.com, 2009). Kids need to understand that manners are about consideration. You simply treat others the way you want to be treated.

She's Different!

Children are quick to notice when someone is different than them or when someone behaves differently. When children are young, they may say something aloud that embarrasses you or is overheard by the individual being spoken of. Usually all is forgiven when one realizes the child is

not old enough to understand. But how old is too old? As a general rule, by the age of four or five, a child should understand basic manners. A child should know that some people are different and that's okay. Staring or making fun should never be tolerated. Basic phrases such as

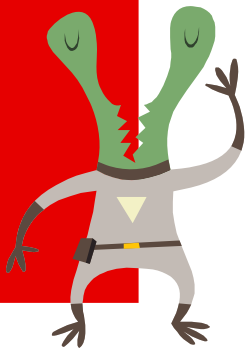
"please," "thank you," and "you're welcome" should be evident, particularly when speaking to adults. When your child is complimented (and they will be!), teach her to say a gracious "thank you" in return.



Wait your turn. It's not reasonable to push your way to the front.

"Home is where you learn to get along with people."
(Child Development Institute, 2009)

"When people say someone is a good conversationalist, they really mean the person is a good listener."
(Family Education, 2009)



Out & About

Our children will not always be with us. While we recognize this simple fact, we often worry because we know with certainty that children will establish friendships, as well as rivalries and experience heart-break as well as love (Family Education, 2009). While social situations and circumstances can not always be controlled, we can help our children with "street smarts."

*If you are walking with a large group, make sure the

way for others is not blocked.

*If you meet someone you know in the store and begin a conversation, move out of the aisle. Making others walk around you is inconsiderate.

*No matter how funny or strange someone may look, it is rude to stare and cruel to make fun of them. Treat them how you want others to treat you.

*If you need to throw something away, find a trash can.

*You do not own public

property. You do not have the right to mark on buildings or write on restroom walls.

*If you are entering or leaving a building, hold the door for someone behind you.

*Remember to say, "Excuse me" if you bump in to someone or need them to move.

*Always remember the polite words "please" and "thank you."

Manners make our world a better place.

Start at Home

At home we often desire *more space*. Here are some helpful manners for home that will enable everyone to enjoy the peace and privacy they deserve:

*Knock before you enter through a closed door – like a bedroom or bathroom.

*If you want to use something that belongs to another family member, ask to borrow it. Taking some-

thing without permission is disrespectful and rude.

*Clean up after yourself. Remove dirty clothes from the floor, make the bed and pick up trash.

*Share with your siblings. There will be times when both of you wants what the other has.

*Help out with chores. Vacuum or sweep the floor, wash the dishes, and make

your bed.

*Pets need attention. Make sure your pet receives food and water daily.

Everyone in a home deserves privacy and respect. By sharing, completing chores and caring for pets, children learn to look out for others instead of themselves.

The Alien Species

Even though we may have much in common, there's often an uncomfortable vibe when adults and kids meet for the first time. Adults often say things they swore they would never say. "Boy! Look how tall

you've grown. The last time I saw you, you were in diapers!" or "We need to put a brick on your head! You're growing too much." Kids look at the adult as if they are an alien species. Help your child learn how to meet adults with confidence.

*When you meet someone new, shake their hand or

look them in the eyes when you say hello.

*Discuss appropriate questions like, "How long have you known my parent?" or "Where did you meet my parent?"

*When your child walks away, it is nice to say, "Glad to meet you," or "It was nice visiting with you."

Life Long Skills



It is better to start early than to correct bad manners later. More importantly, no matter what you tell your child what you show him makes a far better example (eHow, 2009). Teaching children manners provides them with a lifelong skill that opens the door to success. Before you

Kids learn by watching you. begin, keep the following in mind:
 *It takes time to master manners.
 Good manners take practice and practice

comes with opportunities. Provide your child with opportunities to meet new people; eat at a restaurant, and stay overnight with a friend.

*To make manners a life-long habit, there must be consistency. Kids must know that manners are not for special occasions but for all life situations (eHow, 2009).

*When other kids show poor manners, discuss it with your child. “Let your child know that good manners are a skill, a tool that not every child is given by their parents” (eHow, 2009).

*When your child is well-mannered, make sure you acknowledge and praise them.

Most children who are courteous are commended. In a world where good manners have fallen by the wayside, educators are delighted when a child exhibits appreciation and respect. When you give respect, you receive it as well!

“We judge people based on their table manners.”

(Family Education, 2009)

At the Table

Psychologist and author, Dr. Alex Packer, became so concerned about the laxity in manners, that he wrote a book specifically targeting teenagers. These are a few general rules when children are eating at home or dining out.

*Take your time. Gulping down food is unhealthy and not attractive to others.

*When you sit down to eat, it is not the time to sing or text friends on your cell phone.

*If you have something stuck in your teeth, excuse yourself from the table.

*Burping or belching is impolite and not acceptable.

*Sit up straight. Putting your head down on the table is not appropriate.

*Never speak while chewing food and don't chew with your mouth open.

*If you must leave during a meal, place the napkin in your chair and gently push your chair in.

*Utensils are for eating. Do not wave your knife or fork in the air while telling a story.

Sportsmanship

Humans are naturally competitive. We want to run faster than the others, shoot more hoops, make more touchdowns, or simply win the game. Dr. Susan Linn advises parents to allow their children to cool off before discussing poor sportsmanship behavior with them and to approach the subject in a neutral, non-accusatory way (Family

Education, 2009). If our child acts in an unbecoming way, it's perfectly acceptable to validate his feelings; however, it's important to stress other ways of coping with disappointment. Linn suggests looking at those around your child to see if poor sportsmanship is role modeled – by friends and even parents. The pressure to succeed and win is

often driven by an aim to please, or a misunderstanding that sports are to be won – not enjoyed.



“Good sportsmanship begins at home.”
(Family Education, 2009)

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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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