

## MANNERS AND CHILDREN

All of us would like our children to demonstrate good manners when around others. As you well know, this is sometimes tough to teach them. Even if the child knows what is expected sometimes they fail to act in a responsible way.

We know that our own behaviors need to show the right way to act but this can get tricky. Like anything else, our children often mimic what they see us do, which we know isn't necessarily how we would like them to behave. Like it or not we must practice what we preach. But are there simple things that happen often during the day that we can remain aware of to help guide our children? I think there are.

I have listed below the most common "good manner" behaviors that occur every day and those we can easily remember and teach our children.

- When a child asks for something ask them to say "please". This is the easiest manner to remember and by far one of the most accepted in all languages.
- When a child receives something they ask for they should say "thank you". You may need to remind them of this until they do it on their own.
- Don't let them interrupt you when you are talking to another person. After a while they will wait until the other person is finished before talking to you.
- Nobody likes to be around a pessimist. Try to get them more interested in talking about the positive events in life. Reminding ourselves to do this also doesn't hurt.

- It's always embarrassing when a child comments about the physical characteristics of others. Children learn the appropriate filters as they get older. When this happens its best to let them gently know (when alone) that it is not appropriate to mention this to people unless complimenting them.
- Getting them to knock on doors before opening them is harder for them to learn but is obviously time well spent in teaching them to do so.
- Using foul language may be one of the most offensive things that children sometimes use. If this happens you need to make a big deal of it and tell them firmly that it will not be accepted.
- Likewise calling others names can be both offensive and most often hurtful. Ask them how they would feel if someone would do this to them.
- If they bump into somebody accidentally a simple "excuse me" goes a long way to getting the other person from being offended. These simple words are also some of the most powerful and easy to use, reflecting an especially well manned child.
- A simple "thank you" coming from a child that asks for help is an act of gratitude that goes a long way in them receiving help in the future.
- After a certain age nobody wants to see a child eat with their hands. Although this is taught early on in preschool you may need to point it out when your child forgets on occasion.
- It's hard but attempt to get your children to "ask for permission" to do certain things early in their lives. It will become ingrained in them and will hopefully remain as they grow older.

None of these are new revelations that we haven't heard before. Good manners mostly show a respect for the other person. They are common courtesies which help all of us to act in a civil manner in our world that often leaves little time to do so. But these take only seconds in busy schedules.

When your child shows these simple behaviors they not only show respect for the other child but you as well. They show the child as kind and considerate.

Most importantly, by showing these manners, your child is more likely to be accepted by other adults as well as their playmates and friends. It's one of those often overlooked simple behaviors that say a lot about both children and adults.

The earlier learned the better chance your child has to become accepted by all of those around them.....and that's pretty important in and of itself.