



PARTNERS IN PARENTING - MANNERS

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Teaching children good manners can be a very long-term, frustrating task. It seems even harder today with our fast paced lifestyles and our children's numerous activities. Unfortunately, eating dinner together is no longer the norm. We tend to feel rushed, and time with our children seems to continually decrease as the years go on. But as we develop the whole child, we have to focus our attention not only on their academics, their health, nutrition, spirituality, but their moral development as well. Moral development deals with helping our children develop positive character traits, including having good manners. Here are a few strategies that you may find helpful:

1. As adults we must model good manners when around our children. They are watching us!
2. As you begin to "teach" good manners, keep the child's age in mind. He may not be developmentally ready to do certain tasks.
3. Families should schedule at least one meal a day together where children can learn basic rules such as taking turns talking, not talking with your mouth full, not interrupting, saying please and thank you, using utensils, not playing with your food, staying in your seat and helping clean up after everyone is finished eating.
4. Be consistent! Don't laugh at Billy's burping one day and reprimand him the next.
5. If your child is misbehaving at a restaurant or grocery store, call a timeout and take her outside or to the car to review rules, and then return to let her try again.
6. Let your children know that good manners and good sportsmanship go hand-in-hand. They should follow rules, respect the umpire, and shake hands with their opponents after the game.
7. If your child has a cell phone, he/she needs to be taught "cell phone use" manners.
8. Be specific. Instead of saying, "Mind your manners", tell your child exactly what you mean. "Cory, don't forget to sit up straight and tell Mrs. Hankins 'thank you' when we leave."
9. Tell your children you expect them to use good manners no matter where they are.

Recommended Resources:

Teaching Your Children Good Manners, by Lauri Berkenkamp and Steven Atkins, Psy.D.
How Rude, Youthlight, Inc.

