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Mind Your Manners

Teaching your child good manners is a great way to make the world, community and home a better place.

by [Stephanie Vozza](#)

“When kids have good manners, society benefits for years to come,” says Kelly Frager, a children’s etiquette instructor in Mount Airy, Md. (pop 6,425).

Here are suggestions from several etiquette and behavior experts for getting kids to mind their manners:

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...a manners model. Parents must do more than teach," says Corinne Gregory, founder of Social Smarts in Bellevue, Wash. "'Do as I say, not as I do' doesn't work."

Practice makes perfect. Walk your child through scenarios beforehand. "Is your high school son going on a date? Practice shaking the parents' hands, making eye contact and saying 'nice to meet you,'" Frager advises.

Explain why. Manners are about honoring one another, says author Mimi Meredith, of Phoenix. "Say things like, 'Didn't you feel special when Grandmother looked you in the eyes and listened to your story without interrupting?'" she suggests.

Set specific expectations. For example, before a birthday party, discuss what proper host behavior entails, Frager says.

Don't reward rudeness. "Many parents reward rude behavior because they're tired or worn down," says psychotherapist Susan Pease Banitt, of Portland, Ore. "If you give in, children learn this is the way to get what they want."

Teach the Golden Rule—to treat others the way that you would like to be treated. "If you can't remember specifics," advises Gregory, "remember that good manners never violate the Golden Rule."

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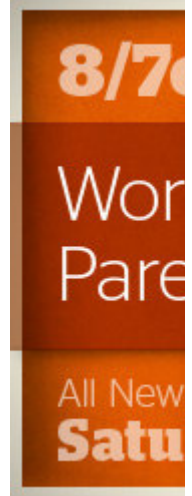
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