

# The Most Local Jobs.

PalmBeachPost.com



click here

## ACCENT

PalmBeachPost.com

▶ **JOBS** **AUTOS** **REAL ESTATE** **CLASSIFIEDS** **SHOPPING**

Home News Sports Business Opinion Accent Entertainment Your Town Archives Site Map Help

### Starting to teach manners at an early age pays off

By [Mark Schwed](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Thursday, January 27, 2005

When 20-year-old Prince Harry sparked world outrage by donning a Nazi swastika for a costume party, parents everywhere winced.

After all, if the residents of Buckingham Palace, where appearance is everything and protocol is an institutional obsession, can't teach the young prince a thing or two about how to behave in public, who can?

#### More in Accent

- [Celebrations](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Comics/Crosswords](#)
- [Horoscopes](#)
- [TV schedules](#)
- [Movie listings](#)

You can, say the experts.

Don't think for a second that it'll be easy. By the time they crawl out of their cribs, today's children are assaulted by a potpourri of profanity and vulgarity. They live (and learn) in a world where professional sports stars beat up fans and strangle coaches; where teen networks like MTV glorify tarts and thugs; where marketers tempt children with sugar and sex.

Is it any wonder that the Queen of England can't compete with Britney Spears, Snoop Dogg and the self-consumed young adults on *The Real World* when it comes to influencing the behavior of children?

Still, this doesn't mean it's time to throw in the towel. Mom and Dad can teach their children well.

"Begin when the child pops out of the womb," says Corinne Gregory, founder of The Polite Child Inc. ([www.politechild.com](http://www.politechild.com)), which works with schools across America to teach children about proper behavior. "It's never too early."

And, Gregory says, it's never been more important. Recent studies suggest that teachers spend up to 40 percent of their time in the classroom on discipline issues; that 43 percent of public school teachers spend more time on managing class behavior than teaching; that 30 percent of teachers know a colleague who quit the profession because of discipline problems.

"If you're losing 20, 30, 40 percent of your day to discipline issues, I don't care how much money you throw at these kids, you cannot teach them. Everyone suffers."

She says an average size school of 450 kids loses \$1 million a year because of problem behavior.

But if they are taught what Gregory calls "the fourth R — respect" — and "the three C's — care, compassion and courtesy," most discipline problems will disappear and more time will be spent on studies in the classroom.

"We're not teaching Gymboree or an art class or anything else that is trendy," she says. "We're teaching life skills."

Think about it. Had Prince Harry learned the fourth R, he would never have slimed his kingdom, embarrassed himself and infuriated a continent or two. He would have known that wearing a Nazi symbol of death and oppression was insensitive, disrespectful and just plain dumb.

In fact, those in the business believe that the whole world would be transformed if people would just mind their manners.

Sound like a bunch of touchy-feely hokey? Not to Gregory, whose program is being taught in 30 schools to thousands of students across the country. Each day, more schools, parents and students sign on. The company's motto: "We're putting civil back into civilization — one child at a time."

### See the latest radar images



**Local Doppler Radar updated every 20 seconds.**

"The biggest thing we can do to secure the future of our children is to give them the necessary social skills that will help them survive," she says. "I don't think there's anything more important to do."

Not math. Not science. Not history or religion. Manners matter most to Gregory.

And she's keeping good — or at least polite — company.

"Good social skills trump everything," says Kay West, author of *How to Raise a Gentleman* and *How to Raise a Lady* (Rutledge Hill Press). "You can educate your kids, give them French lessons, teach them how to throw a ball, but if they don't have any idea how to act civilly, they're not going to get far. All good manners are is thoughtfulness to other people."

Imagine a world where everyone was thoughtful, where children treated others with respect and compassion and communicated clearly and courteously. Peace on Earth, right?

Perhaps that's a stretch, but certainly peace in the home is possible.

Where to start?

"It all begins at home," says Jacqueline Whitmore, founder of The Protocol School of Palm Beach ([www.etiquetteexpert.com](http://www.etiquetteexpert.com)). "If Mom and Dad are rude and arrogant and they scream at people in grocery stores and curse at people on I-95, the child is going to pick up on that."

West agrees.

"When people say, 'They were raised in a barn,' the answer is no, they were raised in a house where good manners weren't practiced," West says. "The most important thing is to set a good example. One doesn't drink and smoke and cuss like a sailor in front of the children unless you want your kids to do the same."

Consider yourself your child's master teacher, charged with instilling in them such character-building basics as respect for themselves and others, integrity, honesty and responsibility.

Good manners, which is nothing more than being polite and considerate of others, is the first building block of such rock-solid virtues.

The experts say that if you are schooled in manners, you will be able to handle any social situation with grace. You'll know what to do and when to do it, while inflicting the least bit of pain or discomfort on others. Those with manners will seem like Prince Charming compared with all the other ruffians in the world.

Parents will have no doubt when they've succeeded.

"It is music to my ears when a parent delivers my child back home after a party or sleepover and says it was such a pleasure having your child — he is welcome back anytime," says West. "I know then I've done a good job."

And if your child is well-mannered, thoughtful and considerate, he'll will know that wearing a Nazi swastika is not fun or funny. It's just rude.

 [EMAIL PAGE](#)

 [PRINT PAGE](#)

 [POPULAR PAGES](#)

 [SUBSCRIBE](#)

Search:



Site & Web

Yellow Pages

Find It Fast

[Obituaries](#) | [Crosswords](#)

[Movie Times](#) | [TV Listings](#)

[Site Map](#)

Ads by Google

### [1-2-3 Magic for Teachers](#)

Effective Classroom Discipline Pre-K through Grade 8  
[www.parentmagic.com](http://www.parentmagic.com)

### [Classroom Discipline Tips](#)

Free 5-part report helps eliminate misbehavior in your classroom  
[www.adhdsolution.com](http://www.adhdsolution.com)

### [New Teacher Resources](#)

A successful classroom management program is based on instruction!  
[www.askeducation.com](http://www.askeducation.com)

