

# Ten Ways to Teach Good Manners

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*Manners* are behaviors we use when we interact with others. *We show good manners when we show respect.* It is important to use good manners every day at home, at school, and in the community. Some examples of good manners are saying “please” and “thank you,” waiting your turn, and putting things back where they belong. Here are some ways to help your children learn good manners.

1. **Model good behavior.** Use good manners with your children and when you interact with others. Let your children see you show respect through your actions, such as holding the door, covering your mouth when you sneeze or cough, and throwing away trash. *Your example is one of your children’s best teachers!*
2. **Teach “polite” words.** Teach your children polite words like “No thank you,” “I’m sorry,” and “May I?” Explain what the words mean and when to use them.
3. **Watch children’s TV programs or movies.** Many children’s TV shows or movies teach good behavior. Watch these shows with your children and talk about the characters’ good manners. As well, children often want to be like their favorite TV or movie characters, so ask them to imitate the good manners they see.
4. **Role-play good manners for different situations.** Practice the types of good manners you want your children to use in different situations like going to a friend’s birthday party, having family over for dinner, or meeting a new neighbor. Have them practice what to say and how to act.
5. **Read books about good manners.** Many children’s books teach good manners. The characters in the stories show good manners or learn to show good manners. Find these books at the library or a bookstore, and then read them together.
6. **Praise your children when they use good manners.** Acknowledge when your children use good manners. Tell them you like the way they are behaving or the way they said something. This positive reinforcement will encourage the behavior to happen again.
7. **Give replacement behaviors.** One of the best ways to know good manners is to know what behaviors are not appropriate. When your children say or do something impolite, explain why those are not good manners. Then explain what to say or do instead in order to show good manners.
8. **Play a good-manners game.** Be creative when teaching good manners. One game to play is to pick a polite word(s) of the day – like “thank you.” Have your children count how many times and in which situations they hear others use the word(s) throughout the day, then have them tell you about it. Also have them tell you when and with whom they said the word(s) of the day.
9. **Make rules and stick to them!** Set expectations for good manners. Being consistent about good manners is important. Start teaching manners when your children are very young—even toddlers can begin to learn good manners.
10. **Enroll your children in etiquette class.** There are several etiquette classes around the country to teach different manners, such as social (i.e., dining) or conversational. Check for local classes in your area.