

# A Little Grace and Charm™

## Tips on Raising Courteous Children

- ! Help children have a receptive attitude toward the words manners, etiquette, polite, etc. by using them in a positive tone. Avoid tongue-in-cheek comments. Children need to realize that these are ideals that you value and take seriously....but are willing to have fun while learning!
- ! To be receptive to learning the rules of etiquette, children must first understand the benefits of behaving in a courteous manner. We use our best manners because of the wonderful way that it makes us feel about ourselves. The magic of good manners is that people want to be with us, they want to be our friends!
- ! Draw a parallel between the rules of etiquette and the rules of an organized sport. Children realize that there's a difference in the way basketball is played, for instance, on the court vs. in the driveway with friends. Just as these rules are more relaxed in some settings than others, the rules of polite behavior are flexible according to the situation.
- ! Provide children with opportunities to practice their skills. Even the busiest of children need to have regular opportunities to practice setting the table, using utensils correctly, answering the telephone, and interacting with others in a calm, mature fashion.
- ! Set an example through your own behavior. Few of us exhibit the manners of a finishing school matron all of the time, but children will learn respect for others best by observing their parents, teachers, and other adults treating one another with dignity and courtesy. Remember, compassion is the cornerstone of good manners.
- ! Have at least one ready reference on your family bookshelf on the subject of etiquette. This will help illustrate the importance of this topic as well as offering guidance when questions arise.
- ! Finally, think of manners and etiquette as an essential part of your child's education rather than a soapbox that we occasionally hop onto prior to weddings and reunions. In the same way that you provide them all of the information that you can about the of subject of safety, provide them with these essential tools of good manners for living happily and successfully in their world.