

A Little Grace and Charm™

The Courtesy Starter Kit

Introductions and Body Language: Our bodies convey so many messages about us! Positive body language is a way that we can convey on the OUTSIDE the respect that we have for ourselves on the INSIDE!

- ! Posture: Have your child imagine that an invisible string is tied to the crown of their head and it is being pulled tight. In this way, we avoid 'stick men' bodies. Practice both standing and sitting posture, particularly for young ladies. While sitting, imagine that your knees are glued together and there's an invisible rubber band around both ankles (allows feet on the floor or the legs crossed at the ankles).
- ! Handshakes: Help children know what to do when an adult extends a hand to them. Imagine 'mitten hands' (four fingers together, thumb extended). Two firm up-and-down handshakes, then release and relax. In our culture, we look directly into the eyes of the person we're speaking with.

Mealtimes: When we gather around the family dinner table, we not only fill our tummies, we feed our souls! While there are volumes written on table etiquette, we've provided a list of the most essential habits below. Download our MEALTIME MAP to use as a template to help master table settings and silverware!

The Five most essential habits:

1. When in doubt, watch the host
2. Be aware of your Body (elbows, mouth, shoulders)
3. Kind words and 'just enough' information about likes/dislikes ("No, thank you" is enough to turn down offers of second helpings of something we don't like)
4. Napkins in the lap before the first bite...remain there until leaving the table when they are nearly folded to the left of the plate.
5. Kindness and respect to host...wait until all at table are served, excuse yourself from the table

Remember, The 'Manners Police' are NOT invited to Dinner! Remind children that our manners and mannerisms are a personal issue, much like the clothes we wear...corrections or reminders are best when made in private.

The Courtesy Starter Kit (cont'd)

Communicating with Others: Help children realize the impact of their words and actions on the people around them.

- ! Speaking: Lose words like 'Yeah', 'Uh-Huh', and 'Nope' and replace them with kind language such as 'Yes' or 'Yes, Please' and 'No, Thank You' or 'No'. Get into the habit of using terms such as 'Excuse Me', 'Please', and 'Thank You'.
- ! Telephone Use: SAFETY COMES FIRST! It is important that children recognize the dangers of letting callers know their personal information. But for other callers, children must learn that incoming calls should be treated in the same manner as a guest knocking on the door. Have caller ID? Telemarketing calls present a wonderful opportunity for children to answer the telephone and practice their telephone manners so that they might grow comfortable with speaking to strangers, taking messages, and letting callers know " I'm sorry, they are not available at this time." Some no-no's for telephone use: Slamming/dropping the receiver while you go find the person for whom the call is being made, answering the telephone with loud background noise (turn down music or TV first), yelling out "Mooom- telephone" or other similarly obnoxious means of letting another person know that the telephone is for them.
- ! Correspondence: Even very young children can complete a picture for friends which lets them know how much their kindness is appreciated...thank you notes are a wonderful habit for children to develop. Allowing children to send post cards is another way they can keep in touch and it helps them realize the gift of a written note.