



Etiquette and Manners

Social development is primarily the development of social skills: the set of behaviors and attitudes that demonstrate the ability to cooperate with others, understand others' feelings, interact positively with others, resolve conflicts respectfully, and state opinions, needs and desires appropriately.

Social skills involve etiquette and manners. These are words we don't use much anymore. But they are social skills, and therefore related to a child's social development.

Etiquette and manners use to be formally taught in school. A long time ago there were lots of rules that people were taught--rules about practically every little detail of life! Over the years, lots of these rules started to seem out of place in modern society.

In the last few decades, we have relaxed most of the formal "rules" of etiquette.

However, there is still a general sense that manners *do* matter. Think of manners as visible signs of basic values. It's not about saying "please" and "thank you" like a robot. Manners demonstrate human qualities of respect, kindness, tolerance, fairness, and empathy.

We know that children who get along with others--both adults and peers--do better in school and in life. Good social skills, such as manners, kindness and helping behaviors, help children make friends. They also help children know how to behave in new, and perhaps uncomfortable, situations. As children grow, having good social skills can help in a job or college interview (or on a first date!).

We also know that manners need to be taught. Being polite is not something we are born knowing how to do. We learn this by watching those around us, being taught by others, and seeing how people respond differently to polite and impolite behavior. There are manners and etiquette for many different situations. For example:

1. Table manners
2. Classroom manners
3. Financial etiquette
4. Good sportsmanship
5. Phone Etiquette
6. Email etiquette
7. Restaurant manners
8. Speaking manners (not interrupting, not pointing)
9. Greeting and introduction etiquette

What can you do to help teach manners and etiquette?

1. Model polite, kind, respectful behavior through your actions and words.
2. Discuss manners and etiquette with your child(ren). Say—"I'd like us to work on our manners in this family. What do you think is important?"
3. Don't yell, humiliate or punish when a child forgets a rule, like saying "please". Gently remind them. **Remember to use manners when teaching manners!**