



## Learning Manners

Many caregivers struggle to teach polite behaviors and manner to young children. Remember, these behaviors aren't easy to learn, as they require children to be able to think about how someone else is feeling.

### Suggestions for encouraging manners:

1. Share your family values with your child
  - “In our family we always...”
  - Explain why certain behaviors are important to your family
2. Model manners
  - How do you treat others in front of your child?
  - How do you treat your child (for example, do you say please when you ask him or her to do something? Do you grab things out of their hands? Do you respect your child? Interrupt them?)
3. Give your child information and understanding
  - Why do we greet people or respond when greeted? For example, “Responding to people makes them want to be your friend.”
  - Why is it important to say thank you? For example, “When you thank someone for something they've given you, it makes them feel good inside.”
  - Why does eye contact matter? For example, “When you look someone in the eye, it makes him feel like you are listening.”
4. Make your expectations clear and brainstorm ways your child can fulfill them
  - “When friends leave, we say goodbye and walk them to the door, what are ways you can say goodbye?”
  - “When someone gives us a gift, we thank them. What are ways you can thank someone? What are other ways you can thank grandma, if you don't want to kiss her?”
5. Talk about feelings
  - For example, “When you say you'll get dressed after you finish the game and then you fight me about getting dressed, I get angry.”
  - Point out how others feel. For example, “Kate is trying to get away from her mom. It looks like she is angry about having to go home.”
6. Take notice of other people's manners (towards you and your child)

- For example, “That child just said “Thank you,” when you gave him the ball. You made him feel happy because you shared it with him.”
7. Make practicing manners fun
- Use pretend play (fancy dinner parties, restaurant, birthday parties, etc.) to practice manners together