

Bringing up Children

They have to sort out for themselves the difference between enthusiasm, exuberance and rudeness. In such a situation teaching children manners is very difficult. Be patient and your patience will pay off.

Of course in early childhood, children learn from their parents and we have to be good role models. When we act and do things in the same way that we expect them to act it becomes a little easier. Being polite should come naturally to them and this will happen only when they see their parents being polite to others. The rules should be the same for everybody immaterial of whether it is a child or a parent. A parent cannot demand a prerogative that he can be impolite to others just because he is older and expect the child to behave politely. Learn to acknowledge a kind gesture and make sure the child notices this.

Empathy, kindness and consideration should be taught right from childhood. Ensure that you do not poke fun or ridicule anyone in the presence of the child and only laugh at jokes which are wholesome. Children should be encouraged not to tease other children even if he is teased himself. This is often very difficult but with a little patience you can get the message across.

Controlling anger and other negative emotions is very important. Children often scream and throw tantrums when they are angry or they hit out at others. Such situations call for immense patience from the parent, so instead of punishing the child, try to teach it to handle anger. Teach it to count till ten or make it look at itself in the mirror when angry and compare it with the image when it smiles. This does not mean that a child can never give vent to its feelings, it must be done properly. It is all right for a child to say that he or she does not want to do a thing, but rephrasing of bald statements is very important.

It always pays to be honest and this quality should be encouraged. Allow the child to see for itself how you are honest in small things—like returning excess change or returning what was unintentionally given. You will be surprised that with this as a base, the child develops a strong sense of honesty and cannot lie even if it wanted to. Children are like tender trees and can be made to grow up in the way that you want them to. All it requires is a lot of patience and bringing yourself down to the level of the child in order to see things from its perspective. The parents have to learn to accept mistakes and try to correct them as unobtrusively as possible.

Parents need to understand that just helping children to develop good manners is not something, which is instantaneously produced. It is hard work for the child who often tends to forget rules and it is harder work for the parents who have to see that rules are constantly enforced so that they become a habit. In spite of doing all this, things may not work out the way you want them to, merely because the child is only a child.

Never criticize the child in public in front of others for nothing can be more demeaning. Help the child to envisage what the feelings of the other person is and more often than not it will refrain from doing what it originally intended to do. Allow the children to work things out for themselves and only intervene when absolutely necessary. Teach them to share what they have because by doing so they build an edifice which has no room for selfishness. This is a lesson they will use throughout their lives.

Countering bad influences is as important as doing things right. In a world in which the child is going to be exposed to good and bad, it cannot be protected from everything. Help it to decipher right from wrong and allow it to use its judgment. You will be amazed at the strength of character it displays.

Parents while limiting the amount of television the children watch can use characters in the television as a learning experience. They also need to know that compromise and tolerance are two things that must be learnt and the sooner they learn, the better for them. All said and done, parents must monitor their own behavior. As the early years in a child's life are developmental, the correct message must be sent. This becomes deeply embedded and forms the basis for children developing good manners.

