



10 BASIC TABLE MANNERS for KIDS

1 - Eat with a Fork

Eat with a fork unless the food is meant to be eaten with fingers. Only babies eat with fingers.

This is good to teach kids at a very young age because it helps them build dexterity in the hands and fingers. I know they will make a mess but it is better to teach when they are very young.

2 - Passing food

"Bread" is not what you want to hear from your kids at the dinner table as they reach across the table. Teach your kids to ask for food rather than reach across the table. Proper etiquette for passing is to pass the food counterclockwise. All dishes should be passed.

In our house we do not always follow this rule but we do make sure that our kids ask for food the proper way. The proper way to ask for food is "May I have some bread, please".

3 - Chew with Mouth Closed

I am sure you can all attest that no one likes to look over at someone and see that person chewing their food with their mouth open.

Along with this one I will throw in not talking with food in mouth.

Unfortunately, I see adults breaking both of these table manners. To be honest I sometimes talk with food in my mouth if I need to correct my children at the dinner table. But when I do I cover my mouth so no one can see inside.

4 - Don't Stuff your Mouth Full of Food

My wife still gets on to our kids about stuffing their mouth full of food. She always explains to them that they might choke. Well it finally happened. My son was eating a piece of Mongolian beef. The beef is sliced in long, thin strips. Part of the beef got stuck going down his throat and he got choked.

This really scared him and he has not stuffed his mouth since. This was an unfortunate way for him to learn this lesson. You know most of us males have to learn the hard way.

5 - Place a Napkin on your Lap after being seated

Place the napkin on your lap after being seated. As needed, use it to gently wipe or dab your mouth. Before drinking from a glass, dab your mouth.

My kids used to have a habit of wiping their hands on their pants so we have taught them to keep a napkin on their lap. This way they wipe the napkin instead of their pants. Plus this keeps any stains off their pants.

Also, if you have to be excused from the table to go to the restroom, place the napkin to the left of the plate. At the end of the meal, place your napkin neatly to the right of the plate (not refolded, but not crumpled either). This process is typically only used when dining out at a restaurant or at a formal event.

6 - Don't Speak Rude of the Food Being Served

Teach your kids to not make any rude comments about any food being served. It will hurt someone's feelings.

Remember, someone took time, energy, and expense to prepare the food, you should show your appreciation.

Also, teach your kids try a little bit of everything that is served even if they do not like the food. This is especially beneficial when your kids spend the night at someone else's house. The other parents will be very impressed.

7 - Say Thank You

Teach your kids to always say Thank You when served something. This shows appreciation.

Explain to your kids why we should say thank you when being served.

Remember, someone took time, energy, to prepare and serve the food or drink, show your appreciation.

8 - How to Eat Bread

When eating bread or rolls, break off a piece of bread then butter it. Eating a whole piece of bread looks tacky.

9 - Don't Pick

Don't pick your teeth, you should never pick anything out of your teeth while at the table, it's gross.

If it bothers you that bad, excuse yourself and go to the restroom to pick.

10 - Don't Shovel...Eat Slow

Eat slowly, don't gobble up the food. Your kids are using a fork not a shovel. Teach them to take their time and enjoy their food. As a general rule I teach my kids to wait about 5 seconds after swallowing before getting another forkful or spoonful.

TEACHING GOOD MANNERS

Good manners are a very important key to your child's social success, but no child is born with good manners. Teaching them is a parent's responsibility.

Beyond teaching "please" and "thank you" many parents aren't sure how to teach their child good manners. Teaching a child what behavior is expected is a daily process, and you'll have many opportunities each day to nudge your child in the right direction. Keep these points in mind:

Teach, don't reprimand

It's easy to assume that your child is purposely using bad manners, when in fact; he just needs a lesson or two. Be specific when you teach your child, and remember that many follow-up lessons will be necessary. So instead of saying, "Don't be so rude!" you can respond this way, "It's impolite to belch at the table. But, if you do, it's proper to say 'excuse me'."

Rephrase

When your child states her feelings in a less-than-polite way, you can rephrase what she's already said in the way you find acceptable. So if she says, "Yuck! I hate this green stuff!" You can politely correct her by saying, "What I'd like to hear you say is, 'I don't care for spinach'."

Tell what you DO want

When your child is displaying bad manners avoid nagging about the problem, "Don't yell in the house!" Instead, teach what you DO want, "Please use a quiet voice." This method will keep you more calm and in control, and will give your child an instruction to follow.

Accept mistakes

When kids are young they will spill and drop. It takes time to acquire the motor skills necessary to be neat and tidy. Children will make social blunders. It takes maturity to learn how to act in social situations. Accept age-appropriate mistakes for what they are: simple childishness.

Correct privately

As annoying as your child's lack of manners may be, resist the urge to reprimand him in front of other people. Making a scene as you attempt to teach your child proper manners, is, well, bad manners!

Prepare in advance

Whether you are planning a visit to a friend's home, a night out at the movies or dinner at a restaurant, take time before you go to coach your child on the behavior you expect. Review the "rules" of good manners and you'll more likely experience a pleasant time.

Expect good manners

When you know your child has learned the proper way to behave it's important to expect those good manners. For example, if you've reminded your six-year-old to say 'please' and 'thank-you' since he was two, you should expect him to apply what he's learned. Be consistent. Require good manners every day. Remind gently. And over time you'll find your children turning into proper ladies and gentlemen.

When is it acceptable to put your elbows on the table?

- Only between courses
- While you are eating
- Never

During the meal you need to visit the restroom. What do you do?

- Announce to everyone, "I've gotta go to the toilet."
- Say, "Excuse me for a moment, I'll be right back."
- Say nothing -- just leave.
- Sit quietly and suffer until the meal is over.

When you are not eating, where do you keep your hands?

- On your lap or resting on the table
- In your pockets

At dinner, when should you start eating?

- As soon as you are served
- When everyone has been served
- When the host or parent begins to eat

Double dipping: When eating chips with dip, is it OK to dip, take a bite, and return for more dip with the same chip?

- Yes.
- No.
- Keep 'em busy. Drum a little tune with your fingers.

When talking with friends, family, it's not necessary to say "Please" and "Thank You".

- True.
- False

You and your folks are at the ballpark watching a ballgame and the national anthem begins to play. What do you do?

- Remove your hat, stand at attention, and salute the flag at the first note of the National Anthem and hold the salute until the last note is played.
- Do nothing -- any kind of "honors" will make you look like a geek.