

## Parents putting emphasis on proper etiquette for their children

By Cheryl Anderson, Post-Crescent Staff Writer  
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Maripat Franke never has met a child excited to take her class on etiquette at the YMCA. Compared to the arts and sports offerings there, the manners class is, from a kids' perspective, boring.

"Usually a parent sees the class and signs their child up against their will," Franke admitted with a laugh.

But good manners, said Franke, a mom of four, makes life easier for children.

"Kids that have manners not only have more friends and are more accepted in their peer group, but they tend to be more accepted by the adults in their lives, you know, other parents and their teachers. They have an easier, happier life."

In some cases, children need to hear the information from someone who is not their immediate family to make an impact on them, according to Jeanne Hoest, arts and humanities director at the Neenah-Menasha YMCA, which will hold an etiquette course for ages 7 to 12 from 9 a.m. to noon Sept. 25, emphasizing table manners, courtesy, respect to others and useful daily manners.

"Parents love that we offer a manners class," she said.

Manners classes at the Y include: greetings and introductions, writing thank you notes, nice vs. nosy questions, making a good first impression, hygiene, table manners, how to behave in public and more. Franke also teaches children the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

"Manners are not just for adults but for your friends and family, too," she said. "They are not just for fancy occasions, but for every day."

A spot of tea

Jody Tourville of Little Chute brought daughters Madeline Clifford, 15, and Clara Clifford, 11, to the "Mom & Me: Time for Tea" event Aug. 22 at Plum Hill in Kaukauna. It was a fun, fancy and faith-based afternoon set aside to celebrate the mother/daughter relationship as well as learn etiquette and table manners.

A mother of four, Tricia Propson of Kaukauna is the facilitator and founder of rekenekt, a ministry dedicated to making healthy connections between parents and children. Propson wrote a yet-to-be published manuscript titled "Raising Little Women of God" and in conjunction has been teaching etiquette classes using President George Washington's "Rules of Civility," such as rule No. 107: If others talk at table, be attentive but talk not with meat in your mouth.



**Kyra Lefeber of Appleton and her mom, Becky, enjoy a mother and daughter tea at Plum Hill in Kaukauna. (Photo for The Post-Crescent by Kasi Koshollek)**

"It's a curriculum ... for the mothers to take the role of raising up their daughters in all manner of things: manners and social etiquette and what to do in situations, like a discipleship kind of thing," Propson said. "That project was born out of the realization, as a culture, we're losing the most very basic of manners. It's so evident. The more I work with young people, the more I realize that they're just not equipped."

Linda Caswell of Appleton brought daughters Lorna and Morgan, both 8, to the tea.

"Teaching and training my children young is something that is very important to me," Caswell said. "Some of the things that were talked about were things that we work on everyday, and it's great to have someone else say that these manners are important."

Reinforcement the rules

Tourville signed up for the tea to spend time with two of her girls as well as discuss manners, a topic, she said, that often comes up at her busy family of seven's dinner table.

"If parents don't teach and reinforce manners — sometimes that means nagging — this generation will gladly give them up in favor of electronic communication," she said.

"In my opinion, kids today are gravitating away from personal interactions in favor of easier, more casual relationships that don't require physical, face-to-face contact.

I think that manners and etiquette could easily get swept away.

“It’s a parent’s responsibility to share their ideals with their kids and model the behavior themselves. A parent who displays good table manners and shows consideration for others is much more likely to inspire their children. I’m not saying that advancing technology is a bad thing, just that there ought to be room, side-by-side for old-fashioned consideration and split-second communication.”

Through games, role-playing and quizzes, Franke teaches children that manners are like a secret code.

“Your friends are watching you and they are reading that secret code,” she said. “What they’re trying to figure out is are you going to be a good friend? Are you a nice person? Are you going to be honest, trustworthy?”

Manners are a very basic part of how we interact with people.

“Our outward behaviors are a reflection of who we are inside,” Propson said.

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## **DINING OUT GUIDELINES**

Polite words such as please and thank you will show appreciation to your host and servers.

If you must wait in the lobby before you are seated, sit politely with your hands in your lap. Use a quiet voice to answer if you are spoken to. Follow your host to the table quietly.

Be considerate. Food is expensive. Don’t order too much or the most expensive food on the menu. Ask what your host would recommend and order in that price range. A la carte means that appetizers, soup and salads cost extra money. Order only if the host does.

A formal restaurant will have lots of extra silverware. The basic rule is to use the outside pieces first. Silverware above your plate is for dessert. If you’re confused, just watch your host.

If you drop something on the floor, leave it there. Ask for another utensil if you need one.

Source: Tricia Propson

## **10 BASIC MANNERS FOR KIDS**

Kids need to learn to wait their turn and not interrupt when people are speaking. Gently tell them to wait and then ask them their question. Be sure to give your child your full attention to reinforce positive behavior. Also, while politely waiting, hold their hand or put an arm around them to let them know you’re aware of their presence.

No name-calling. Even if it’s in fun, name-calling hurts. Instead of labels, have children explain what the behavior is that bothers them.

Always greet someone when they come to your house. Depending on your level of formality, you can teach hand shaking with adults (but not other kids). And always have the kids say hello to make guests feel welcome.

Say, “please,” “thank you” and “you’re welcome” often. It shows respect and appreciation.

Clean up after yourself, whether at home or a friend’s house. If kids leave a mess they need to clean it up before the next activity begins.

Good sportsmanship. No gloating, and be kind. Tell others playing “good game.”

Take compliments courteously by saying “thank you.”

Open doors for elders when entering buildings. If preceding others into a building, don’t let the door slam in their face, but hold it until they can grab it. And when someone holds the door for them, “thank you” is the correct response.

Exiting first, enter after. When an elevator door opens let those inside exit before entering; the same thing goes with a building or room.

Respect differences. When someone does something different from your family because of race, culture or religion, teach your children to respect those differences.

Source: [www.drdaveanddee.com](http://www.drdaveanddee.com)