

Hip Habits Manners for Kids Wheel and Manners for Kids Teacher Guide

Good manners are an important key to each child's social success. Parents and teachers often desire to go beyond the basics of "Please" and "Thank you" in teaching proper manners. Teaching manners is a daily process. There are always opportunities to teach expected behaviors in social situations. The *Hip Habits Manners for Kids Wheel* provides information on table manners, teasing and bullying, rude behaviors, grooming, respect for adults, and much more.

The *Manners for Kids Teacher Guide* offers ideas to educators and parents for teaching children appropriate manners. Through the use of songs, poems, and interactive lessons, students are given strategies to be successful in a variety of social settings. Manners for children goes beyond the basics of "Please" and "Thank you" by addressing topics such as respect for others, good sportsmanship, computer etiquette, and other healthy habits for positive living.

Focus groups with a variety of teachers and parents from elementary and middle school levels shared the necessity of teaching etiquette skills to students. Some teachers stated they use direct instruction to model courtesy, respect, and good sportsmanship. Other teachers said they facilitate small group sessions with students when difficulties arise. Still another teacher shared that social skills classes are held after school. All teachers agreed that positive effects resulted from all three approaches. Parents noted they, too, saw the need for children to participate in such classes. Several parents indicated they would be supportive of etiquette ideas for reinforcement in the home setting. Group consensus concluded that regular class offerings of manners or other topics of etiquette would be helpful prior to any outbreak of behavioral difficulties.

Literature on manners (Bafile, 2009; Luddy, 2000) reveals similar findings. Teachers think a focus on manners in classrooms is essential and no longer optional. Parents should model such behaviors at home, but schools must also assume responsibility of providing formal and informal opportunities to teach students the appropriate way to conduct themselves if our goal is to promote and maintain civilized and orderly communities.

The National Association of Elementary School Principals cited the lack of appropriate manners as a growing concern among schools (Luddy, 2000). Students must be led to understand the ramifications of disrespectful actions and ways they can demonstrate positive responses in their interactions with others. Luddy shared how campus-wide efforts were implemented at a Pennsylvania school to decrease instructional time lost to unmannerly actions. Another middle school in Washington shared how etiquette training was applied in a hotel dinner setting. Both experiences demonstrate favorable results and show the importance of addressing teaching and practicing manners.

Bafile (2009) shared that a parent who was a restaurant owner, advocated mealtime as an opportunity to teach and practice good manners. This restaurant owner modeled his idea by allowing a local elementary school to bring 50 second graders to the restaurant for a meal in which the students were provided a lesson on manners.

Upon return to school, a follow-up discussion was held to review lessons learned. Students were asked to apply their manners in their home environments. Later, teachers and parents shared that children were appropriately using previously observed and taught manners in their home and classroom settings. This evidence shows that real-world lessons on etiquette are motivating, fun, and valuable to children.

A posting on a Texas school website (Perez, 2009) noted that an elementary teacher modeled and taught basic etiquette skills to fourth- and fifth-grade students in an after-school program. The teacher stated that an outcome of the manners training built self-confidence in the attending students. It appears the class is a repeated offering due to the interests of students.

In studying well-disciplined schools, Short (1988) indicated a student-centered environment which incorporates students and teachers problem-solving together. In addition, the incorporation of activities to promote self-esteem of students and activities that lead a student to feel a sense of belonging are more effective in decreasing behavior problems as opposed to punishment consequences. The philosophy adhered to in the *Hip Habits Manners for Kids Wheel* and in the *Manners for Kids Teacher Guide* demonstrate collaborative and supportive efforts leading to students becoming self-disciplined to manage their own behavior.

Gottfredson (1989) found that increasing parent involvement is a critical element in improving order in troubled schools. According to Stright, Neitzel, Sears, and Hoke-Sinex (2001), research supports how crucial it is for parents to be involved with their children. Although the sample was limited, research indicated that when parents support their children the results impact school success favorably. Otherwise, a negative impact could result in attention problems, social problems, passivity, and poor grades. Strong parent support was cited by Rose and Gallup (1997) as one of the factors that affects academic achievement and determines the quality of public schools. The *Hip Habit Manners for Kids Wheel* and the *Manners for Kids Teacher Guide* signify the importance of parental partnerships for student success.

Schools must provide parents with the tools they need to support learning in the home. Parents must receive regular communication about the academic progress of their children. Family workshops must be offered by schools. Parents must have opportunities for family sessions. Lastly, parents must be given opportunities to partake in parent leadership activities on the campus. All of these mandates were made by the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act (2002). Within the context of the *Hip Habits*, these factors can be addressed. Parents can become an active focus group to initiate campus efforts toward etiquette training for students and to lead parent sessions to support parents in their homes. The *Hip Habit Manners for Kids Wheel* and the *Manners for Kids Teacher Guide* provide resources for such parent and student training sessions.

"Recent research in the United States and abroad has documented that bullying is a common and potentially damaging form of violence among children" (Limber, Nation, 1998). Sylvia Rimm, the Director of the Family Achievement Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, a clinical professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, and the author of books on parenting, has worked with and studied numerous children. Rimm (2000) noted one constant among the angry children who displayed violent behavior: they all had been victims of bullies.

"Today, bullying is rightfully being recognized for what it is: an abusive behavior that often leads to greater and prolonged violence," state June Arnette and Marjorie Walsleben (1998) in the OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin, Combating Fear and Restoring Safety in Schools. "Both bullies and their victims need help in learning new ways to get along in school."

Dan Olweus, a psychology professor at University of Bergen Norway, is credited as a leading expert on bullies and their victims. Olweus (1993) stated that bullying affects the social climate and the learning environment of the classroom. His research discovered that students in schools or classrooms with serious bullying problems reported feeling unsafe and dissatisfied with school. Olweus emphasized that bullying is not a problem that will go away without adult intervention.

Bullying is harmful to the health and academic progress of students. Actions taken by the school and parents can significantly reduce the occurrence of bullying, Dr. Ken Rigby (2000), a Professor at University of South Australia noted. Both those who bully and those who are victims of bullying could suffer physical and mental health problems. As a result, the educational progress could be limited and life contributions could be negatively affected. Bullying can have negative consequences on the overall school climate and for the right of students to learn in a safe environment without fear.

A study supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2001) reported that bullying is widespread with 16 percent of school children sharing that other students bullied them. After a survey of 15,686 students in grades 6-10 in public and private schools within the United States, Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001) purported that 29.9 % of the sample had been involved in bullying, 13% of the students acknowledged they were bullies, 10.6% reported being victims, and 6.3 % admitted being both a bully and a victim.

Bullying has become a serious public health issue as identified in the Educational Forum on Adolescent Health hosted by the American Medical Association in May 2002. Physicians, psychologists, health educators, and other professionals in attendance met to focus on bullying and how to address this problem. Research presented at the forum found that bullying occurs predominantly on school grounds (Fleming and Towey, 2002). Wessler (2003) reported that some students plan indirect or out of the way travel routes to various locations to maintain safety. On the other hand, many victims will not report any incidences of bullying (Shakeshaft, Mandel, Johnson, Sawyer, Hergenrother, and Barber, 1997). Thus, schools have a responsibility to stop bullying and create a safe learning environment. Initiatives which include parents and community members greatly enhance preventative bullying efforts. Limber (2003) advocates that schools involve these audiences to address the bullying problem.

According to Blasé (1982), teachers complained about having to cope with student disregard for classroom and school rules. This disobedience resulted in student misbehavior which interfered with the teaching process and student performance, resulting in loss of classroom teaching time. Cotton (1990), in a synthesis of 57 research studies, noted that over half of classroom time is spent in activities other than those of instruction. The greatest part of the loss of classroom instructional time is attributed to discipline problems.

Written plans and district policies by themselves cannot change behavior. All plans and policies must become part of the school culture and be communicated clearly and repeatedly to students, parents, and staff. Most importantly, behavior interventions must be integrated with strategies that reinforce social skills, strengthen school climate, and improve student achievement. Thus, offering etiquette classes or integrating manners across the disciplines can help strengthen self-confidence and develop self-esteem.

The Mentoring Minds' Product Development Team reviewed findings from the field of literature and conclusions reached by the focus groups to design the *Hip Habits Manners for Kids Wheel* and *Manners for Kids Teacher Guide*. Reinforcement of good manners is beneficial for any age or grade level. Social skills lessons include setting a table, personal grooming, responding to teasing and bullying, showing respect, and using appropriate telephone manners. The *Hip Habits Manners for Kids Wheel* and *Manners for Kids Teacher Guide* provide direction to parents and teachers for etiquette training. Both of these products can be useful in promoting "manners literacy."

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