

# Teaching Table Manners

Making mealtime pleasant can often be difficult with young children. Teaching children table manners helps them know how they are supposed to act and what is expected. Use some of these ideas to help teach table manners and make mealtime more enjoyable.

## Table Manners to Teach

- ◇ Wash hands before eating
- ◇ Say "please" and "thank you"
- ◇ No toys at the table
- ◇ Don't throw food
- ◇ No banging of utensils
- ◇ Don't spit out food
- ◇ Stay in your seat until finished eating
- ◇ Use utensils instead of fingers (when appropriate)



## How to Handle Misbehavior

Children are different and your approach may be different from one child to another. Sometimes it is best to ignore the misbehavior such as banging on the table. Other times it may be best to discourage the behavior such as reminding them to say please before receiving seconds. There may even be times when removing the child from the table and explaining to them their actions are not acceptable may be appropriate. Find what works best for you and each child. Consistency is key, so kindly reinforce manners until good habits are formed.

## Set Expectations

Discuss the importance of good manners with preschoolers and have realistic expectations. Encourage them to be a polite person. Have them draw pictures of the rules to help them remember. When the children come to eat have them remind you of the rules. Set a good example, demonstrate good manners, and make pleasant conversation with the children because they are watching and learning from you.

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