

HOLIDAY MANNERS

Call me old fashioned but I think manners are important. Especially important in this holiday season.

There are three areas parents should stress as they talk about special holiday manners to their children. ACT NICELY, DRESS FESTIVELY / APPROPRIATELY, and SAY THANK YOU FOR ALL GIFTS.

Tell all the children it is time for Holiday Manners. Specifics of acting especially nicely now that the holidays are near obviously depends on the age of the child but parents should instruct their kids in what "nice" behavior is, model such behavior, and expect their children to exhibit such behavior at holiday gatherings with family and friends.

Nice behavior includes cordial greetings, listening respectfully when older folks are talking, keeping the level of noise down, and using those kind six letter words. "Please." and "Thanks." Table manners for a festive holiday dinner should be rehearsed a couple of times at home.

Dress has become casual for almost all of us over the years. A century ago one wore formal wear to a Christmas dinner and now anything goes in many families. Not mine, however.

Children and grandchildren are expected to look neat, clean, and appropriate. No cut-offs or sweats at my holiday dinner table.

Now we come to the thank-you note. Again in my family this is important. Even the toddlers "sign" a note written by their parents. Preschoolers can print their name to such a note and by the fourth grade every child should write a note for every gift.

Yes I'm strict in this regard. Manners mean caring and caring means manners. Can you think of a better time to express how much we care for each other than the holiday season?