

A Little Reminder Can Mean the Difference:

The time to brush up your family's party manners is before the holiday season. Just like your house, a little polish goes a long way! Here are five tips to help your child—and you—shine this season.

1.



As much as possible, make sure your child is rested and well-fed: being tired and hungry leads to crankiness.

2. Say “please,” “thank you” and “you’re welcome.” Your consistent use of these phrases will help your child make them a part of everyday speech.

3. At the table:

- Have a few ‘practice’ meals. Begin by dressing up your own family dinner table. Candles make everyone and everything look better and supertime seem like a special occasion.

- Model and help your child to use utensils, to put a napkin in the lap, to pass food around the table (to the right, by the way) and to engage in basic conversation.

- Keep dinner conversation fun, positive and inclusive. Everyone should get a turn to talk. Supertime is NOT the time to take children (or spouses) to task.

- Review the basics of greetings. Even a young child can shake hands and say ‘Hello.’ Older children can be reminded to greet adults with ‘Hello, Aunt Mary,’ or ‘Hello, Mrs. Jones.’ Let your child know who she is greeting – she may only see Aunt Mary once in a blue moon.

- Help your child write thank you notes—a must for holiday gifts. Make it a family activity so that children see that grown-ups write notes, too. The more it’s fun (cocoa and cookies) the less it’s a chore. Have gift lists, address book, note cards, paper, envelopes, pens, pencils, crayons and stamps at the ready. Younger children can draw pictures or sign notes they dictate to you; older children may need help with spelling and addressing envelopes.