

Manners First

Top 20 Must-Have Manners, And How to Actually Teach Each One

Would you like to go first?



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DAYCHILD.ORG

Manners First

Table of Contents

Page

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Manners and How to Actually Teach Them |
| 8 | Supplementary Materials:
-Full-Body Attention Worksheet
-The Gates Worksheet
-Multiplier Rule Worksheet
-Divider Rule Worksheet |
| 9 | More resources available at Daychild.org |

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You do not want to skip out on direct manners instruction and reinforcement, any more than you would neglect teaching your children why and how they should brush their teeth or give up on requiring them to do it. Here are the top 20 basic manners your child needs to know in order to get not only the first invitation, but the repeat invitation in every area of life.

1. Eye-contact: Maintaining a natural eye contact when engaged in conversation is number one on this list. We give our energy to other people first and foremost through our eyes. An inability or unwillingness to do this weakens relationships and reduces one's opportunities in life.

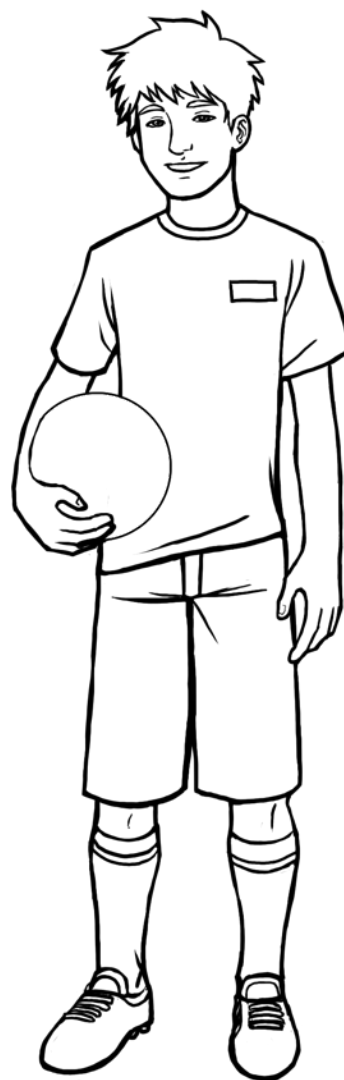
Teach eye contact through daily modeling as well as direct instruction. To teach this, do a role play. Sit with your child, facing each other. First, have your child share a story and don't give eye-contact. Look around the room, play with your shoe, pretend to swat a bug, all while your child is sharing their story. Then, have her share again and give her eye-contact. Switch roles and let her try out not giving and then giving eye-contact. Discuss how each of you felt, during each role play.

It's a great deal of fun to role-play this with kids aged 5 - adult. If you have a few children, you can do this in pairs and switch partners. It's an activity worth repeating through the years. Put your screens away when you are with your kids so you can make this essential skill part of your vibrant and engaged family culture. Switch the ringer off and tuck your phone in a drawer where you can quietly check it from time to time if you need to, while it remains out of sight.

If you have a boomchkin who is especially squirrely, teach him how to stand, speak, and listen in "full-body attention" which I teach in the e-book [Integrity Lessons 1 - 10](#). Full-body Attention is Lesson One.

2. Please and Thank you: Children should have a habit of saying "May I please..." and "Thank you for..." whenever they ask for or receive something. Teach this by saying it to them when appropriate, and by expending the energy to require it from them in return.

**Thank you for picking me up
from practice.**



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When they do not say it correctly, calmly say, with eye-contact, in your [Spock Parent](#) voice, "Try that again, please." By only saying "Try that again," you save your parental energy. Don't lecture them or get heated over it. Have them think of what they missed on their own if possible, and soon it will become a habit for them to remember these two essential social niceties.



Also, teach your children to say *only* "Thank you," when they receive a compliment. If someone says, "You are good at riding your bike," you do not want your child to diminish the compliment by saying, "My brother is better," "I crash all the time," or "I'm not very good." It's a polite habit and an indicator of self-respect to simply say, "Thank you" without any qualifiers or disagreement. It's a healthy habit to be able to sit in the good feeling of receiving a genuine compliment.

When a child learns to do this, he is also more likely to give genuine compliments himself. Teach this by giving your child descriptive compliments and helping him to only say, "Thank you" in response. You can say, "You're welcome," after he says "Thank you." Descriptive compliments are non-cliche, detailed descriptions of what you see, such as "Your hair looks so pretty with the light coming through it." or "You used a lot of color in that drawing. I love the things you come up with." or "You have a beautiful singing voice."

3. Respect privacy: Placing appropriate boundaries on others and honoring the boundaries placed by others are two consistent behaviors of successful people. Teach children from a young age to not go into a room with a closed door without knocking, to not listen to a private conversation, and to not read things that are private and not meant for them. Teach this by talking out loud about the boundaries you honor, right at the moment you are honoring them.

Say, "I'm going to knock on this door before we go in since it's closed." or "I can tell they are using quiet voices, which means they want their conversation to be private, so we can go over here for a minute until they finish." or "Even though that envelope is open, it's not addressed to you or me, so we are not going to look in it." or "Please bring me my purse, but do not open it. I will get xyz out for you. You may not go into my purse or someone else's purse without asking first." or "Your cousin is too big for your bike. I'm going to ask him to get off of it so it doesn't break."



This type of boundary setting and honoring of boundaries will translate later into even more important boundaries that relate to their physical bodies, the level of mistreatment they will accept in their professional and intimate relationships, and even how they care for their belongings. It may seem a little counter-intuitive, but placing and honoring boundaries helps open your child up to a world of integrity and abundance.

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4. Using appropriate voice volume: Children can learn from a young age about three voice volumes, "whisper," "indoor," and "outdoor." By age six, they should be adept at using the appropriate voice depending on the situation. To teach this, first give your children direct instruction on the three volumes. Practice them together. This is super fun to get silly with while gaining an understanding of the importance of voice volume.

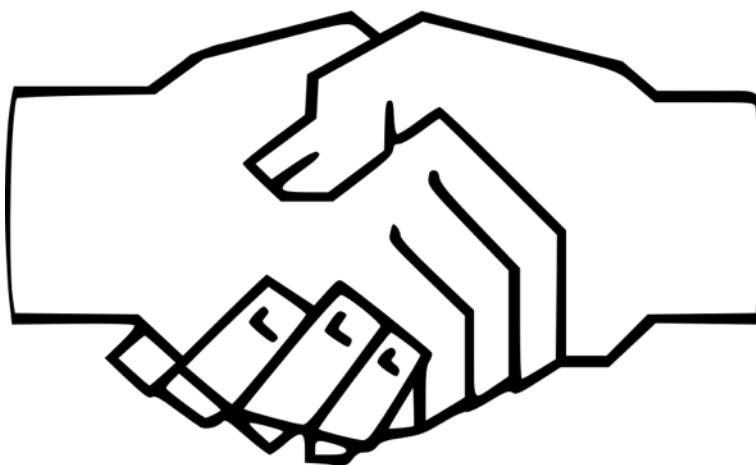
Then, wait for a time when your child is using an inappropriate volume for the situation. Ask her an [empowering question](#), such as, "Which voice do you think would work best right now?" Chat through the possible outcomes if she does not offer up the correct volume. Whenever possible, let her do the thinking so she can have buy-in on the learning of basic manners.

Another way to teach this is to notice when other people are not using a polite volume. If you are in a public place and the person next to you starts talking loudly into their cell phone, you can say to your child, "Her voice is very loud. She must not realize how loud she is right now. Remember to always walk away from others when you take a phone call or to wait and call someone back when you can do so privately." Be kind in your words and actions toward others, but use their misbehavior as teachable moments for your own little padawan.

5. Introductions: Being able to make eye contact, offer a hand for shaking, and to say "It's nice to meet you" is a social skill that will open doors and help keep them open for your child. Teach this skill by practicing it at home as a family. Children can learn to do this from about age five.

Before someone new is coming over to your home, or before you go to a place where your child will be meeting someone new, remind them that they will want to shake the person's hand and say, "Hello, I'm so and so. It's nice to meet you," while maintaining eye-contact.

To teach this skill, role-play it with your child. Also role play the non-example. Shake your child's hand with a limp wrist and look away while they are introducing themselves to you. Let your child see how it feels to experience this. Take turns doing it correctly and incorrectly with each other and talk about how you feel each time. As always, have fun with it. Fun makes things sticky.



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6. Closings: On the flip end, teach your child to say “Goodbye, thank you for having me,” whenever they leave someone else’s home, and “Goodbye, it was nice to meet (or see) you,” when someone leaves your home. Expending the energy to find the host and extend these salutations shows that you respect the fact that they prepared for you as a guest and served you in whatever way they did. Or, that you appreciate the fact that they took the time to come to your home or party. Teach it in the same way you teach your child how to greet others and introduce themselves.

Sending a hand-written thank you note via snail mail for an especially fun time with someone is always a nice thing to do. Learn how to make a Thank You Box for your family in [Ten Traditions to Strengthen Your Family and Build Literacy at the Same Time](#).

7. Sitting while eating: Children can learn how to sit at a dining table with one hand in lap with their napkin in it, while keeping their body still, and their utensils quiet. Teach this by doing it yourself, and reminding your child as needed throughout a meal to self-monitor these behaviors. You can say, “Please remember to keep your utensils quiet,” or “Remember, your napkin stays in your lap when you’re not using it.”

While it is a social faux pas to point out the ill-manners of another person, this is not the case with your own child. In fact, it’s one of the most important jobs you have as a parent. When you are around others, it is nice to remind your child about manners quietly, by whispering it in their ear or giving them “the look” from a distance, which they can translate into a reminder about proper manners. At your own dinner table, provide this direct instruction as needed, at every meal, their whole lives through. It’s worth the reward of having people say, “Your child is so well-mannered. He was so nice to have over. He’s welcome anytime.”

8. Eating quietly: In addition to keeping utensils quiet while eating, teach your children to chew and drink quietly. Teach this by showing them how to take bites small enough to fit easily into their mouth. It’s a size that allows them to immediately close their mouth and chew quietly. Teach this through direct modeling. Cut a piece of food and discuss whether you think it will fit well into your mouth. Then try it.

Discuss which sizes work best for different foods. Teach your children that they should not spear a food item and then take only a bite off it, replacing the rest to their plate. Every item they spear should be able to go completely into their mouth. If it’s too big to do that, it should be cut to a smaller size first. Of course, the exception is something you might decide to eat with your hands, such as a chicken leg or a piece of pizza.

Do the same modeling and practicing with drinking, both with and without a straw. If your child says, “But I couldn’t help it!” when they use improper manners, let them know they need to slow down. Say, “Please slow down so you can have the time and space to remember and use all of your good manners. It’s not ok to say you cannot control yourself. You can.”



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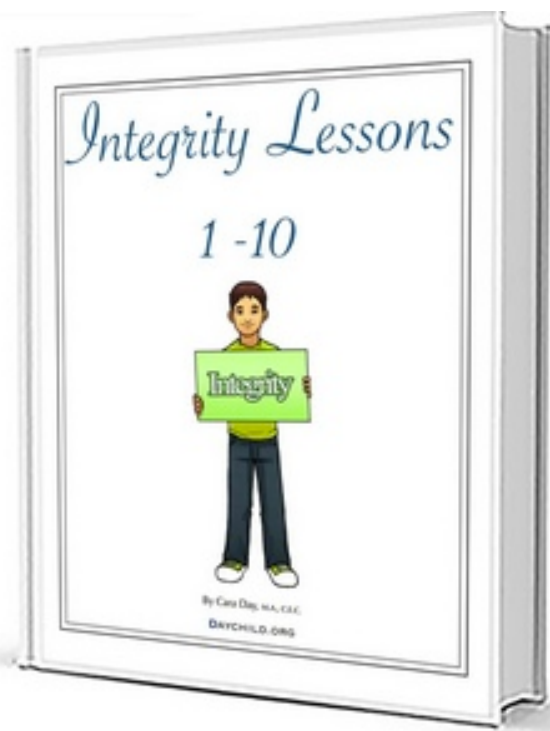
9. Save bathroom things for the bathroom: It's important to remember not to pick your nose, groom yourself, or do other things that should be done in the bathroom in front of other people. Children can also be taught to cover their mouths and nose when they cough or sneeze, and say "excuse me" if they burp or toot. Teach this by talking about the things that should be done in the bathroom, and which ones are ok in front of others. Talk about exceptions, such as when you cannot control a sneeze or burp, and how to do these as quietly as possible when it happens. At the same time, it's incredibly important that you do not allow the other parent, siblings or friends to "shame" your child for these bodily functions. When a child accidentally passes gas in a group, they may feel embarrassed, especially if someone laughs or points it out. You can say, "Don't laugh. That just means his body is working perfectly, doing exactly what it needs to do to be healthy. Everybody does it several times a day!" It's important for children to embrace all things human so they can feel good about their bodies, especially as they begin to change.

10. The Divider Rule: The Divider Rule teaches children to ask themselves, "How much should I talk, eat, or participate, based on what is being offered?" This tool for self-regulation help children to share available food, materials, and time with an activity, when they are in any kind of a group, whether at home, at school, or with friends.

Teach children to take an appropriate amount of food based on the amount of food served and the number of people there. Every family has their own idea about portion sizes, as well as their own budget. Children can begin to notice the group size and the amounts of food being served as young as age six. For a complete description of how to teach and implement this handy manners rule, watch [The Divider Rule](#).

11. Being kind: One key to successful marriage, friendships, and professional relationships is to always be kind. Teach this by teaching your children to ask themselves if their words will pass "the four gates" before they speak. The four questions are: 1. Is it true? 2. Can it be said with loving kindness? 3. Does it need to be said? 4. Does it need to be said by me? Exactly how to teach and practice this, along with a print out of the questions to post, is included as Lesson 10 in [Integrity Lessons 1- 10](#). Of course, speaking this way ourselves is a great place to start.

When children are little, the questions help them to be kind when they taste a food they do not like, open a present they don't care for, or notice the physical differences of another person. As teens, it helps them be thoughtful in their speech so they can learn to use their words in powerful ways that help them build strong relationships with others, even during times of conflict.



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12. Identify yourself: Let your child know that it is polite to identify yourself first when calling someone. Teach your child to say, "This is so and so" before he starts talking or asking for someone to come to the phone. If helpful, tell him to state his relationship to the person he is meeting with or calling, by saying, "Hi, it's Johnny, how are you?" or "I'm Johnny, Sally's friend from school," if a parent answers. Grab your cell phones and practice this little tidbit so your child can see how nice it sounds to display basic manners. As always, have fun with the non-example, too.



13. Apologize: When you make a mistake or accidentally hurt someone or something, say "I am sorry," or "I apologize." It's important to say it right away. Then, it's good to also say, "I hope you will accept my apology." Teach your child to apologize by doing it yourself. You can say, "I apologize that we are in a rush now because I overslept." or "I apologize for using that tone of voice. I want to always speak kindly to you." or "I'm sorry I broke your treasure when I was cleaning your shelf." Apologize to your spouse, friends, and strangers in a heartfelt way in front of your child, too. Talk about times you have apologized and how it worked out. Use the family dinner as a key time to have these discussions. Over the years, there will be times when your child apologizes to someone and it's not accepted. Or, they may have difficulty apologizing. Or, they may have an opportunity to see the value of apologizing for a situation occurring, even if they do not feel they need to apologize for something they have done specifically. Apologizing is a basic manner, as well as an important part of building emotional intelligence through empathy.

Forcing children to give fake apologies is counter-productive. Better is to be someone who takes responsibility for yourself and proactively apologizes when you transgress someone with your words or deeds. Also, teach your child that the other person can take the time they need to sincerely accept an apology. Sometimes, they may be ready right away. But other times, the other person may need to say, "Thank you, I will let you know when I can accept your apology. I'm still upset right now. I will talk with you a little bit later."

This is an important boundary for your child to learn how to both place and honor with others. If someone just says, "Ok" after a sincere apology is given, there can be some sour left-over feelings. When someone says, "I accept your apology," with sincerity and eye-contact, resentments can be more fully released. Be sure to do this for your child when they apologize to you, and ask them to do it with you and others when someone says sorry to them. This is especially important between siblings. If you start this when your children are young, you will see them doing this on their own in the teenage years and beyond. It's a pretty magical thing.

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14. Participation: One might not think of participation as a basic manner, but it is. When we are interacting with other people, part of what we should be aware of is what it is like for the people who are interacting with us at that moment. Teaching a child to participate fully in life, regardless of where they are, is an important part of manners.

When we participate at an appropriate level, adding energy to the activity or situation in a positive way, we become a welcomed part of any group. Alternatively, when children are disengaged and/or self-centered, this can come across as aloof, superior, or just not interesting. They will be unlikely to get the repeat invitation. If multiplied, this can lead to a life of isolation. Interesting people are *interested*.

Participating and contributing in social situations is something you can proactively teach to your children through modeling and discussion. Before you go somewhere with your children, discuss what will be happening. Talk through various scenarios that may be happening.

For example, you can say, "There is going to be a jumpy there. Make sure you take turns with the other children and jump safely, make sure everyone is having fun." or, "Aunt Judy and Uncle Michael are going to be there. Be sure to ask them about their new house and how they are doing," or, "We are

Would you like to go first?



going to listen to a presentation and then hear the music. Be sure to look at the speaker and to applaud nicely after each set." It's not enough for only you to show good manners. Let your children know they hold this responsibility, too, and actively teach them how to do it before social situations. [The Multiplier Rule](#) is a fantastic tool for self-regulation that covers nearly every behavior a child might display.



15. Letting others go first: It's wonderful for children to offer for other people to try something first, go first, or go in front of them. They can also learn to let someone else do something instead of them if there is only a chance or room for one. Teach this in a similar way as the last one. Model this in social situations when you are with your children on a regular basis. As you approach a door where others are also wanting to pass, you can say, "Let's let them come in first." When you see the last seat, you can say, "Let's let them sit down and we can stand over here."

By saying things out loud and modeling them over and over throughout childhood, these basic manners become quietly incorporated into your child's social repertoire.

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16. Wait for conversation pause or completion: Teach children to wait until the person they are talking with is finished talking before they start speaking. You can even encourage them to count to 2 before they respond, and to ask follow-up questions rather than shifting the conversation back to themselves.

Children also need to learn to wait until a conversation between two other people is over before they express a need to talk if they are not in the conversation. This is the case, unless, of course, it is an emergency. Then, teach your child to say "Excuse me" or "Pardon me" if they must interrupt. If it turns out that they should not have interrupted, discuss it with them later by saying, "When you interrupted earlier, you could have waited." Explain why you feel this way. Or say, "Thank you for interrupting in such a polite way. It was important for you to get my attention and it was great to see you do it with your best manners. That worked well for you."

17. Ask permission: Teach your child to check in with themselves when they are making decisions, in all of life. Every time we make a decision, we have an internal physical response to that decision. People who are in tune with "their gut" get on better in life than those who are not, or who are, but ignore it. Teach your child to feel this inner response and to pay attention to it.

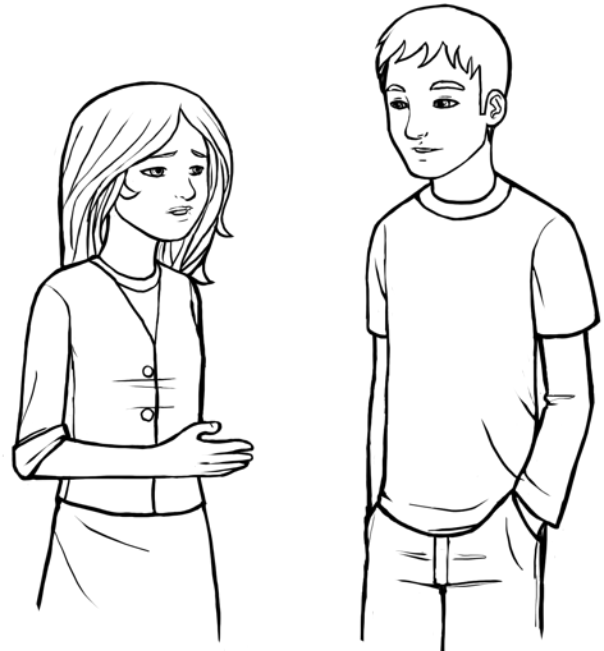
When it comes to doing things in certain situations, or using things that are not theirs, children should know when to ask first. If they are not sure whether they should ask or not, tell them to check in with themselves and see what comes up. To teach this, use life's little moments. As situations occur for you or them, chat through the thought process you or they went through and talk about how the situation worked out. Discuss other possible decisions that could have been made and what the outcomes of those might have been.

For example, if your child used her brother's computer without permission and he became upset, you can say, "What were you thinking or feeling as you started to use the computer?" Ask your child to dig a little deeper to see if she can recall any thoughts about it possibly not being the right thing to do. Discuss what she might do differently the next time and how that might work out better.

The way to develop manners and other skills is to first create awareness around them and then to become a social scientist of the self.

Sorry, I should have asked first.

I accept your apology



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18. Give thoughtful answers: Teach your child to be someone who answers with more than one word. To do this, practice. Ask your child a question and ask them to respond with their first response, followed by a piece of evidence or commentary. For littler children, you can just say, "Add another idea," or "What's one more thing you could say about that?" With older children, use the words "evidence" and "commentary."

For example, if someone asks them, "What sport do you play?" They can answer, "I play water polo. I'm on the varsity team and we have 8 practices a week." (evidence) or "I play water polo. I've been playing for 3 years and I love the game." (commentary) Teach your child how to think of details they can share to make their answer a little longer. Then, teach them to ask the person they are talking with a question about the other person.

The volley of conversation should go both ways. Model this for your children in your every day life and role-play it from time to time to be sure they are developing this awareness and skill. When you notice them not engaging or being self-centered when with their friends, your friends, or other situations, point it out later in a loving way. Say, "I want you to have these skills so people will enjoy being around you and really get to know the great person that you are."

**I want you to have these skills
so people will enjoy being around you
and really get to know the great
person that you are.**



19. Be helpful: Helpful people are fun to be around. Children can look for opportunities to help other people and enjoy the good feeling that comes from it. Teach this by example by helping people you know and people you don't know. From offering your seat to someone who may need to sit down to helping someone clean up at a party, there are always chances in every day life to lighten someone else's load or otherwise provide support. Put your kids in the flow of abundance by teaching them to be generous.

20. Use manners at home: Manners are not just for when you are a guest or when you are around other people. Basic manners are good to use everywhere, and that care and attention to manners should start at home, among all family members. By doing this, you teach your children that they are part of an important family--your family. This helps build your [Family Fraternity](#) which is key to enjoying a strong bond. This is a bond that will help you be your child's compass through the teenage years, and keep them coming back home long after that.

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Appendix

Excerpts from Integrity Lessons

- A. Lesson 7: Multiplier Rule
- B. Lesson 11: Divider Rule
- C. Lesson 1: Full-Body Attention
- D. Lesson 10: The Gates

Lesson 7: The Multiplier Rule

The Multiplier Rule

- Awareness of self and others
- Develop basic manners and relationship
- Using my toolbox

Ideas for this lesson:

- **Begin by talking about what it means when things multiply.**

When something multiplies, it gets bigger. If a noise multiplies, it gets louder. If an action multiplies, it could be happening more frequently, or to a larger degree. Or, there could be more people doing it.

- **Talk about what it looks like when a lot of people are doing the same thing.**

“What are some behaviors that, especially when multiplied, might be problem?” (Someone talking at an inappropriate time, making a noise with their body or an object, someone whining or complaining, or asking too many questions)

- **Complete practice sheet.**

Work through the sheet together. Your child can write, or you can write for him or her. Answer each prompt.

What I am doing:

- Tapping my foot at dinner
- Talking in class
- Touching something that is fragile
- Not being helpful

If everyone was doing it:

- It would be distracting and loud
- It would be distracting and loud
- It might break
- Others might decide not to help also, people would feel bad, things wouldn't work out as well

- **Secure the pages in your child's binder.**

If desired, make color copies of the pages for your child to post in their bedroom or in the kitchen for reinforcement. Then, hole-punch both pages and let your child put them in their binder.

MULTIPLIER RULE

WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE IF
EVERYONE WAS DOING WHAT I'M
DOING RIGHT NOW?

.....

WHAT I'M DOING	IF EVERYONE WAS DOING IT...

WHAT I'M DOING	IF EVERYONE WAS DOING IT...

WHAT I'M DOING	IF EVERYONE WAS DOING IT...

Lesson 11: The Divider Rule

The Divider Rule

- Awareness of self and others
- Develop basic manners and relationship
- Using my toolbox

Ideas for this lesson:

- **Begin by talking about what it means when things are divided or shared.**

When there is a group of people eating together, the food has to be shared between everyone. In the same way, the amount of time each person talks can be shared, too. Also, sometimes we might get to do an activity and it is good to share the materials and take turns doing it, if needed.

- **Talk about what it looks like when a group of people is together or doing something.**

"When people have us over to eat, they prepare a certain amount of food for everyone to share. Sometimes there might be a lot, and other times there may be less."

"When it's your turn, how long do you think you should take for your turn? How can you figure that out?"

"Can you think of a time when there wasn't enough for you because someone took too much or too long?"

- **Complete practice sheet.**

Work through the sheet together. Your child can write, or you can write for him or her. Answer each prompt.

What I see:

- Ten people, with 3 pizzas.
- Talking at dinner, with 4 people.
- Craft supplies with 6 people.
- A tree swing with 3 people in line.

What I will do:

- I will eat two pieces.
- I will talk for about one quarter of the time.
- I will make sure I use an amount that leaves some for the others.
- I will take about a two minute turn.

- **Secure the pages in your child's binder.**

If desired, make color copies of the pages for your child to post in their bedroom or in the kitchen for reinforcement. Then, hole-punch both pages and let your child put them in their binder.

DIVIDER RULE

I LOOK AROUND AND ASK MYSELF,
“HOW MUCH SHOULD I _____?”
Talk, eat, or use.

WHAT I SEE	WHAT I WILL DO
WHAT I SEE	WHAT I WILL DO
WHAT I SEE	WHAT I WILL DO

Integrity Lesson 1: Full-body Attention

Full Body Attention

- Help a wiggly child stand or sit still when appropriate
- Develop basic manners and relationships
- Develop speaking and listening skills
- Develop scholar skills

Ideas for this lesson:

- **Begin by talking about how it feels when we feel heard.**

"Today we are going to talk about a strategy that will help with listening and understanding. It's called Full-body Attention."

"How do you feel when you know someone is really listening to you?"

"How do you feel when you can kind of tell someone isn't really listening to you?"

- **Talk about what it is like for others to feel that you are really listening to them.**

"Tell me about a time when you were a really good listener."

"Tell me about a time when you didn't listen so well."

"How do people feel when you don't listen well?"

"How do people feel when you show them you are really listening?"

- **Read through the first page together.**

This page describes Full-body Attention. Follow your child's lead. If they want to read it, let them. If reading it feels challenging to them, you can read it. Discuss each line, as needed, as you go along.

- **Role-play giving your child Full-body Attention, and not.**

"Let's have some fun with this. I want you to share a short story with me about something that happened today or yesterday." Let your child think of something and ask him or her to tell you when they are ready.

"Take a moment to think of something, and just let me know when you are ready."

This time, while your child is sharing their story, be a poor listener. Look around the room, fiddle with things on the desk, play with your hair, reach down and adjust your shoe. In short, don't pay much attention.

When the story is done, talk about how it felt for the child to know that you weren't really paying attention.

Next, say, "Ok, tell me your story again." This time as your child shares, keep your body still, maintain consistent eye-contact, and pay keen attention to the story. When your child stops talking, ask him or her an open-ended question (a question that cannot be answered with a "yes" or a "no"), about what was said, such as, "Wow, how did that feel?" or "Why do you think he did that?", or "Tell me more."

Integrity Lesson 1: Full-body Attention

- **Reflect on the role-play.**

Ask your child how they felt both when you listened and when you weren't listening. Discuss how each scenario would affect the relationship. You can ask,

What you can say after you did not listen well:

"Do you think you would want to share more stories with me if I was not a good listener?"

"What did you think about me while you were sharing?"

What you can say after you listened well:

"How did you feel when you could tell I was really listening to you?"

"After I was listening to you, how would you feel about sharing something else with me?"

- **Let your child role-play giving you Full-body Attention, and not.**

Children love to switch roles after this has been modeled, and be the one to "listen" and "not listen" to you. Have a little story about your day ready to go and share it with your child. After they "listen" and "don't listen," tell them how you felt about each experience.

What you can say after your child didn't listen to you:

"When you weren't looking at me, I felt like you didn't want to hear my story."

"I was thinking you weren't very interested in my feelings when I was telling you about what happened."

What you can say after your child listened to you:

"When you were looking at me and nodding, I thought you cared about me and what I was saying."

"When you asked me a question about my story, I could tell you were really listening."

"When you were listening, I felt good, like I wanted to share more."

- **Coach around any presenting issues.**

For example, if your child did not ask you a follow-up question when you were done sharing, talk about it and role-play that part. Discuss any element that needs further exploration.

- **Visualize Full-body Attention and complete practice sheet.**

On the second page, let your child draw a picture of how they look and feel when they are in Full-body Attention. At the bottom of the page they can write how it feels to be a person who listens well.

"It feels good to know people will want to share with me."

"I am a good listener."

- **Secure the pages in your child's binder.**

If desired, make color copies of the pages for your child to post in their bedroom or in the kitchen for reinforcement. Then, hole-punch both pages and let your child put them in their binder.

FULL-BODY ATTENTION

When you speak to me, I...

1. Keep my body still
2. Keep my hands and feet still
3. Look into your eyes as you speak
4. Look into your eyes as I speak
5. Listen to what you say
6. Ask questions if I need to
7. Speak kindly
8. Respond appropriately to what you say

And, you do these things for me.

FULL BODY ATTENTION

Here I am in Full-body Attention:

How I feel:

Integrity Lesson 10: The Gates

The Gates

- Learn how to moderate speech
- Learn how to filter thoughts before speaking out loud
- Develop basic manners and relationships
- Develop speaking skills

Ideas for this lesson:

- **Begin by talking about self-monitoring one's speech.**

"Today we are going to talk about a strategy that helps with being careful and thoughtful with our words."

"Tell me about a time when you said something you wish you had not said."

"Tell me about a time when someone said something unkind to you and later apologized (or didn't apologize) for saying it."

"Tell me about a time you deliberately did not tell the truth."

"Tell me about a time you thought you were telling the truth, but it turned out that it wasn't."

If your child cannot think of examples, work together to create hypotheticals that might happen or that happened with someone else. Be sure to discuss the emotions and outcomes for the examples.

- **Read through The Gates together.**

These "gates" have been shared through several cultures for many years. You can read each one, then discuss. Or read them all, then go back and discuss them individually.

1. Is it true? This question helps us stop for a moment and think about whether what you want to say is actually true, or if it is just your perception of the situation. If you figure out that what you want to say is not actually true, and it's just your opinion, you can still share what you want to say, but it might sound a little differently. For example, instead of saying, "You are so mean." You might say instead, "Sometimes when you say things you have a tone of voice that, to me, sounds unfriendly and I feel badly when you use it." If you notice, the second statement is true for the speaker, whereas the first statement is actually an opinion, which could be argued against. For example, instead of saying, "I'm so upset because you never do what you say you will do," you can say, "When you don't do things you say you will do, I feel upset."

2. Can it be said with loving kindness? This question helps us think about the tone and energy of our words. Is there a kind way to say what you want to say? If there truly is not a kind way to say something, it might be an indication that it may need to be left unsaid. However, most things we want to say can be said in a kind way, even if the subject is sensitive or complicated. Instead of saying, "You're so bossy," you might say, "Sometimes when you say things it sounds like you are giving an order rather than asking or just talking with me."

Integrity Lesson 10: The Gates

3. Does it need to be said? This question helps us take pause and consider the possibility of saying nothing at all. Often, when our emotions are high, it's tempting to communicate right away, often in an ineffective way. This helps us develop the habit of questioning whether not communicating at all, or communicating later might be more effective. Perhaps your opinion of someone or a situation is not really necessary and your involvement will disrupt how it would have turned out in a negative way. This question helps us to be more observational and thoughtful, rather than jumping to interject oneself into a situation.

4. Does it need to be said by me? Finally, if your intended speech passes the first three gates, this question prompts us to consider whether you are the person who should do the communicating. See if the situation directly affects you or is your responsibility. Consider whether there is someone else who is either in a better or more appropriate position to do the communicating than you. Is there someone who is likely to create a more productive or beneficial outcome for both the person you are communicating with, as well as the greater good?

- **Complete practice sheets.**

If there is a presenting issue, or you'd like to use a sample one to gain some practice with this concept, you can use the following pages to write out sample text similar to the examples above. Doing this exercise reveals just how much thought goes into effective communication. It will also hopefully reveal the benefits of taking pause to think things through in a systematic way before speaking out loud. With a little practice, thinking through the gates can take less than a minute. This little bit of time will most often increase your effectiveness, connection, and joy in your relationships.

- **Secure the pages in your child's binder.**

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Integrity



Before you speak, consider:



THE GATES

of skillful speech

Do your words
pass through
these gates?

1. Is it true?
2. Can it be said with loving kindness?
3. Does it need to be said?
4. Does it need to be said by me?




1. Is it true?

POSSIBLY NOT TRUE	TRUE

2. Can it be said with loving kindness?

WITHOUT LOVING KINDNESS	WITH LOVING KINDNESS



3. Does it need to be said?

WHY IT SHOULD BE SAID...	WHY IT SHOULD NOT BE SAID...

4. Does it need to be said by me?

WHY I SHOULD SAY IT...	WHY I SHOULD NOT SAY IT...

Some other videos, e-books, and articles available at Daychild:

Videos and e-books:

The Choice Chart Behavior Management System: Parts 1 - 6

The Multiplier and Divider Rules: Tools for Self-Regulation and Basic Manners

Rapid-Behavior Shapers: Parts 1 - 4

E-books:

The Chit-Chat: A communication tool

Winning Ways to Speak

I Am a Happy Kid

Integrity Lessons, 1- 10: Character Development for All Ages

Resources:

Ten Ways to Trick Yourself into Exercising Everyday

How to Anchor Two People

Ten Reasons Your Stepchild Doesn't Like You, And 10 Winning Ways to Respond

There are many Free and Member videos, e-books, and resources available at Daychild.org. Your membership helps us make more videos, e-books, and resources for you, and we appreciate YOU!