



Learning Respect

Children seem to be so self-centered that teaching them about respect may seem a daunting task for parents. Young children also have short memories so it may seem that what you teach them one minute they forget the next. Although preschoolers might not have fully developed the ability for empathy, they can learn behaviors that set the stage for truly respecting others.

CHARACTER COUNTS! defines respect as:

- Follow the Golden Rule
- Be tolerant of differences
- Use good manners, not bad language
- Be considerate of the feelings of others
- Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone
- Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Tips to help children develop respect for others:

- **Teach children not to hit or bite.** We can use phrases such as “teeth are not for biting”, “hands are not for hitting”, “biting hurts”, and “hitting hurts.” These phrases help children understand how others feel when they are hurt.
- **Teach children to say they are sorry when they have hurt another child.** Point out that the other child is sad because they have either been hurt physically or emotionally. Saying things such as, “Charlotte is sad because you took her toy. Can you say you are sorry?” can help children learn to respect others feelings. However, don't force a child to apologize.
- **Help children learn to take turns with toys.** Young children have a difficult time sharing and are more likely to play with



similar toys side by side or to take turns. Setting a timer may help young children transition toys.

Tips to help children develop respect for property:

- **Encourage children to clean up after themselves.** Young children often like parents to help them during clean up; this gives parents an opportunity to model how to take care of property. Say things like “put your toys gently into the toy box,” or “be careful so your toys do not get broken.”
- **Get a library card.** Take children to the public library to check out books. Explain that we have to keep the books nice so that other children can use them. This is an excellent way to teach respect.

Books that help teach children about respect:

Giraffe's Can't Dance by Giles Andreae. After reading this book you might ask your child: “How did Gerald feel when the animals made fun of him when he tried to dance?” “How did Gerald feel when the jungle animals learned that he could dance really well?”

You Are Special by Max Lucado. After reading this book you might ask your child: “How did Eli help Punchinello feel better about himself? “Did he show respect for each of the Wemmick's?” “Should we respect everyone, no matter what they look like?”

Source: www.charactercounts.org

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