

Maria Dismondy

# Quick Tips for Families

## Dear Families,

As a former educator, parent, and children's book author, I am passionate about providing young ones with a social skills tool-kit. Sticky situations in personal relationships happen long before your child enters school, making it even more important to provide little ones with this "tool-kit" from infancy.

Manners are a way of behaving towards others. Character Traits define your personality as they are made up of a person's behavior and attitudes. The relationship between the two show that manners are indeed a character trait.

Spoonful of Sweetness uses early intervention to teach infants and toddlers manners and character.

I hope you will join me in making a difference by teaching your little ones that even they too can do great things!

Sincerely,

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**Kindness** We've heard the old expression that actions speak louder than words. By watching how someone interacts with and treats others, we teach children kindness. Shower those around you with kindness and your baby will mimic these positive manners. Some simple ways to show kindness: share a smile, give a hug and make cookies for your neighbors.

**Friendship** Show your child how to take turns when you are playing with them. Infants and toddlers may not pick up on sharing immediately but with enough modeling, they will inherit this important trait. Another way to help your baby learn about friendship is to include them in activities that involves other children such as your local library's storytime.

**Responsibility** The key to teaching babies responsibility is giving them simple tasks, such as putting blocks into a basket. As they become toddlers, they may be able to conquer two tasks, like putting blocks in the basket and putting a puzzle away. Toddlers can learn other ways to show responsibility like trying to put their shoes on before leaving the house. Cleaning up after they have a snack is a reasonable task for children that are walking. Remember that demonstrating responsibility also fosters independence.

**Empathy** Empathy is being able to understand how someone feels. Babies understand injuries, often known as a "boo-boos." They know that a band-aid or kiss is there to make it better. A way to teach empathy at a very young age is to use pictures to label emotions. There are books, flashcards and apps that give examples of human emotions via illustrations. If children can identify how they are feeling and how others are feeling, they are able to have empathy for others. Be sure to praise empathetic behaviors.

**Respect** The best way to teach respect is to model it, expect it and acknowledge it. Show respect for other people, animals, and the environment. As you go about an action that shows respect, make a point to use the word respect so they can match the word with the action. Another way to respect others is to use kind words such as please and thank you. If your child is not talking, teach them how to sign these greetings.

**Courage** Babies are constantly learning something new. To roll over, crawl, stand up on their own, walk, and talk. It takes courage to try new things. Reinforce their efforts with positive feedback and remind them that you are proud of them for trying their best!