

# Teaching Children Manners: Is It Still Worth the Effort?

Teaching kids manners can be a grueling process, which is perhaps why many parents today give up on it.

Mother Barbara Spindel, [writing for the Washington Post](#), is one of those parents. Despite believing that manners are important, she has grown more tolerant of her 9-year-old boy's lack of them.

Among his issues: he "eats alarmingly fast, often without utensils" (so that he can get to his screen time), and he blows his nose into his shirt and couch cushions.

Spindel says that she and her husband have attempted to teach their son manners, but he remains "proudly and stubbornly gross." And so, she has taken refuge in the belief that he will eventually grow out of his ill-mannered ways with little guidance.

According to the [Pew Research Center](#), the clear majority of Americans across ideological groups, like Spindel, believe that it is important to teach children good manners:



But one has only to eat in a restaurant or visit a public place to realize that their belief is not translating into reality.

Spindel asked the advice of etiquette experts as to how she should handle her son, "who knows the rules of etiquette but is simply uninterested in following them," and received differing advice:

Faye de Muyshondt, founder of the New York City modern etiquette company Socialsklz, believes this is a normal stage

of development and favors a gentle, “he-will-grow out-of-it” approach to dealing with the behavior:

*“She recommended replacing daily nagging with a weekly ‘fancy dinner night’ at home where kids dress nicely, set the table and eat with impeccable manners. ‘Meals should be enjoyable for a kid,’ de Muysshondt said of taking a break from the constant haranguing. ‘Doing it on a weekly basis helps them master the skills.’”*

Lizzie Post of the Emily Post Institute, however, suggests a stronger approach:

*“‘Parents today have a harder time being consistent, being diligent, taking the time, and making the effort,’ she told me. ‘You have to hold the line. The way to make sure that your kid is developing these habits is to practice and to continually remind them and to be that broken record. The repetition is what sticks with us as adults. That is truly the way to go.’”*

Spindel fully acknowledges that a lack of time and consistency are her downfall. And with [61%](#) of parents with children under the age of 18 saying they do not have enough time, Post’s comments seem to nail the problem.

In our hectic world, do you still think it’s worth the time and effort to raise well-mannered children?

Image Credit: Piers Nye via Flickr