

## **Grace and Courtesy**

“Montessori education includes explicit instruction on social behavior in a part of the curriculum called Grace and Courtesy, which are on par with lessons in math, music, and language” (Lillard, 2007, p. 198). These may include lessons on how to say please and thank you, politely interrupting someone, making verbal greetings, or introducing friends and acquaintances. Through the lessons of Grace and Courtesy, a child is able to develop and refine social skills while building self-esteem and **independence**. Montessori stressed the relationship of these exercises to the general happiness and well being of the child. “A child who becomes a master of his acts through... repeated exercises [of grace and courtesy], and who has been encouraged by the pleasant and interesting activities in which he has been engaged, is a child filled with health and joy and remarkable for his calmness and discipline” (Montessori, 2007, p. 93). Lillard (2007) further explains the importance of educating the whole child, “the goal of Montessori education in fact, is explicitly stated to be the education of the whole child, not only the intellect” (p. 198-199). Taken from

<http://dirigomontessori.pbworks.com/w/page/64871416/FrontPage>

Parents can do many things at home to foster independence through Grace and Courtesy. The best way to do this is to lead by example. If your child sees you kindly holding the door open for someone else, they will be more likely to do the same. If your children consistently sees you covering your mouth when you sneeze so will they. Grace and Courtesy can also be taught at home through let's pretend scenarios. First demonstrate the proper behavior, breaking down the lesson into distinct steps. Then give your child opportunities to practice the lesson. Invite siblings and dolls to play along. Let's pretend mom is on the phone and you have a question to ask her. What can you do to interrupt politely? Act out these scenarios with your child. They love it! You will quickly see them creating opportunities to use these newly taught skills. When your child uses the skill appropriately be very specific with your praise. I was so happy that you said “Excuse me Mommy,” when I was on the phone. Continue these lessons if your child still needs help performing these techniques consistency. It truly is amazing to see what children can accomplish is we give them the skills and practice time needed to be successful!

