



I
am

myself

Practical Life 4



Grace and Courtesy

Grace and Courtesy is a very important part of the curriculum in the early years. It is that part of Practical Life exercises that deals with the social interactions. It will mirror the cultural values in place where the child lives and it is very important for us to start teaching children how to behave right from the start.

This means that the adults must model the right behaviour. It is no use expecting that children will do as they are told if we do not do what we tell them. It is not fair, and they will eventually tell us so. We also call it hypocrisy.

Also do not expect that the child will get it right immediately, lots of practice is needed. Children in the Montessori setting are shown what to do and it is modelled constantly, we do not however coerce them into doing what we expect them to do, we encourage them by being the right model and you find that the children learn over time to do it right.

Telling a child what to do and showing them by example and role play what to do are two completely different things. Maria Montessori noted that adults who felt that children were clumsy and untidy found them that way mainly because they have not taken the time to show children what to do and how to be. Children are interested in being graceful and behaving correctly but they need guidance.

Some of the different exercises we need to do with the children include the following and should happen at the beginning of the school year with the early years. This sets the tone and helps the children realise what and how they should be engaging in the classroom.

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- How to greet people, using titles of respect when indicated
- How to sit down and stand up properly
- How to carry a tray or item
- How to turn the page on a book
- How to walk slowly
- How to talk softly
- How to excuse oneself when passing in front of someone
- How to ask to watch someone else work
- How to open and shut a door quietly
- How to hand objects to another person
- How to blow ones nose

I will go over a few important presentations below.

Greetings

Greeting should be presented in the first week when the children arrive at school. As children become more comfortable with you, you can shake their hand and greet them by name. Also teach them the culturally accepted ways of greeting in your community

Suggestions: "Good morning, (name of child)" followed by "It's nice to see you today."

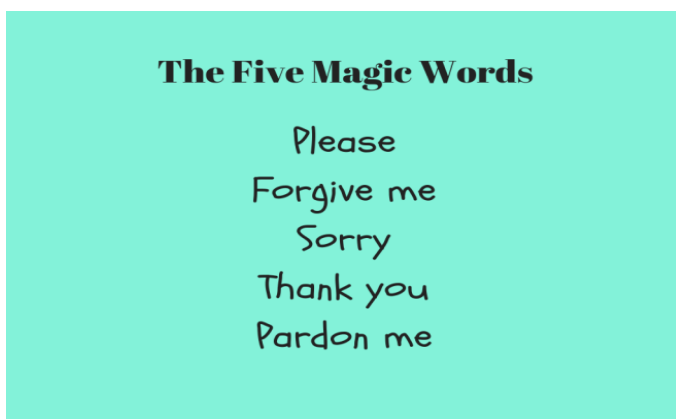
Let child respond and greet you.

Over time the child will learn to greet people without being prompted.

NOTES:

1. It is good to continue this practice daily. A variation is to invite children to greet each other, a new child, a parent visitor or a substitute teacher.
2. This can also be done occasionally as a small group activity, if desired (or with a "hello" song) for fun.

The 5 Magic Words



Teach the children the song: "There are 5 Magic Words"

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There are 5 magic words 2ce

There are 5 magic words that I know

Please, forgive me, sorry, thank you

*And the last ones **pardon me***

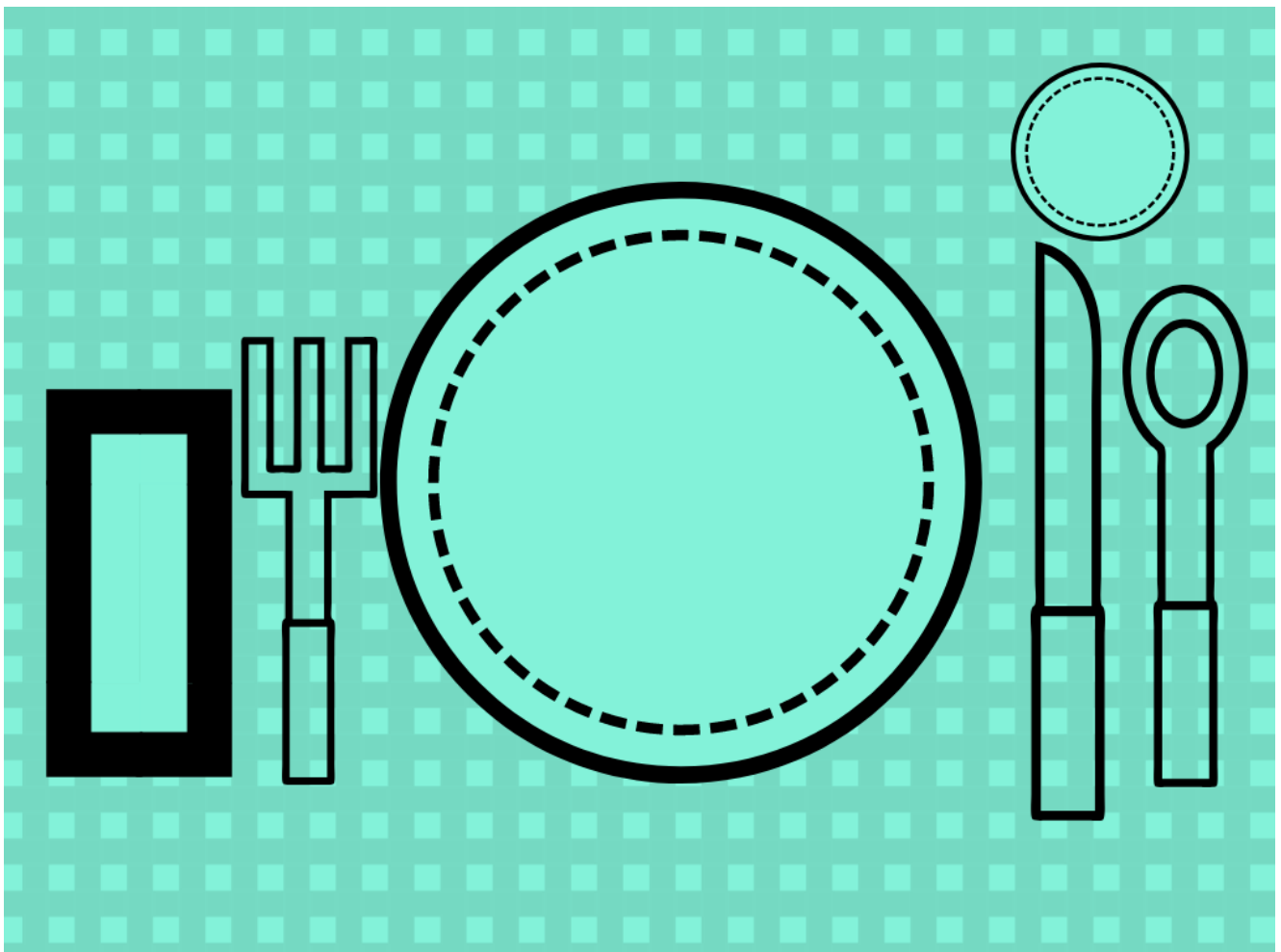
Talk through each word and play role using these words.

Be a great model of good use of the words this will help the children learn and practice using the words till it becomes second nature.

Table Manners

Each culture has its own unique table manners. In the Nigerian context I will combine the Western and Nigerian way of doing things since this is how we do most of our things, or at least we can learn both to meet the needs.

Setting The Table: Western style:



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Materials: A tray, table mat, knife, fork, spoon, plate, cup and napkin.

Presentation:

- Place all the materials needed in the tray and carry to the table
- Put down the tray to the left of the place you want to set
- Pick up the table mate
- Roll out the table mat in its place on the table
- Place the plate in the middle of the table mat, face up
- Place the cup at the top right corner of the mat
- Place the knife to the right of the plate under the cup and the spoon to the right of the knife
- Put the fork on the left side of the plate and the napkin to the left of the fork

(Note:- You can make table mats that are marked with the right placements as in the picture above to start with and when the children are more confident, get them to do it on plain table mats.)

Before you eat

1. Tidy up yourself (clothes and hair, especially when out and about and eating at a friends house for example)
2. Wash your hands.

At The Table

If you are eating out wait to be told where to sit by your host, wait to be served, and do not start eating until others have started eating. It is important to help the children realise that each household may have different ways of doing things, for example some people may say the grace before eating, so if they just dig in without waiting to observe others it may come across rude. Let them know that they do not have to do all the rituals but must always show signs of respect, for example bowing their heads when the prayers are being said and responding with 'Amen' etc.

It is important to help children learn right from the beginning not to talk with food in their mouth. It is rude as it doesn't look nice and they can choke which is dangerous.

Helping out at the End

Depending on the age of the children always encourage independence, let them clear up and tidy the table and floor as best they can especially your 3 to 6's. If you wait until they are 6+, they may have lost interest in such chores and then it becomes more difficult to get them to help. Remember it is not the end product that is important at the early childhood stages it is the process that matters.

Blowing your nose

How to blow your nose:

Materials: A box of tissues and a small mirror in a basket

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Presentation:

- Take the child over to where the tray is kept.
- Carry the tray to the workstation and settle down with the child
- Look in the mirror to check to see if you need to blow your nose.
- Take a tissue out from the box.
- #Cover your nose with the tissue.
- Gently grasp your nose and blow gently into the tissue.
- Gently pinch your nose and withdraw the tissue.
- #Examine your nose in the mirror.
- Repeat steps # - # if needed.
- Throw the tissue away in the garbage can.
- Invite a child to repeat the activity.

Points of Interest:

Being able to breathe through your nostrils

Control of Error:

1. Not able to breathe because mucous is not removed
2. Tissue not in garbage can

Aims:

Eye hand coordination, concentration, control, responsibility, good

healthy habits, independence, etc.

Age:

2 and up

Language:

Nose, nostrils, mucous, tissue, blow, grasp, pinch, gently

How to look after yourself in public

Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing in public

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Always turn away from the people nearest to you to sneeze or cough in public, it has recently been the advice to use the crook of the arm to cough and sneeze instead of into the palm of the hands. These will help to prevent the fast spread of diseases.

Do not use a napkin, use a tissue or handkerchief if possible when you are at the table if you need to cough or sneeze. Only use the napkin if there is nothing else available, turn away from the people nearest to you and always apologise afterwards: Magic word 'Excuse Me'.

Grooming yourself

We should look neat as best we can. It is important to note though and teach the children, that we comb our hair and neaten up in the bathrooms or public rest rooms and not at the dining table or in public, it is not considered good manners.