ForeWord Reviews

PICTURE BOOKS

Buenos Modales
Para Nis Marisela Guevara
Alfaomega
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It has been said that good manners are the grease that keeps the wheels of society going ’round. That the “civilization” of children is the most important education they’ll receive; that an unsocialized child, no matter how intelligent, will falter in school if he can’t remain attentive and take turns. This tightly written little book is a handy tool for parents wishing to advance this socialization process. Table manners, pets, health, behavior issues, school, restaurants, birthday parties, and other social occasions are among the subjects covered. The idea is that good manners not only help children to interact well with others, but also helps them to develop a calm and considerate nature. It is the infinite hope of society that social graces denote a reflective and conscientious person.

The author, a writer and columnist, addresses this hope in chapters on the values and moral responsibilities of parents. The book provides a plan for parents wishing to approach the subject of ideals such as tolerance, hygiene, and respect in an effective yet gentle manner. “Tolerance is acquired in the home, from family,” writes Guevera, “as are prejudices. If a child lives in an atmosphere of censure and discrimination toward others, they will develop prejudices, if they live in a tolerant atmosphere they will learn acceptance towards others.” If parents want their child to deal appropriately with strangers, or people with disabilities or of other races, it is imperative that the parents avoid using racial slurs when referring to them, and never themselves mock the way a disabled person or a foreigner talks.

The book goes on to explain correct behavior in situations where children will come in contact with people from other cultures or religions. Guevera suggests finding a common ground. As the saying goes, discretion is the better part of valour: if one is at a loss for guidance in a new situation, silence and respect go a long way toward treading lightly on unfamiliar ground.

This clearly written book is highly moral and organized into compact chapters. Any parent struggling to acclimate a contrary young person into their future community should find it useful and informative.

Gabrielle Shaw