

There are several factors that can have a big impact on kids and their ability to be respectful. The first one to consider is manners. Calling adults by their surnames, setting proper examples during sporting events and while driving, and how we talk to each other in our homes all can have a tremendous affect on a child's concept of respect and how important it is. Many of these seemingly trivial ideas have become almost outdated, but one should seriously consider the value of these ideas before casting them aside. It is easy to become unconscious about these behaviors. Try to keep track of how often your child is subjected to this kind of disrespect.

The media, as you may have guessed, plays a large part in the increase in disrespect. The Parents Television Council, according to Borba, looked at four weeks of programming during the 1999 fall season in the 8:00 to 11:00 p.m. time slot and tallied up to 1,173 vulgarities---nearly five times that of 1989. Movies are equally to blame, with a PG movie often containing an abundant amount of crude and profane language. These factors and others all contribute to an alarming increase in disrespect in society. If we don't step in and change the course, we will find living in a morally respectful culture unlikely.

This process can be greatly impacted for the better by treating our kids as a child of God. Show them unconditional love and listen with your whole attention. Let your kids feel your love through your hugs, your words and your encouragement. Spend time together interacting. Eliminate disrespect by immediately calling attention to it, and if need be, have behaviors in place to discourage it further. Refuse to engage when kids are being disrespectful. Fine kids for swearing. Use time outs for younger kids. Don't allow kids to socialize with family if they can't be respectful. Take away phone privileges or ground them. Younger kids need more immediate consequences in order to fully understand the impact of their behavior. Above all, the same rule applies. Reinforce your kids' positive and respectful behavior and be clear about negating disrespect. Kids take their cues from all adults, so be sure you are setting the best possible standards. See how your child is doing with this simple guideline from Building Moral Intelligence, by Dr. Michele Borba, of behaviors usually displayed by kids who demonstrate respect:

1. Child respects the privacy of others
2. Child uses a respectful tone of voice
3. Doesn't gossip or speak unkindly of others
4. Treats property with respect
5. Avoids disrespectful gestures around others

6. Uses manners regularly
7. Does not interrupt
8. Avoids swearing and obscene gestures

In the case of extreme disrespect, consider getting help to cope and modify behaviors.

Adapted from <http://www.parentingbookmark.com/pages/ArticleAL11.htm>