



Kid whisperer Diane Mirabito teaches preschoolers good manners

September 4, 2014

Comments 90

Read later



Rachel Browne

Social Affairs Reporter

View more articles from Rachel Browne

Follow Rachel on Twitter | Email Rachel

Tweet 32 | Share 608 | Share 5 | Share | submit

Email article | Print | Reprints & permissions



Teacher Diane Mirabito teaches manners to preschoolers at Rosebud Cottage, Rozelle. Photo: Peter Rae

Diane Mirabito has the close attention of her class of preschoolers as she explains the concept of magic, in particular the enchanting properties of two very special words.

"Please and thank you – those words are very magical," she said. "They make things happen, they open doors."

Then the teacher questions the group of three- and four-year-olds about consideration for others.

"What's a kind thing you can do?" she asked. A small voice pipes up: "Share a toy."

As well as learning about shapes and colours, the youngsters at Rosebud Cottage in Rozelle are also getting an education in good, old-fashioned manners as part of a pilot program being trialled in childcare centres and schools.

The eight-week program, devised by martial arts instructor Rose Smith and delivered by teachers, can be used to teach manners to any child from toddlers to teens.

Younger students learn about the importance of making eye contact, saying please and thank you, not interrupting and accepting the word "no" without making a fuss. Teenagers learn more age-appropriate concepts such as how to perform chores without being asked, such as helping to prepare dinner or bringing clothes in from the line if it looks like rain.

Parents are given worksheets to take home, which encourage them to reinforce the lessons learnt at school.

Smith devised the program, based on martial arts philosophy, after despairing about the behaviour of today's young people.

"The mobile phone and the iPad have become very convenient babysitters," she said.

"As soon as the device is taken away, the kid loses it. They cannot sit and control themselves. They do not know how to behave.

"The electronic babysitter has gone from being on four legs in the living room to being everywhere but the electronic babysitter isn't teaching you manners, it isn't teaching you interaction, it isn't teaching you kindness, it isn't teaching you consideration for others."

Lack of basic courtesies puts pressure on both parents and teachers.

"Everyone is unhappy which makes me really sad because I believe everybody should have great interactions with kids and you can't do that unless you can communicate with them," she said.

"Communication starts with the most basic grease that oils society which is good manners."

Cory Watson, whose three-year-old daughter Andie has been doing the program at Rosebud Cottage, had initial doubts about whether it would work.

"I was a little bit sceptical at first but I can already see the change," she said.

"I did not expect it to catch on this quickly. I do get a real kick when other adults compliment her on her manners."

Lyn Moran, whose four-year-old Eloise is also doing the program, said that while she tries to instil good manners at home, the formal lessons reinforce the message.

"As a parent you question almost everything," she said. "It's so reaffirming to have it in the school."



Angus Bianco, 3, from Rosebud Cottage, Rozelle, holds up a medal the children receive when they have finished their course. Photo: Peter Rae

Advertisement

OLX.ro

De 10 ORI mai multe cereri!

Vinde mai repede PROMOVEAZA ANUNTUL

Most popular

- 1 Slain woman had tried to support abusive husband
- 2 Teenager Sam Smith films shark biting his hand on ...
- 3 Terrified mother prepared deadly cocktail for ...
- 4 Shark sighting: Close brush with danger leaves ...
- 5 Erased from the records: investigation into ...

LATEST VIDEO

Featured Videos

More video



Labor to outline 'vision for Queensland' Labor will have its campaign launch in Ipswich on Tuesday, targeting youth unemployment and apprenticeships.

- Unions tie Newman to Abbott
- LNP are 'prostitutes': Jones
- Hockey plans for 150-year life expectancy

Featured advertisers

Top Innovators Which companies really know how to shake things up? reviews here.

Time Machines Read watch news and

0% Balance Transfer mozo

Westpac Low Rate - Online Only Offer	balance transfer	0%	▶
ANZ Low Rate	balance transfer	0%	▶
Bankwest More MasterCard	balance transfer	0%	▶