

Learning to play by the rules

Six-week Hollywood course offers children lessons in etiquette and good manners.

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HOLLYWOOD • Lucia Vicencio of Hallandale Beach knows the importance of good manners.

"Good etiquette opens doors," she said. "We need to teach our children to behave in any setting. Because of our fast-paced world, we don't sometimes pay attention to what we are doing, especially children, because they want to blend in, be cool and fit in with their friends in school."

That's why Vicencio brought her

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SARA ALVAREZ-LEVEY, 10
HOLLYWOOD

granddaughter, Zoe Nouel, 8, of Hollywood, to the Etiquette and Good Manners for Youth class at The Arts Academy of Hollywood.

"It's a really cool class," Zoe said. "I like the teacher; she's really nice."

The six-week class is taught by Elena Brouwer of Hollywood,

director of the International Etiquette Centre. Children learn social skills such as telephone manners, handshaking and writing thank-you notes.

They also are taught table setting, proper use of silverware and do's and don'ts of dining. The class includes a tutorial dinner during which students can show off their newly learned skills.

"My daughter is learning to be a lady," said Zoe's mom, Claudia Calabrese. "She loves the class. She's a lot more conscious about how she eats and what she says, and that's only after two classes."

During a recent class, students learned the proper way to shake hands and introduce themselves.

"When you shake hands, don't be a dead fish," Brouwer said. "Shake firmly, be in control, be assertive. Look the other person in the eye. If you don't make eye contact, you are ignoring the other person."

"When making introductions you should always use first and last names. Children should always refer to adults by a title such as Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. unless the person expressly gives you permission to call them by their first name."

Brouwer also taught students how to make legible nametags, which she says are a necessity in many social and business

settings, and discussed telephone etiquette.

"If a call comes in when you're speaking to someone, don't leave the first caller hanging while you carry on a conversation with the other caller," she told her young charges. "Take a number and call the second caller back, except of course in case

of an emergency."

Sara Alvarez-Levey, 10, of Hollywood, said the class has been a big help.

"I've learned how to shake hands and how to introduce people," she said. "People notice if you have good manners."

ETIQUETTE TIPS

"DON'T BE A DEAD FISH"

Shake hands firmly and look the other person in the eye.

RESPECT YOUR ELDERS

Children should always refer to adults by a title such as 'Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms.,' unless the person gives them permission to use his or her first name.

DON'T LEAVE THEM HANGING

When using call-waiting on the telephone, take a number and call the second caller back, except in case of an emergency.