

Making a Good First Impression at School

27 strategies to help you shape the way people think about you.

by David Mitchell

It's important to make positive first impressions at the beginning of the school year because first impressions last a long time.

During the course of the first day of school and over the next couple of weeks after that, you'll have many chances to shape the way teachers, administrators, counselors, and other students see you.

Check out the following strategies, put them in use, and you'll see the positive results:

Respect

RESPECT FOR YOURSELF

- Come to school clean and neat in appearance.
- Dress moderately. The first few days are not a good time to start a new fashion trend or to make a major statement with your appearance.
- Carry yourself with confidence, as shown by your good posture.
- Have a positive attitude about school and display it with your words and actions.
- Give your best effort on all that you do. You deserve nothing less.
- Turn in 100% of your assignments on time and complete for the first two weeks. It's a positive start to a positive habit that will also make a super first impression.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- Be welcoming and kind to all other students, especially those who are new or are somehow in need of a little help or encouragement.
- Make eye contact with others when you listen to them or speak with them. A little trick to help remind you of this is to try to see what color eyes your teacher or classmate has. That produces direct eye contact.
- Stop by and introduce yourself to your teacher outside of classtime. Give a firm handshake and make eye contact as mentioned above.
- Smile (even if you don't really feel like it).
- Patiently await your turn to speak. Use your best manners in all situations with peers and adults. Avoid talking when the teacher needs your attention.
- Speak in a clear, easy-to-hear indoor voice.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
- Follow all classroom rules and use good sense for situations that the rules don't cover.
- Get to your class on time or better yet, arrive early.
- Read the information posted in the room for students and follow all directions.
- Show that you are interested in learning by asking questions when something isn't clear. Be sure to raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking.
- Do what you are asked to do by the teacher promptly to the best of your ability.

RESPECT FOR PROPERTY

- Take good care of your books and materials. Keep them neat and orderly. Handle them gently and quietly.
- Sit in your chair with all four chair legs on the floor.
- Clean up any messes that you may have made without having to be asked.

Readiness

- Eat breakfast each day before school.
- Bring a notebook with lined paper, a pencil and a pen to class every day.
- Bring a planner (some schools will issue one) with you and use it daily.
- Bring your books (once they are issued to you) with you each day.
- Get enough rest each night, so that you'll be able to be alert and pay attention in class.
- Many teachers will ask for some family information (addresses, phone numbers), as well as assign you a short writing assignment about you. Be prepared with this basic information.

David Mitchell is a parent and an educator in Pinckney, Mich., with over 20 years experience as a teacher, coach, and school counselor. He'd love to hear about how your school year started off. You can reach him at dmitchel@pcs.k12.mi.us.