

FRESH START

[strategies]

Playdate Manners

How should you manage the behavior of your child's friends?

YOU'RE HOSTING A PLAYDATE. Enforce *your* rules when they're safety related. If you're clearing plates and your guest won't help, you can either let it go, or you might say, "This is what we do at our house," and ask for her help.

YOUR CHILD IS AT HER FRIEND'S HOUSE. Remind your little one to be polite and demonstrate good manners regardless of what her playmate does. If her friend refuses to put her own toys away, your child can still put away the ones she's played with.

YOU'RE TAKING THE KIDS OUT FOR DINNER. Your child's pal is now your responsibility in public. Make clear the consequences of



bad behavior such as burping or playing with food. You might explain, "We can't disturb others or we'll have to leave." If you're with another adult, try a quick break from the table.

YOU'RE ON THE PLAYGROUND WITH OTHER PARENTS. Focus on your child—his buddy's parents can handle theirs if he acts out. If there is dangerous behavior occurring, however, intervene right away.

—Amy Levin-Epstein

(Source: Alyson Schafer, parenting expert and author; alyson.ca)



Classroom Mom The perfect accessory for any parent interested in getting more involved in the classroom. Each of the 45 cards in this brightly illustrated deck features a tip, activity, or craft that comes in handy when you're volunteering at your child's school. *Andrews McMeel Publishing, \$17.*



Q&A EMMA THOMPSON

The Oscar-winning actress is back on screen as the magical caregiver in *Nanny McPhee Returns* (in theaters August 20). She also wrote the screenplay!

Q: Why a sequel?

A: I really like my character. She's kind of like Clint

Eastwood, and the movie's like a Western—a stranger rides into town, helps someone using unorthodox methods, and then has to leave. The movie explores conflict in ways all ages can understand.

Q: Did your kids influence your writing?

A: I talked to my daughter (now 11) a lot about what might work and what might not. I thought about having

Nanny McPhee arrive during the day, but she convinced me that the arrival needed to happen at night during a storm.

Q: What would you like to see families take away from this movie?

A: A shared moment. I hope kids experience that exquisite and rather delicious feeling, which I think is all too rare, of knowing that their parents have been equally entertained.



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