

Please read this, thank you

Children here are learning to be oh-so-polite at etiquette classes where they improve their social graces

Cheryl Wee and Kezia Toh

Stay-at-home mother H.F. Chiang, 36, thought nothing of her eight-year-old son Brian's habit of pointing a finger at others while speaking.

However, etiquette consultant Eunice Tan, 37, identified this as an impolite habit when he attended a three-day holiday programme by her consultancy, Image Flair Academy Of Modern Etiquette.

Pointing a finger at other people can come across as being hostile and aggress-

sive, and Ms Tan explained to Brian that there were other hand gestures he could use to express himself.

Mrs Chiang said of her son: "It never dawned on him that he had been sending the wrong message to his friends all these years."

She considered the \$299 course fee well spent, adding wryly: "The best way for him to learn is by attending classes as he listens more to teachers than to his parents."

Even four-year-olds are attending workshops and camps dealing with social etiquette, such as greeting others and speaking on the telephone, dining manners such as having correct posture at the table, and how to correctly handle bread and butter.

Housewife K.K. Wong, 41, spent \$250 on five etiquette sessions for her four-year-old daughter Kellie.

She said: "Being smart is not enough. Being smart and being able to conduct yourself properly around others is better."

Demand for such classes has risen and requests from parents have led to more courses being conducted at community centres by the People's Association (PA).

Back in 2006, the PA had just three such classes. This year, more than 40 etiquette classes are being offered in various community centres.

Safra has also jumped on the bandwagon. For example, Safra Jurong is offering three etiquette classes over the June holidays, the first year it has done so.

Prices range from \$25 for a two-hour session at community centres to more than \$300 for etiquette camps, such as the one conducted by Image Flair Academy Of Modern Etiquette.

Through various means such as role playing, children from four to seven years old are taught basics such as how to shake hands and how to conduct themselves when meeting people. Those aged five and

above are taught how to consume a three-course meal, with tips on dealing with messy foods such as spaghetti, and having the proper dining posture.

Older kids ranging from those in primary school to teenagers get etiquette pointers on topics such as deportment and personal grooming.

Some courses even focus specifically on helping girls learn about skincare, dress codes and dressing for their body type.

Protocol Academy etiquette consultant Teo Ser Lee thinks one of the main reasons for the spike in business is because parents want their children to behave well in public.

The 44-year-old has seen business double since she started children's etiquette courses at her centre five years ago. "Nowadays, parents like to entertain. They don't want their kid running around and making noise. They want them to

know how to shake hands and make polite conversation," she said.

And these lessons seem to be working. Image Flair Academy's Ms Tan recounts how a painfully shy six-year-old, who was so reticent that she could barely interact with other children, let alone strangers, came out of her shell through the lessons.

She said: "After the classes, her mother told me how her daughter greeted her colleagues for the first time."

She added: "She was so happy that she cried."

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With more children taking etiquette classes, do you think today's kids are more polished in their social graces? E-mail your views to suntimes@sph.com.sg

Mind your P's and Q's

ETIQUETTE AT THE DINING TABLE

A hands-on approach to dining etiquette including proper posture, the use of napkins and utensils
Where: Various community centres
When: May 30 to June 22
Fee: \$40 to \$57
Age group: Six to 12 years
Info: www.lifeskillslifestyle.org.sg/pakiddies/

DEVELOP CONFIDENCE AND POISE

A one-day, two-hour session where children learn social graces and an understanding of what is perceived to be rude in society
Where: Various community centres
When: May 31 to June 25
Fee: \$35 to \$47
Age group: Six to 12 years
Info: www.lifeskillslifestyle.org.sg/pakiddies/

MACARONI AND PLEASE

A two-day, three-hour course to learn self-introduction and telephone manners
Where: 167 Jalan Bukit Merah 04-13/14 Tower 4
When: May 31 to June 25
Fee: \$208
Age group: Four to seven years
Info: www.imageflair.com.sg

SKILFUL YOUNG CONVERSATIONALISTS

A two-hour lesson that teaches telephone manners, text-messaging etiquette and how to join in and excuse yourself from a conversation
Where: Various community centres
When: June 1 to 25
Fee: \$35 to \$47
Age group: Eight to 12 years
Info: www.lifeskillslifestyle.org.sg/pakiddies/

SOCIAL GRACES AND DINING ETIQUETTE

Learn more about formal place settings and dining etiquette, and manners when meeting people
Where: Serangoon Gardens Country Club, 22 Kensington Park Road
When: June 4, 2 to 6pm
Fee: \$80
Info: www.protocolacademy.com.sg

CHILDREN SOCIAL ETIQUETTE AND DINING WORKSHOP

Learn the finer points of dining, and personal grooming and hygiene
Where: Orchard Hotel
When: June 5 and 19, 10am to 1pm
Fee: \$128
Age group: Five to 12 years
Info: www.imageflair.com.sg

CONFIDENCE IS COOL CAMP

A three-day camp of four-hour sessions daily, for older kids to learn deportment skills and overcome shyness
Where: 167 Jalan Bukit Merah 04-14 Tower 4
When: June 7 to 9, 1 to 5pm
Fee: \$328
Age group: Eight to 12 years
Info: www.imageflair.com.sg

FINISHING TOUCH LADIES WORKSHOP

Learn proper skincare and make-up techniques, and how to dress for your body type
Where: Orchard Hotel
When: June 11, 1.30 to 5.30pm
Fee: \$138
Info: www.imageflair.com.sg

ETIQUETTE IN MY POCKET

A workshop on personal hygiene, deportment and social skills
Where: Civil Service Club, CSC@Tessensohn
When: June 21, 9.30am to noon
Fee: \$33 to \$38
Age group: Nine to 14 years
Info: <http://imageexchangeint.com>



ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

'Being smart is not enough. Being smart and being able to conduct yourself properly around others is better'

MRS K.K. WONG, 41, who spent \$250 on etiquette sessions for her four-year-old daughter Kellie

Etiquette consultant Eunice Tan teaches six-year-olds (from left) Ahmad Alhafeez Hasan, Ernest Yen Wei Xiang and Gerylyn Chong how to eat spaghetti the proper way and not simply slurp it up.

Other June holiday activities

ARTS

ROMEO IN A SEQUINED GLOVE: A METAMORPHOSIS

This five-day camp is for those interested in photography, fashion, role playing, drama and literature. They will come up with the publicity materials, costumes and script for a production
Where: Julia Gabriel Centre For Learning, 04-00 Forum, 583 Orchard Road
When: May 31 to June 4, 2 to 5pm from Mon to Fri, June 7 to 11, 9am to noon from Mon to Fri, June 14 to 18, 9am to noon from Mon to Fri
Age group: Secondary school students
Fee: \$440 for one week
Info: Call 6733-4322

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS' HOLIDAY CREATIVE ARTS CAMPS

Explore the world of theatre at these camps, which range from musical theatre to drama and acting
Where: Artistic Expressions, 77 East Coast Road, 02-01
When: June 1 to 18
Age group: Five to 16 years
Info: www.artistic-exp.com or call 6344-1366

COOKING

GO GO GYOZA

Learn to make Gyoza dumplings, from preparing ingredients to making the dough from scratch
Where: Yio Chu Kang CC, The Jelutong CC, Sengkang CC, Mountbatten CC
When: June 2 to 13
Age group: Six to 12 years
Fee: \$22 to \$25 (PA members), \$27 to \$30 (non-members), ingredient fee, \$15
Info: <http://one.pa.gov.sg>

SPECIAL KIDS CULINARY CLASSES

Classes tailored for kids, ranging from how to prepare desserts to one-dish meals and even healthy snacks
Where: So EZ Cooking Studio, Great World City
When: Various dates next month and July
Age group: Five to 16 years
Info: www.soez-cooking.com

CRAFTS

TODDLER POTTERY COURSE

Shape, mould and knead clay to create two pottery pieces

Where: Clay Cove, 05-38 Funan DigitalLife Mall, 109 North Bridge Road

When: May 31, June 3, 7 and 10
Age group: 36 months to five years
Fee: \$100 for four sessions
Info: www.claycove.com

BUILD OUT OF THE BOX: A DIORAMA STORY WORKSHOP

Parents and their children work together to create a diorama of a scene inspired by local folklore, using boxes, string and craft materials
Where: National Museum level 3, Atelier
When: June 5 and 6, 10.30am and 4pm
Age group: Five to 12 years
Admission: \$25 for one child and one adult
Info: www.nationalmuseum.sg

DANCE

YOUNG @ ART - DANCE INTENSIVE CAMP

A two-week dance camp
Where: Lasalle College of the Arts, 1 McNally Street
When: May 31 to June 11, 9am to 6.30pm
Age group: 15 years and above
Fee: \$30 (a class), \$400 (a week), \$700 (two weeks)
Info: Call 6496-5135 or e-mail sharina.salim@lasalle.edu.sg

FAMILY

DO THE FAMILY CHA CHA

A 1½-hour ballroom Latin Cha Cha class for those with no experience in dance
Where: Anchorvale CC, Buona Vista CC and Tampines Changkat CC
When: June 7, 20 and 23
Age group: Five to 15 years
Fee: \$22 (PA members) and \$30 to \$34 (non-members) for a parent-child pair, \$12 (PA members) and \$24 (non-members) per additional child
Info: <http://one.pa.gov.sg>

LIVING IN THE OCEAN! SLEEPOVER FAMILY CAMP

Sleep in the Underwater World Singapore after a day of activities, including a conservation talk, an ocean discovery tour and a session with the pink dolphins of Dolphin Lagoon. Children must be accompanied by an adult
Where: Underwater World Singapore, Sentosa
When: June 13 and 14 or June 20 and 21

Age group: Five to 12 years
Fee: Child, \$55 to \$73 (PA members), \$55 to \$75 (non-members), adults above 18, \$75 (PA members), \$78 (non members)
Info: <http://one.pa.gov.sg>

MISCELLANEOUS

FUN WITH ELECTRONICS AND ROBOTICS WORKSHOP

A one-day session where participants learn about the programming of robots. They will also learn basic robotics and how to solder circuits
Where: Pek Kio CC and Rivervale CC
When: May 30, 2 to 5pm, Pek Kio CC, June 12, 6 to 9pm, Rivervale CC
Age group: 10 to 12 years
Fee: \$10 (PA members) and \$15 (non-members)
Info: <http://one.pa.gov.sg>

MAKING SOUND WAVES

In this five-day workshop, you can watch a radio DJ at work and record your own drama for radio in a recording studio
Where: Julia Gabriel Centre For Learning, 04-00 Forum, 583 Orchard Road
When: May 31 to June 4, 9am to noon from Mon to Fri, June 7 to 11, 2 to 5pm from Mon to Fri, June 8 to 14, 9am to noon from Mon To Fri
Age group: Primary 3 and 4 students
Fee: \$440 a week
Info: Call 6733-4322

CRIME SCENE DETECTIVES

Participants work in teams to solve fictitious crime mysteries using logic, scientific techniques and analytical skills
Where: Various CCs including Bishan, Chua Chu Kang and Pasir Ris East
When: June 2 to 24
Age group: Seven to 10 years
Fee: \$32 (PA members), \$37 to \$44 (non-members), material fee, \$2
Info: <http://one.pa.gov.sg>

HOLIDAY SCIENCE CAMP

A three-day camp packed with science experiments
Where: Fun Learning Yard, Mandai Orchid Garden, 200 Mandai Lake Road
When: June 14 to 16
Age group: Nine and above
Fee: \$100
Info: www.funlearners.com/

MUSEUM

ART GARDEN

The Singapore Art Museum at 8Q will be transformed into magical art gardens. Children can befriend Walter the rabbit, watch mechanical flowers "grow" and "bloom", and take part in artists'

workshops and enjoy short-film screenings. Part of Children's Season
Where: Singapore Art Museum 8Q, 8 Queen Street
When: Till July 18, 10am to 7pm daily, till 9pm on Fri
Age group: Free for children six and below who must be accompanied by an adult with an admission ticket
Admission: \$10 (adults), \$5 (concession)
Info: www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

MUSIC

THE GRAFFITI CLASSICS

Children can learn about string instruments and classical compositions as well as singing and dancing, jazz and folk music at this concert by The Graffiti Classics, a string quartet from Britain.
Where: Act 3 Theatre, One-Two-Six Cairnhill Arts Centre, 126 Cairnhill Road
When: Till May 30, various times
Age group: Five to 12 years
Admission: \$28
Info: Call 6348-5555 or go to www.sistic.com.sg

YOUNG @ ART - JAZZ MUSIC INTENSIVE CAMP

A full-day programme that teaches improvisation techniques, performing skills, music arrangement, active listening and interaction skills
Where: Lasalle College of the Arts, 1 McNally Street
When: June 7 to 11, 10am to 6pm
Age group: 14 to 20 years
Fee: \$800
Info: Call 6496-5135

SPORTS

LIVE, TRAIN & PLAY THE UNITED WAY

A soccer camp organised by the Manchester United Soccer Schools and Geylang Serai Constituency Sports Club. British coaches will teach football techniques, team skills and discipline
Where: Tanjong Katong Secondary School
When: June 1 to 5
Age group: Seven to 18 years
Fee: \$498
Info: Register at Geylang Serai CC

FUN ON WHEELS SKATE CAMP

A four-day camp on skating and activities such as Tchoukball and roller hockey
Where: West Coast Park, East Coast Park
When: June 7 to 24
Age group: Three to 12 years
Fee: \$229 to \$428
Info: <http://skate-with-us.com/swholidaycamp.html>