

Tool Box Tip #8 WINNING WAYS WITH CHILDREN WHEN EATING OUT

Eating in restaurants with your children doesn't have to be nerve wracking experience. Here are a few tips to help make dining out with kids more enjoyable:

Choose a child-friendly location. Does the restaurant you're considering have a kids' menu? This is a good indicator that children are welcome.

Call ahead. Ask some questions: Are children welcome? Does the restaurant have high chairs or booster seats? Will you have to wait for a table? Can you order your meal in advance to cut down on waiting once you are there?

Avoid the rush. Dine at off-peak times. Arrive at the restaurant before or after the busy times to avoid long lines and waits for meals to be served.

Sit by a window. Kids enjoy watching cars and trucks pass by. A window seat may provide children with a pleasant way to pass the time until their meals are served.

Order small. Don't overwhelm your child with food. Order from the children's menu or share part of your meal with your child. Don't expect your children to finish their meals if they are full. Ask your server to put leftovers in a container to take home.

Stick to the familiar. Order food your child likes. A restaurant usually isn't the best place for your child to try new foods.

Keep them busy. Crayons, books, and quiet games can keep kids occupied before meals are served. Take along a notepad and pencils so they can draw.

Leave. If all your efforts fail and your child misbehaves (or can not stop crying) in the restaurant, have a parent or a mature teenager leave with the child. This will avoid spoiling the meal for everyone else. You can take home the food your child has not eaten.

Remember: Every time you eat out at a restaurant, it is a learning experience for your baby or young child and for you. What does not work one time may work the next. Rest assured, as you both get better at it; there will be better days and better restaurant experiences ahead.



Source: Prevent Child Abuse New York www.preventchildabuse.org
Parent Helpline 1-800-244-5373

TOOL BOX TIPS: SHOPPING WITH YOUR CHILD

Plan Ahead

Check attitudes. Is your child too tired or hungry to shop? Are you? If yes, postpone your trip or find a sitter.

Explain the rules. Before entering the store, explain your expectations using clear and positive language: "Stay close to me," and "Please speak quietly."

At the Store

Make a game out of shopping. Who can see the bananas? Who can find the shoe store first? Who can see a person wearing red? Which store begins with a T?

Give children some choices. When possible, allow your children to make some decisions. Blue or red socks? Chocolate or vanilla ice cream? Be prepared to bargain or compromise.

Praise your child. Thank them if they are helping you. Hugs are reassuring and say more than words at times.

If All Else Fails

Remember that kids will be kids. They are not perfect and neither are adults.

Ignore inappropriate behavior unless it becomes dangerous, destructive, embarrassing or annoying to others. Try to engage their attention on something they may be interested in. e.g. Would you like to pick out which of these cereals you would like ?

Remove a child who is out of control. Take him or her to a restroom or out of the store. Look your child in the eye and make it clear that this behavior is unacceptable. Explain the behavior you want from the child (e.g. Take my hand, walk) instead of what not to do.

Go home. If the child can not calm down, leave the store. If the shopping can not wait, find a sitter and return alone.



Source: Prevent Child Abuse New York

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