

Minding your manners during the holidays

Advice on teaching kids to be on their best behavior

Today show

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Whether your family is celebrating Hanukkah, Christmas or Kwanzaa, December is filled with celebrations and family gatherings. Corinne Gregory, founder and president of the Polite Child, a program that teaches children and teens about good behavior and etiquette, shares tips on teaching your kids manners for the holidays.

Eddie Katt's™ Holiday Event Survival Tips

Keep these general "Ground Rules" in mind when preparing for Holiday Events or other Special Occasions with your children and you're much more likely to have a graceful and gracious time.



1: Prior to attending or participating in a holiday event, set expectations for your child about the event, whether it is a family dinner, a party at a friend's house, a religious ceremony, or a holiday theater or dance performance. Specifically you want to tell your child:

- Where you are going
- What is going to happen
- Who is going to be there, and approximately how many people
- What kinds of foods or beverages will be served and when (if appropriate)

2: Keep kids' schedules in mind when planning or attending events that will include them. For example, don't stay out until midnight if your kid normally is a wreck by 8. Children only do worse, not better, at events that are outside their normal schedules. Also, keep their usual meal schedule in mind when you're planning or attending an event such as a party, special meal, or a performance. If you're unsure about when or if food will be served, or what will be on the menu, perhaps provide your child with a snack or meal in advance.

3: Set expectations for what you expect of *your child* during the event prior to your arrival. Be specific about the types of behavior you will

expect from him/her. The word specific is important here – just telling a young child to “be polite” or use your “best behavior” is vague and open to interpretation. Keep in mind that your idea of “Be good” may not be the same as theirs.

4: After the event, review with your child how he/she did at the event. Discuss what went well, where improvements could be made next time. This means you’ll need to be monitoring their behavior somewhat during the event, but, unless there’s imminent danger of breaking glass or a major scene, try not to correct the child in public. If you have to make mid-event corrections, try to do it in an out-of-the way place and time. Keep in mind that your child doesn’t like being embarrassed anymore than you would, given the same situation

5: Emphasize the POSITIVE. You don’t want your children to develop a dislike for events because all they hear afterwards is about how they blew it or messed up or caused you embarrassment or distress. Praise them for the situations in which they handled themselves well. As mentioned in Tip #4, you can certainly bring up where they could *improve* their behavior next time, but focus on what was done right and where they made you proud, not just on the negative.

For more information about teaching your child manners visit politechild.com

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