



Factory specials available in
Western Washington.



Camry

HOME

Site index

« Northwest Life

Master the
art of
asphalt.

TIME
FOR A
CHANGE?

Saturday, October 12, 2002 - 12:00 a.m. Pacific

Families

Birthday tips for all ages

Here are some etiquette tips by age group for parents and children, both as hosts and guests, from Corinne Gregory, program director of Woodinville's The Polite Child; Barbara Brueske, owner of Etiquette

Unlimited in Sammamish; "Elbows Off the Table, Napkin in the Lap, No Video Games During Dinner," by Carol McD. Wallace; and "The Gift of Good Manners: A Parent's Guide to Raising Respectful, Kind, Considerate Children" by Peggy Post and Cindy Post Senning.

[E-mail this article](#)
[Print this article](#)
[Search web archive](#)

Preschoolers

- **Don't go overboard on guests.** "A peer or two may add to the fun, but don't invite a toddler army," advises "The Gift of Good Manners." Limiting the guest list to four to six children for 3- and 4-year-olds will help keep the event manageable.

- **Praise the positive and be willing to overlook a lot.** "You don't want anyone to be mean or to get hurt," Wallace says. "Otherwise, the expectations for manners at a preschooler's party are minimal, for guests and host alike."

- **Young children's feelings are easily hurt** if they're left out of a party, especially if it's one attended by an older sibling. Parents might take the child out to lunch as a treat to soothe feelings of exclusion, Gregory suggested. "A 5-year-old doesn't want to hang out with a 4-year-old, but that's hard to explain to the 4-year-old," she noted.

- **Offer refreshments to other parents,** who will most likely stay to supervise young children.

- **Parents should control their child** while a guest and be willing to leave if kids are too disruptive.

- **Don't push it.** "You should encourage your child to say 'thank you' for gifts and 'goodbye' when his guests depart, but don't make an issue of it," say the Posts. "He may be too pooped to manage even a wave when the party's over."

- **Avoid games with clear winners and losers.** For example, play Musical Chairs with a seat for everyone. If you give prizes, make sure everyone receives one. Leave time for free play as well.

School-age children

Join our
online team!

NWsource.com

**Online Senior
Producer**

Lead a project team in the creation of new online products and services focused on increasing market-share, and bringing advertisers and customers together.

- **The birthday child** should greet each guest as he comes in and say "thank you" when gifts are handed over. Guests should greet the host parents.
- **Guests shouldn't complain** and should try to participate in activities, even if it's something they don't like. "Even if a guest doesn't like a game, they should play it in honor of the birthday child," Brueske said. "When it's their birthday, they'll get to pick something to play."
- **Be friendly with everyone.** The host should introduce children who don't know each other, such as a soccer-team friend to a classmate friend. Guests shouldn't exclude others by whispering and teasing.
- **Except in case of illness or an emergency,** children should go to a party they said they would attend. "It's the height of rudeness to (fail to attend) once you've accepted an invitation," Gregory said.
- **If you are dropping a child off,** make sure the parents know where they can reach you in case of illness or injury. Gregory once had a young girl attend a party who sat in the corner and cried once her dad left. Parents should also inform the hosts of any relevant information, such as food allergies or the fact a child can't swim when attending a swim party.
- **Encourage the birthday child** to thank guests for attending the party, not just bringing a gift. "That they came to celebrate with you means something," Gregory said.
- **Parents should** drop-off and pick-up children on time.

Pre-teens and teens

- **Don't complain about food,** company or the entertainment. Eat and drink what's available without making special requests. (Picky eaters should eat before the party). Politely decline an offer with "No, thank you."
- **Keep the age of guests** within a couple years' span.
- **Parents have the right to know** what activities are planned, including what music or videos will be played. Be clear on what areas of the house are off-limits, such as bedrooms.
- **Kids should handle most of the hosting duties,** such as greeting guests at the door. Parents can chat with other parents dropping children off. At the end of the party, they should make sure children leave with the right adult.
- **Parents can pop in occasionally** to offer soft drinks or food. "You have a perfect right to walk through the party area and chat briefly with guests, but don't join in the fun unless you are invited," the Posts advise.
- **Parents should be responsible for ending a party,** since it's hard for a teen to muster the authority to kick out friends.
- **With mixed-gender parties,** doors should remain open and lights on, Gregory said. If teens want to shut the door so the music isn't so loud, tell them to turn down the music instead, she advises. She believes boy-girl slumber parties are "absolutely not appropriate, regardless of how trendy they seem to be."

Copyright © 2003 The Seattle Times Company

[More Northwest Life headlines](#)

SeattleAreaHomes.com



Buyers agents, Free help, Search listings.



[seattletimes.com home](#)

[Home delivery](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Search archive](#) | [Site index](#)
[NWclassifieds](#) | [NWsource](#) | [Advertising info](#) | [The Seattle Times Company](#)

[Copyright © 2003 The Seattle Times Company](#)

[↑ Back to top](#)