

# Kids and Restaurants – Tips for Parents

Children can be both excited and bored in a restaurant. They can find it hard to sit in one place while you order, wait, eat, and pay for the meal. The problem gets better with age, development, and practice. You can help your child learn how to behave in a restaurant so that you can all enjoy the experience. Here's how:

## Start at home

- Practice good manners at home for every meal. Teach kids to use silverware and expect good behavior.
- Have longer sit-down meals at home.
- Play pretend restaurant at home with your kids

## Pick the right restaurant. It should have a:

- Children's menu
- Short wait time for a table
- Booster seats or high chairs
- Noisier, family-friendly atmosphere

## Do's for dining out

- Try to eat at around the same time you normally do. If you must go out later than your usual time, then provide your children with a snack at the normal time.
- Order an appetizer immediately, or ask for some bread, chips or crackers.
- Bring along a few quiet toys or books.
- Stick with familiar foods that your kids like. A restaurant is not the place to battle over new and unfamiliar foods.



## Review your restaurant rules before you go. Be very clear and specific. A sample list of “restaurant rules” might be:

- Sit in your seat. Stay at the table.
- Use a quiet inside voice.
- Use your silverware, not your fingers.

## Don't stay if you're not having fun.

If a child's behavior gets out of hand, take her to the restroom or out to the car for a time out so that she can calm down. If she continues to misbehave, ask for to-go bags and leave the restaurant. Don't give up. Review your expectations and try again.