

A Simple Guide to Table Manners

This simple guide can be used when teaching children about proper table manners. Use what you feel is appropriate for the age of your children, and your own culture, traditions, or religious beliefs. Remember to introduce only what you feel your child can handle. Dining together, setting good examples, and role playing can help children understand and practice the proper behavior that is expected of them, both inside and outside of the home.

- We put away our electronics and toys for this special meal with our friends.
- We put away our sunglasses when inside, and take off our hats at the table.
- We wash our hands before we eat.
- We respect the culture, traditions, or religious beliefs of our host.
- We sit up straight in our chairs and stay seated throughout the meal, excusing ourselves to use the restroom.
- We do not lean on or over the table.
- We unfold our napkins and place them neatly on our laps to catch spills and dropped food.
- We politely ask for dishes and items to be passed to us, if they are out of our reach.
- We pass serving dishes and other items from one person to the other, around the table.
- We remember our manners and say, "Please," "Thank you," and "No, thank you."
- We use proper utensils to serve ourselves, to move food on our plate, and to eat, unless the food is meant to be eaten with our fingers.
- When selecting finger food, we put anything we touch onto our plate.
- Once bitten, our food does not go back into the dip, or back onto the serving platter.
- We serve ourselves small portions, unless we are offered another serving. There may not be enough food for second helpings.
- We wait for everyone at the table to be served their food before we begin eating.
- We eat over our plates, facing the table.
- We take our time eating and enjoy the meal.
- If we're not sure we will like the food we're offered, we serve ourselves a small bite-sized portion, and taste a small piece.
- If we don't like the food we've tasted, we don't complain, make faces, or make noises.
- We use our utensils for eating, not waving. We don't want to injure someone, knock over something, or launch food.
- During the meal, we place used utensils along the edge of our plate, not on the table.
- We remove food we can't chew, or bones, from our mouths using our napkin.
- We eat bite-size small portions. If food is too big, and we can't cut it ourselves, we ask for help.
- We use our napkins to wipe our mouths and clean our hands.
- If we drop a utensil or napkin, we ask the server or host for another.
- We do not crawl under the table.
- When getting up from the table for a moment, we place our used napkins in our chairs, not on the table.
- We chew and drink quietly, with our mouths closed. We don't slurp, gargle, or smack our lips.
- We hold back from burping or belching at the table. If some air slips out, we cover our mouths and say, "Excuse me."
- We cover our mouths with our napkins to sneeze.
- We excuse ourselves to pick our teeth or blow our noses in the bathroom.
- We do not sing or dance at the table.
- We do not throw or play with our food.
- We do not play with each other, our hair, the pets, our chair, our napkins, condiments, or other objects that are on or around the table.
- Some meals come in courses, such as soup, salad, main dishes, and dessert. When we finish eating each course, we place our used utensils gently across our dish at about 10 and 4 o'clock.
- At the end of the meal, we place our used napkins on the table.
- Before we get up from the table, we ask our host if we may be excused.
- We remember to say, "Thank you," for our meal.

"We Love The Company" — Picture Book

A Story About Table Manners

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