

## Tips to prepare you and your Little for a Black Tie Event

**Greetings** A proper greeting shows confidence and maturity. Teach your Little to address people they meet by their title and name. Making eye contact is an important etiquette too. You can teach your Little how to greet people by giving yourself a name and pretending to meet your Little. Have your Little practice saying, "Hello, Mr. Hansen," and looking you in the eye. Remind them that they need to use Mr., Mrs., or Ms. and not an adult's first name unless requested to use it.

**Handshakes** In our society handshakes are used unlike the kisses that dominate European society. So it is an important etiquette for children to learn how to shake hands. Typically a person extends their right hand the one they use most often. For left-handers, it is harder to remember that people shake with their right. Practice with your Little so that they don't grip too hard (it's not a contest) or too soft (there should be some actual gripping) but right in between.

**Please and Thank You** These two phrases are still valuable today and their use shows a person has manners more than anything else. In order to teach these words you must use them yourself (and remind your kids about a million times). Talk to your Little about why please and thank you are important. Everyone likes to be appreciated and according to Emily Post saying, "Please" can turn a demand into a request and indicates an option, it can turn an unpopular request into a more palatable one."

**Excuse Me** This is a valuable phrase that is used too little. Besides saying "excuse me" after public bodily functions there are many other times when "excuse me" should be used. Such as when a person walks through a crowded room, bumps into someone, walks in front of someone, needs to leave a group, or needs to ask a question. Practice role-playing situations in which your Little could use "excuse me."

**Not Interrupting** Nothing shows bad manners more than a child who runs up to his parent in mid conversation and begins speaking. Teach your Little that when you or anyone else is talking that they must wait until a break in the conversation before interrupting. Teach your Little the right etiquette using a signal, such as raising one finger, to show that you acknowledge them and will listen in a moment. Then be sure to stop and listen to your Little

Test your etiquette skills: <http://www.establishyourselfny.com/kids.html>

**Eating difficult foods such as: Pasta.** Pasta comes in many different sizes and shapes, but you can basically divide them into the long and stringy type and the short and squat type. To eat long and stringy pasta, like spaghetti or linguini, it's a good idea to avoid that business of twirling spaghetti with your fork into the bowl of a spoon. Instead, eat a few strands at a time, twirling them on your fork without the support of a spoon. Do not cut the strands with your knife. Small ziti, penne, and the like require only a fork.

### Ten Common Dining Mistakes

1. **Cutlery.** Don't hold your fork like a cello or your knife like Lady Macbeth's dagger. Also, don't wave your cutlery triumphantly in the air to emphasize a point and don't put silverware partly on the table and partly on the plate. After you pick up a piece of cutlery, it should never touch the table again. Knives go on the plate, blade facing in and touching the inside of the plate. Only the handle should rest on the rim of the plate.
2. **Napkins.** Don't blot or rub the lower half of your face. Dab delicately. Don't flap your napkin to unfold it and don't wave it around like a flag. It belongs unfolded on your lap. If you leave the table, place your napkin on the chair and push the chair back under the

table. Gently. Watch the upholstery. Don't refold your napkin at the end of the meal because an unknowing server might give it to another diner. Pick up the napkin from the center and place it loosely on the table to the left of your plate.

3. **Chewing.** Never chew with your mouth open. Also, no matter how urgently you want to inject the perfect kernel of wit and wisdom at just the right moment, don't do it with food in your mouth. And don't gulp and blurt. Finish chewing, swallow, and smile philosophically, content in the knowledge that you could have said just the right thing, but had too much class to speak with food in your mouth.
4. **Appearance.** Remember what your mother said: Sit up straight and keep your elbows off the table. If you have any doubt about where your hands belong, put them in your lap.
5. **Breaking bread.** Here is a real bread-and-butter tip. Tear bread into bite-size pieces and butter each piece just before you eat it. Don't butter the entire slice of bread or the entire roll to get it ready for occasional bites during the course of the meal.
6. **Speed.** Take it easy. Whether you're at the Ritz Carlton or Gertie's Grease Pit, gulping down food is not only unhealthy but also unattractive, and it can cross the line into rudeness when dining with others. Dining partners should have the same number of courses and start and finish each one at about the same time. Don't be huddling over your soup while others are salivating for dessert or vice versa.
7. **Don't pick!** If you have something trapped between your teeth, don't pick at it while you are at the table. If it's really driving you nuts, excuse yourself, go to the restroom, and pick to your heart's content.
8. **Lipstick etiquette.** Leaving a lipstick trail behind on stemware and flatware is bad form, especially at a business meal. If you apply lipstick in the restaurant and don't have a blotting tissue with you, make a detour to the restroom or nab a cocktail napkin from the bar on your way to the table.
9. **Smoking.** Even if you're sitting in the smoking section of the restaurant, you should never light up between courses. It affects your dining partners' taste buds and is a jarring note during any meal. Wait until the meal is over and, even then, ask if anyone minds if you smoke. If anyone does object, offer to wait or to smoke at the bar. And, please, never use a plate as an ashtray.
10. **Purses and briefcases.** Keep them off the table. And this rule goes for keys, hats, gloves, eyeglasses, eyeglass cases, and cigarette packs. In short, if it isn't part of the meal, it shouldn't be on the table.

Book List provided by the Sioux City Public Library

## Etiquette and Manners for Kids and Teens

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Elbows off the table, napkin in the lap, no video games during dinner: The modern guide to teaching children good manners by Carol Wallace (395.122 Wal)

Emily Post Emily's everyday manners by Peggy Post (Picture Books Pos)

Emily Post's teen etiquette by Elizabeth L. Post and Joan M. Coles (395.123 Pos)

Emily Post's the gift of good manners: A parent's guide to raising respectful, kind, considerate children by Peggy Post and Cindy Post Senning (395.122 Pos)

How rude! The teenagers' guide to good manners, proper behavior, and not grossing people out by Alex J. Packer (395.123 Pac)

It's a spoon, not a shovel by Caralyn Buehner (Picture Books Bue)

Letitia Baldrige's more than manners! : Raising today's kids to have kind manners & good hearts by Baldrige, Letitia (649.7 Bal)

Manners, please! Poems and activities that teach responsible behavior by Greta Barclay Lipson (J 395.122 Lip)

The Muppet guide to magnificent manners: featuring Jim Henson's Muppets by James Howe (J 395 How)

Social smarts : Manners for today's kids by Elizabeth James and Carol Barkin (J 395.122 Jam)

You've got manners! Youthful dining etiquette, table tips from A to Z for kids of all ages by Louise Elerding (395.54 Ele)