



Top Ten Holiday Etiquette Tips For Children
By Paula Pranger Owner, Director of Peachtree Etiquette

1. **Down Time** – Schedules are hectic during the holidays and it's easy to forget or put off quiet time, naps and snacks. A tired and hungry child is a recipe for a holiday party disaster. Avoid meltdowns by making sure your children get plenty of rest and eat a light snack prior to attending any holiday celebration.
2. **Greetings** – Holiday's should bring out the charm in your children. A joyous greeting is the best way to start off on the right foot. Be sure children smile, stand tall and greet with either a hand shake (non family) hug (family members) a confident and sincere Hello or a holiday greeting like Happy Thanksgiving!
3. **Welcome** - Have your son or daughter (6+) offer to take the coats of guests and help with younger children while the adults get settled. Encourage your child to make young guests feel welcome by offering them food, drink and introducing them to the other children.
4. **All Dolled Up** – Nothing is more adorable than children dressed in their holiday best. Taking time to properly groom and dress up for an event gives a great first impression. It also conveys sincere appreciation for the invitation and teaches children there is an appropriate time and place for every outfit.
5. **Appetizers** – Instruct or assist your child with preparing an appetizer plate to prevent eating directly from the serving dishes. Spoon dips onto a plate to prevent double dipping and teach children to select food closest to them using serving utensils and touching only the food they put onto their plate. Lastly, explain to children that appetizer's are snacks and not intended to satisfy hunger, three to five items on their plate is appropriate.
6. **Table Time** – Children ages 3 to 14 should be able to master these fundamentals.
 - (a) Wash hands prior to sitting at the table
 - (b) Sit with feet under the table, hands and napkin on the lap
 - (b) Start eating when the host starts or once everyone is served
 - (c) Food is passed to the right
 - (d) Chew with lips together & never talk with food in your mouth
 - (e) Keep elbows off the table
 - (f) Don't criticize the food
 - (g) Ask to be excused
 - (h) Thank the person who prepared the meal
 - (i) Offer to help clear the table
7. **I'm Sorry** – Accident's happen, drinks spill and sometimes things get broken. Make sure you and your child inform the host and apologize immediately. Offer to help clean up. If an item was broken, send a note of apology with money to fix or replace the item. If they refuse or return the money this is acceptable, what matters most is you make the gesture.
8. **Gifts** – Teach your children to come bearing gifts to parties. Involve them in the process of choosing and wrapping so they can learn appropriate gift giving. Children should graciously accept all gifts. Regardless if they already have the

- item or if the gift is something they don't particularly like they should simply say, "thank you" or "that was so nice of you".
9. Time To Go – Be aware of the invitations ending time and communicate departure timing to your children. Don't overstay your welcome. It's best to leave before meltdowns can interfere with a proper good bye to your hostess.
 10. Thank You – Children should always thank the host/hostess for having them. If they received gifts and were able to thank that person face to face, a thank you note is not necessary. If they receive gifts and were not able to thank the giver in person, have them write a thank you note. When in doubt, it's never wrong to write a thank you note.