





PACK YOUR MANNERS

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Family trips generate fond memories that your children will recall for years to come. They create a special time to be together as a family while experiencing new and different sites, lifestyles and cultures. As your family plans its spring break getaway, staycation or summer vacation, certain social graces for young travelers and explorers should be kept in mind. To make for smooth sailing, flying or driving, take note of these out-and-about travel etiquette tips for happy travels with your kids.



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EXPECTATIONS ARE EVERYTHING

The optimal time to talk with your children and set expectations about their behavior, manners and new social situations they may encounter is before you leave for your trip.

For example, “Aunt Annie has a lot of fragile items in her house and is not accustomed to having kids around. How do you think staying at her house this weekend will be different than living at our house? What will be important behaviors and manners to remember?” (Simply substitute museum, hotel, art gallery, etc. for Aunt Annie’s house). Once your child answers, you have an opportunity to positively reinforce what he or she said and add your expectations. Briefly refresh memories shortly before you arrive. “Remember when we talked about...”

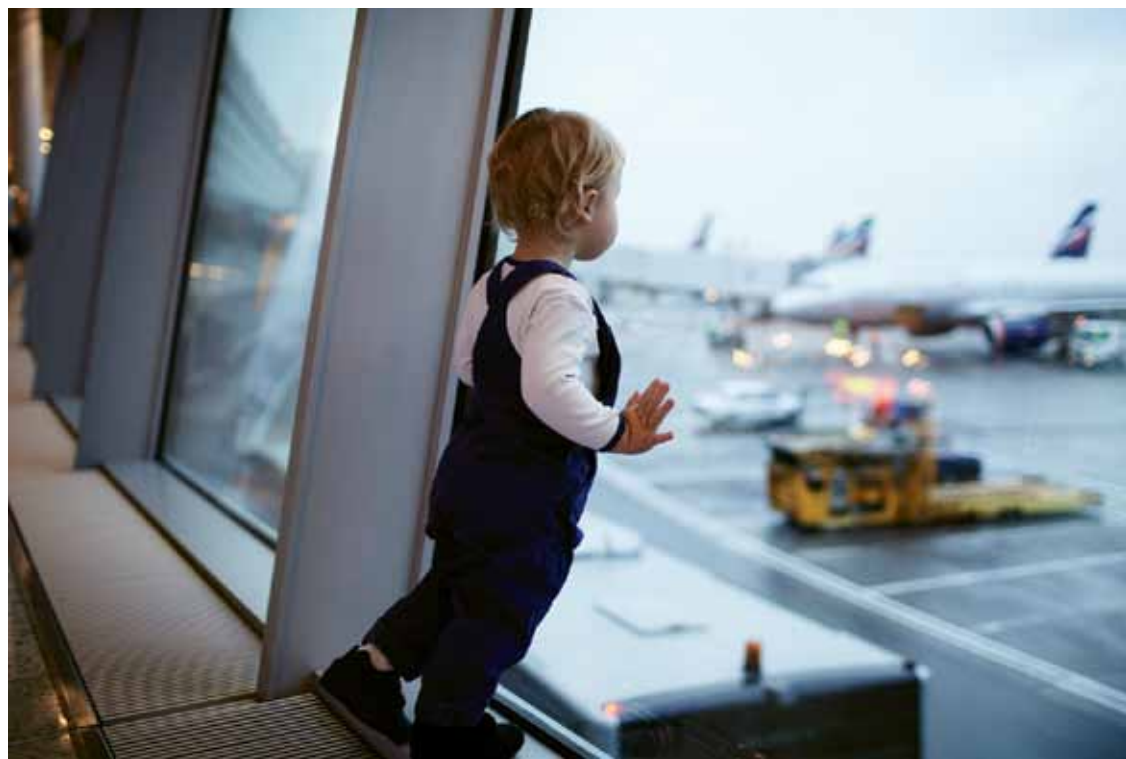
For any trip, there should be positive build-up prior to departure. Whether you’re visiting Disney, taking in Europe or hitting the Outer Banks for a week, let the kids know that vacations are special and require special manners. If you’re going to a historic site, make history come alive before you go. Get them excited to take in the full experience! Tell your kids what they are going to see and why it’s pretty cool. This gives them perspective and appreciation for what they are about to experience.

THE TWO RS: RESPECT AND RESTRAINT

Use your indoor voices when indoors. Respect property and history. No climbing on historic monuments, putting hands on the artwork or pressing your face up against the glass display. When in the presence of any works of history, the general rule is “No touching, running or yelling and keep your hands to yourself!”

Respect and restraint is also needed when it comes to the comments and remarks your child makes in public. Your children may be experiencing a completely different culture and seeing things for the first time. It’s very exciting! However, you don’t want to have that parent moment when your child says something extremely embarrassing (and says it loud enough for others to hear). Have a system worked out in advance in which the children can ask any question or make a comment to you at a set time (meals or back at the hotel). You know your child best. Anticipate his or her curiosities and discuss them in advance.

Discuss restraint rules before to your adventure. Restraint can be difficult for kids to grasp. Kids love to touch, do and see; it’s how they learn. Enforcing respect and restraint is common sense for some parents, but sadly lost on other parents who want to capture that perfect picture with their



Etiquette For Everyday

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child on a special landmark (where the “keep-off” sign rests in the foreground) or are too distracted and allow their children to run amok.

According to a recent Expedia.com survey of more than 1,000 American travelers, annoying and loud children and their parents was ranked the worst when it comes to airline travel. Participants would rather have their seat kicked or sit next to a stinky passenger than have to sit near annoying children and their parents; 41% of survey respondents ranked obnoxious children and their parents as the most annoying airplane etiquette violation.

Which brings me to my next bit of advice: respect the space you are sharing with others in crowded places. This goes for you, too, parents! When you bump others with your stroller, leave it in the middle of the walkway or let your kids run wild, you are not being other-centered. Also make sure your kids know that they must wait their turn, just like at school, to see a display. No line cutting or squeezing their way to the front of the whale window at the aquarium.

BE PREPARED

Be prepared with entertainment for your trip and at your destination. If you have young children, set

boundaries, just as you would at home. No running the aisles on the airplane or skipping wildly through the museum galleries.

When going through airport security as a family, be organized out of consideration for all the travelers in line behind you. If your kids are over the age of 12, they will need to take off shoes, belts, etc. Make sure you’ve told them what to expect so going through security is smooth. Previous to your trip, visit the TSA website at [HYPERLINK “http://www.tsa.gov” www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov). There’s a special tab for traveling with children.

The best of us get cranky when we’re tired or hungry. Take care of both: eat regularly and ensure the entire family is well rested. A full day at the museum may seem like a wonderful idea to you, but young kids don’t have long attention spans. You may be setting them up for failure if you expect them to act appropriately in a quiet, no-touch, no running environment for six hours.

Once you’ve made your plans and prepared the children, take a breath and relax. Exciting new adventures await your family, so have fun and make those memories!