

Restaurant

The Young Guests Standard

Five steps for children at the table. Parents judge the restaurant by the first ten minutes with their child, often before anyone has ordered.

Who	When	You need
Host, section servers and the kitchen	Every table with a guest under 12, from booking to departure	High chairs, booster seats, a children's menu, a small activity kit
Measured by Child's seat ready before the family sits · Child offered a drink within 2 minutes · Child's dish first, if the parents agree		

1 Prepare

When a booking mentions a child, set the high chair or booster before the family arrives, at a table away from the kitchen door and the stairs. Remove knives, glasses and candles within the child's reach.

"T11: family of 4, one child aged 2. High chair set, candle removed. 19:20."

Common mistake Fetching the high chair after the family sits. The parents stand holding the child while you unfold it.

2 Greet the child

Greet the parents first, then the child at eye level, by name if you know it. Ask the parents, not the child, about allergies, and offer a drink and something to do within 2 minutes.

"Hello, Layla. This chair is just for you. Would you like some crayons?"

Common mistake Talking only to the parents. The child decides within a minute whether this is a nice place, and so do they.

3 Feed first

Ask the parents whether the child should eat first. If they agree, send the child's dish to the kitchen at once, served on a warm, not hot, unbreakable plate, and keep every hot dish out of reach.

"Shall I ask the kitchen to bring Adam's pasta first, while you look at the menu?"

Common mistake Serving the child's plate with the adults' mains. A hungry four-year-old has already waited twenty minutes.

4 Watch the floor

At every pass, check what is in the child's reach: hot plates, sharp knives, the edge of the cloth. Carry trays high near small children, and tell the parents calmly if their child heads for the kitchen.

"Mrs Nowak, Tom is heading towards the kitchen door. Shall I bring him back to you?"

Common mistake Saying nothing while a child plays by the swing doors. A tray will come through them at speed.

5 Clean up kindly

Clear spills and dropped food within a minute, without comment, and bring a fresh napkin and cutlery. At the end, note the child's name and what they liked on the family's guest profile.

"Mia, 4: plain pasta, apple juice, colouring book. Family back in July."

Common mistake Clearing the mess with a visible sigh. The parents were already embarrassed; now they want to leave.

Your Young Guest Kit

What your restaurant has ready for children of three ages. Fill it in with the chef and keep it at the host stand.

Under 3

Seat _____

Something to eat first _____

Something to do _____

Who checks it _____

3 to 7

Seat _____

Something to eat first _____

Something to do _____

Who checks it _____

8 to 12

Seat _____

Something to eat first _____

Something to do _____

Who checks it _____

How to use this with your team

Fill it in at Monday's briefing with the chef. The host checks the kit each morning before service, and on Friday one server walks through a family arrival with the card in hand.

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