

# Pointers For Parents

## Eating Out With Children Can Be Fun

(NAPSA)—According to a recent study conducted by Impulse Research, while 99 percent of parents eat out with their kids, 25 percent find the experience hectic, hurried and not at all enjoyable. The top reasons for this: waiting a long time for food (40 percent), unable to find a menu that will please both parents and children (35 percent) and dealing with misbehavior (30 percent).

### Is It Really Worth the Wait?

“Waiting anywhere with your children can be a problem, but it becomes exacerbated when they are hungry. Sometimes it’s too much to ask our young ones to stand in line with the aroma from the kitchen filling the air and tantalizing food posters on the walls around them,” explains Elizabeth Pantley, parenting expert and author of *Perfect Parenting: The Dictionary of 1,000 Parenting Tips*. “Having a plan and realistic expectations are both important,” she continues. “When possible, plan to dine at a reasonable time, before the kids become famished. Seat the kids at a table while you stand in line. Bring along a few simple toys, like a deck of cards, that can keep the kids occupied while they wait. For younger kids, have a bag of dried cereal to munch on until the meal arrives.”

### Pleasing Parents and Their Kids

Many restaurants that appeal to children aren’t the first choice of parents. “There are places that



cater to all generations,” Pantley says. “You just need to look around. For example, a comfortable, casual destination like KFC offers a Kids Laptop Pack with choices like chicken strips and macaroni & cheese. They also serve real homestyle chicken, mashed potatoes with gravy and baked beans that satisfy more grown-up tastes. If everyone can find a favorite on the menu, then eating out can be fun for the whole family.”

### Keeping the Kids Entertained

“Adults view dining out as a rich, social experience, while kids just want to eat and run,” Pantley explains. Once the kids have eaten enough to satisfy their hunger, they look for entertainment. “Bored kids misbehave; busy kids tend not to act out. So bring toys with you or use what’s available. Try letting the kids stack sugar packs, play ‘I spy,’ or enjoy a few rounds of tabletop coin hockey. And keep your post-meal conversation short. The longer you stay, the more likely the kids will act up.”