



TIME OUT KID-FRIENDLY DINING DOESN'T HAVE TO BE "KRAZY" BY JUDY COLE

It's a familiar scenario: You're sitting down to eat at your favorite burger joint or bistro, when suddenly, the kind of pandemonium that can only be induced by a rambunctious toddler erupts, filling the air with shrill shrieks and dramatic, end-of-the-world sobs. While it's bad enough to be caught in close proximity to that family, as even the most patient parent can attest, it's worse to be that family. However, armed with an arsenal of advanced intelligence and the right tools, it's possible for you, your offspring and everyone around you to enjoy a kinder dining experience at any number of Queen City dining spots, if you follow these simple rules.



IN THIS ARTICLE...

CAJUN QUEEN

1800 E. 7th Street
(704) 412-9741
www.2cajunqueen.net

PIKE'S OLD FASHIONED SODA SHOP

1930 Camden Road
(704) 412-9742
www.2pikessodashop.com

BAD DADDY'S BURGER BAR

1626 East Boulevard
(704) 412-9743
www.2baddaddysburgerbar.com

DIM SUM CHINESE RESTAURANT

2920 Central Avenue
(704) 412-9745
[note: no website]

ROOSTER'S WOOD-FIRED GRILL

Uptown 150 N. College Street
(704) 412-9746
Southpark 6601 Morrison Boulevard,
(704) 412-9748
www.2roosterskitchen.com

COWFISH SUSHI BURGER BAR

4310 Sharon Road
(704) 412-9749
www.4thecowfish.com

PINKY'S WESTSIDE GRILL

1600 W. Morehead Street
(704) 412-9750
www.2eatatpinkys.com

STRATEGY 101. When taking kids out to eat, be pragmatic, flexible, and stick to realistic expectations. Bottom line? Not all restaurants are suitable for children. While the staff of a fine dining establishment may accommodate your brood, no one spending upwards of \$40 for an entrée is looking for a tantrum on the side. Haute cuisine can wait until children are older.

DO YOUR RECONNAISSANCE. Whether you rely on word of mouth or a search engine for info, get feedback from other parents for the skinny on the best places to bring your crew. By reviewing online menus with your kids in advance, you can save time and agita by knowing what to order for them before you sit down.

CHOOSE YOUR TARGET. Stick with trusted favorites, such as Cajun Queen in Elizabeth, Pike's Old Fashioned Soda Shop and Bad Daddy's Burger Bar in Dilworth, Plaza Midwood's Dim Sum Chinese Restaurant, or try out something new at either Rooster's Wood-Fired Grill locations (Uptown and Southpark) or the Cowfish Sushi Burger Bar in Southpark. Also recommended: Pinky's Westside Grill on Morehead for its eclectic, eye-catching, kid-fascinating décor.

ARM YOUR TROOPS. Bring crayons, coloring books and other quiet activities along to keep little diners occupied before the food arrives. Appropriate apps are okay, too, as long as all handhelds are put away when it's time to eat.

PICK YOUR BATTLES. If your children are exhibiting unacceptable public behavior, and you simply can't get them back in line, calmly pay the check, pack up, and vamoose. There's no dishonor in retreat. The restaurant staff will understand. The other diners will thank you. And children need to understand that their actions have consequences.

RALLY THE TROOPS. Include kids in the conversation. Encourage creativity and really listen to what your children have to say. Help your kids feel valued and validated because if you can be this family it's a good bet you won't be that family.

