



## MANNERS MATTER

It was great to see your magazine encouraging parents to instill good manners in their children, even if that means paying someone else to do it for them ("Charm School for Tots," June-July 2002). My 3-year-old has always eaten at the table with the family and has good manners. If you ask me, propriety is always in style.

—Vicki Berrios, via e-mail

I was intrigued to read about the increased interest in learning manners and table etiquette, but what a shame that our family life has deteriorated to the point of paying someone for formal training. In my home we have a family dinner, and when my daughter is old enough she'll learn how to set the table as her nightly chore, just like I did.

—Susan Johnson, via e-mail

### MUSIC TO HER EARS

I enjoyed reading your "Little Maestros" (June-July 2002) article. I'm the owner and instructor of a school for music arts in Texas, and my teaching philosophy is very similar to that of the program you featured. The arts have been stripped from our public education system, and I feel so lucky to be able to give children the joy of learning through self-expression, exploration, and movement. Keep up the good work with these important subjects!

—Tamara Klotz, via e-mail

### A FAMILY AFFAIR

After reading "Your Impact on Your Child's Health" (May 2002), I thought I'd offer a suggestion: If you want a doctor who's aware of your family's influence on your

child's health, consider going to a family practitioner. Our doctor has been fabulous in diagnosing and treating our whole family by taking into account our family's lifestyle, illnesses, and other important factors. He doesn't have to use guesswork or pry for information—it's all in his files. This is truly "family-centered care" at its finest.

—Diane Suits, via e-mail

### RAVE RECIPE REVIEWS

I greatly appreciated "Dinner's On!" (May 2002). I had been in a cooking rut, and these new recipes really helped me out of it. We've tried several, including the ones for Three-Cheese Penne and Turkey Tortilla Rolls, and they have been very easy, fast, and inexpensive. Thanks again!

—Laurie Matzko, via e-mail

*Editor's Note:* For more quick and healthy recipes, go to [www.child.com/web\\_links](http://www.child.com/web_links).

### SMART ADVICE FROM VICKI

I want to thank the "Safety-Conscious Mom" who wrote to Vicki Iovine about her car seat problem ("Girlfriend to Girlfriend," June-July 2002). I have two friends who just don't seem to care about their children's

safety. One friend has her 1-year-old facing forward even though she weighs only 17 pounds. The seat is installed incorrectly and she is not strapped in right. The other friend has her 8-month-old, who weighs only 16 pounds, facing forward and also not strapped in right. I don't understand how some parents can have this "It won't happen to me" attitude. I hope Vicki's response to that letter works for "Safety-Conscious Mom" and all the other parents who worry about their friends' kids.

—Jordana Maggard, via e-mail

### DISNEY FUN THE FAIR WAY

In your article "Doing Disney Your Way" (June-July 2002), one of your strategies to beat the crowds is, "If you have a grandparent along who can't walk well, rent a wheelchair (available at all parks). You'll get priority seating at parades and faster boarding on most rides." Shame on you for encouraging people to do something that was meant to help people who truly

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## Mail Center

### OVERHEARD ON CHILD.COM

"There has been so much emphasis put on girls for so long—and for good reason—that I think boys have fallen through the cracks."

—T.W. of Oklahoma, in a posting to the comments section of our weekly poll

need wheelchairs. I am the mother of a hearing-impaired child who recently visited Disney World. During our visit, we were denied priority seating on many occasions until we lifted our daughter's hair to show her hearing aids. According to Disney personnel, this was necessary because of the vast numbers of people who claim they need special assistance when they really don't. I'm sure *Child* does not wish to encourage this type of abuse, and I'm hoping that you will set the record straight.

—Janice L. Schacter, via e-mail

*Editor's Note:* Indeed, *Child* does not wish to encourage this type of abuse. Our suggestion to rent a wheelchair was intended only as a helpful tip for travelers who otherwise may have trouble getting around, so that grandparents and grandchildren

can enjoy the fun of Disney World together. We appreciate your alerting us to this problem, and we trust that our readers who are in need of this special service will ask for it and that those who aren't will not.

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

As a new mom, I devour every article in your magazine, and I got a great laugh from "Name That Baby!" (May 2002). It was a combination of circumstances that led my husband and me to the name of our son. Born 40 days early during a two-week span of cloudy, rainy weather, and on our second wedding anniversary (our wedding day was also the day of the 500-year flood, with more than 25 inches falling in a few hours), it became clear that our first-born child should be named Noah!

—Michele Autenrieth Brown, via e-mail

### UPCOMING CHILD EVENTS

Meet Jamie Lee Curtis in New York City!

Join *Child* for the launch of Jamie Lee Curtis's new children's book, *I'm Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem*, and meet Jamie Lee and illustrator Laura Cornell. Check the events and promotions page on [child.com](http://child.com) for more details.

**When:** Tuesday, September 17, 2002, 6:30 p.m.

**Where:** Barnes & Noble, Lincoln Center, Broadway and West 66th Street, New York City

**RSVP:** 212-499-8149 by September 13, 2002

*Child* and FAO Schwarz invite you to join our own Girlfriend, Vicki Iovine, for breakfast and a discussion of the challenges of motherhood.

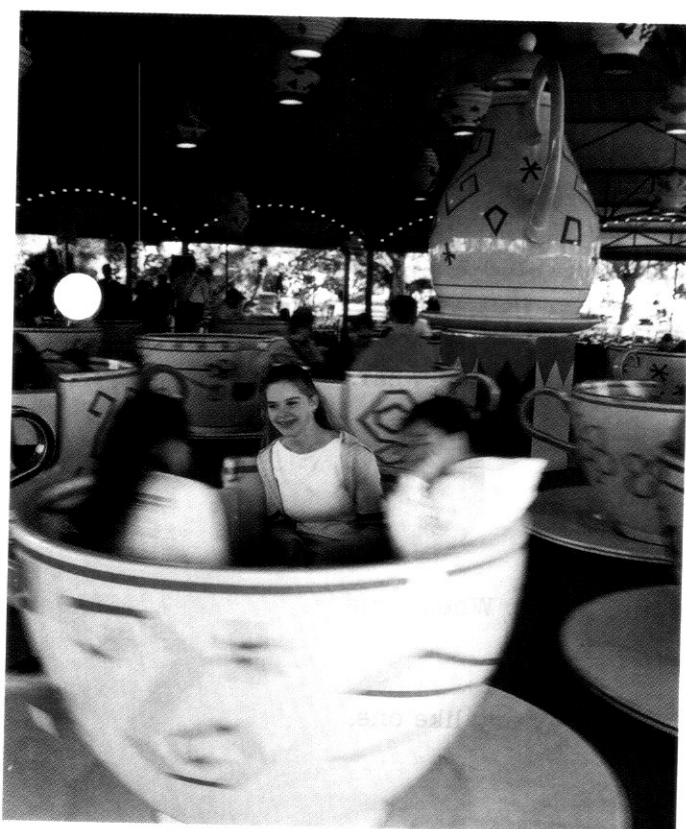
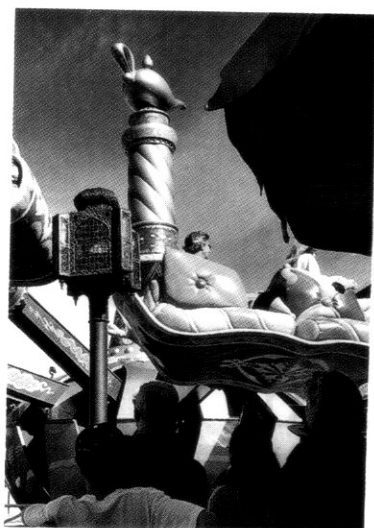
**When:** Thursday, September 19, 2002, 9 a.m.

**Where:** FAO Schwarz, The Grove at Farmer's Market, 6301 West 3rd Street, Los Angeles

**RSVP:** 212-499-8149 by September 13, 2002

Get Great Parenting Advice

Like many parents, you may feel that you're caught in a rut, responding to your child's misbehavior in the same ineffective ways. Now you can benefit from an expert's input—for free. This fall, *Child* is offering a limited number of New York City-area parents the chance to participate in a problem-solving workshop series run by Nancy Samalin, author of the bestselling book *Loving Your Child Is Not Enough*. It may be featured in *Child* (all participants will be given anonymity). For details and rules for entry, go to [www.child.com/web\\_links](http://www.child.com/web_links). **G**



**TAKE A WHIRL** The new Magic Carpets of Aladdin ride (above left) and classic Mad Tea Party spinning teacups ride (left) delight Magic Kingdom visitors. Midday crowds form around characters such as Rafiki (above) and Belle (below).

condo like the well-regarded Vistana Resort, all conveniently located and often much less expensive than similarly sized rooms in Disney hotels. Having one or more separate bedrooms allows kids to nap or go to sleep early and adults to stay up later. The accommodations also usually include kitchenettes, making it easier to have breakfast or other meals "at home" and pack a sandwich or snacks for the park. Furthermore, they can be more convenient if you're planning to visit Universal Studios, Sea World, and other non-Disney attractions.

rides, lets you get a timed ticket for the most popular rides, usually for an hour or two later. Arrive at your scheduled time, and you breeze in past the line. You can't hold more than one FastPass at a time, so it's worth checking out how long the delays are in case another ride might be available more quickly.

- Check the ride boards at the parks for up-to-the-minute information on what's crowded and what's not, and head for any unexpectedly short lines. One *Child* reader set a 15-minute limit for standing in line with a toddler.

- Go left. It sounds simple, but many people swear the majority of the herd tends to head right, both in the parks and in line.

- To get a prime seat for the nightly parades and fireworks without waiting forever, schedule a meal in the right place at the right time. "We had a character dinner at the Liberty Tavern, then came outside and were well-positioned to see the nighttime parade," says one mom. Book a dinner at the lovely California Grill on the top floor of the Contemporary Resort for a fantastic fireworks view or at Narcoossee's at the Grand Floridian for the Electrical Water Pageant. At Epcot, diners at the Rose & Crown have a front-row seat for the IllumiNations show. And at Disney-MGM Studios, if you eat dinner at the 50's Prime Time Café, Brown Derby, Mama Melrose's, or Hollywood & Vine, you can get reserved seats at the nightly Fantasmic! show.

- If you have a grandparent along who can't walk well, rent a wheelchair (available at all parks). You'll get priority seating at parades and faster boarding on most rides.



#### ANTI-MELTDOWN TIPS

**Rest in the afternoon.** Spend the morning at one park, then head back to the hotel for a nap and a swim. After that, depending on your group's stamina, you can go back to the same or a different park for less-crowded late afternoon rides, dinner, or evening parades and shows. (Park Hopper passes and conveniently located hotels are a boon.)

**Go with the flow.** While many people advocate getting to the parks early to beat the crowds, you have to go with your own family's rhythms: "We let the kids sleep late to recover from the night before, so they wouldn't be



#### BEST STRATEGIES TO BEAT THE CROWDS

- If you go to Disney World in the summer, late August is best, but fall and spring are ideal times to visit, both weather-wise and for smaller crowds. December (pre-Christmas), January, and early February can be cool, but they're relatively uncrowded.

- Take advantage of FastPass. This amazing (and free) convenience, now available on 24

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**W**hen we started planning our first trip to Walt Disney World with our 4-year-old son, we envisioned his excited face as he met Mickey Mouse for the first time; his thrill at seeing his hero, Buzz Lightyear, in three dimensions on a heart-pounding ride; and his awe at the fireworks over Cinderella

Castle. Little did we imagine that his very favorite thing about Disney World would be our hotel pool!

Of course, at Disney's Yacht and Beach Club, the pool is no standard rectangle but a virtual water park that kept our son entertained for hours splashing on the deck of a pirate ship, floating on an inner tube along a sand-bottomed lagoon, and feeling comfortable enough to swim underwater for the first time. For my husband and me, the trip's biggest surprise was rediscovering what a pleasure it is to eat a good meal without feeling on edge about our young son's behavior, even in the fanciest

**WALT'S CENTENNIAL** A 12-story sorcerer's hat (top) and new parades and attractions mark the 100th anniversary of Walt Disney's birth. Left and below: Young fans greet Snow White and Winnie-the-Pooh.



of Disney's family-friendly restaurants. And for my mother-in-law, who brought us on this trip, the highlight was not only being clutched tight by her grandson on the Pirates of the Caribbean ride but also the varied atmosphere at each of the theme parks and resorts we visited. The fact is, Disney caters to families like few other places on earth.

As Disney World celebrates the 100th anniversary of Walt Disney's birth, *Child* decided to take a fresh look at the world's top vacation destination by consulting an army of specialists: the magazine's readers and Disney-with-kids veterans. Here, our roundup of insider secrets and smart strategies from parents who've been there and survived—or, like us, had a far better time than they imagined.



#### WHY IT'S WORTH IT TO STAY AT A DISNEY RESORT

**Ease of travel:** If you plan to visit just the Disney parks, you won't even need a rental car. The most convenient resorts to the Magic Kingdom (the Contemporary, Grand Floridian, and Polynesian) are located at monorail stops, but all Disney transportation gets you closer to the Kingdom than driving or using non-Disney shuttles. Disney transportation is free, and so is parking if you stay at a Disney resort. And if you buy four-day Park Hopper passes, which allow you to visit more than one of the four parks (Magic Kingdom, Epcot, Disney-MGM Studios, and Disney's Animal Kingdom), you'll get around more quickly.

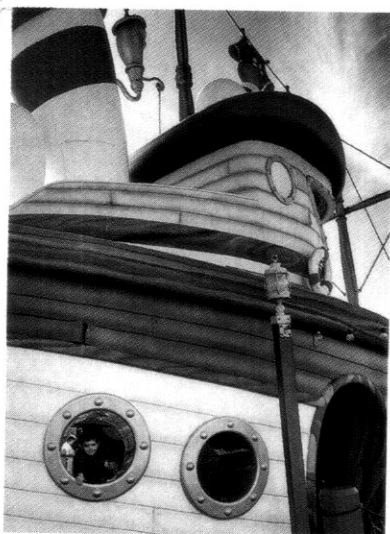
**Priority meal seating:** Even before you arrive, you can make reservations for all Disney World restaurants with one call: 407-WDW-DINE.

**Great themes:** From exotic animals on the grounds of the Animal Kingdom Lodge to the larger-than-life icons at the All-Star resorts, the Disney hotels are often as much a part of the magic as the theme parks themselves.



#### WHY YOU MIGHT WANT TO STAY AT A NON-DISNEY RESORT OR CONDO

With more than 100,000 hotel rooms in the Orlando area, it's definitely a buyer's market. Many families like the larger accommodations offered at hotels like the Holiday Inn Family Suites or the Embassy Suites or a time-share

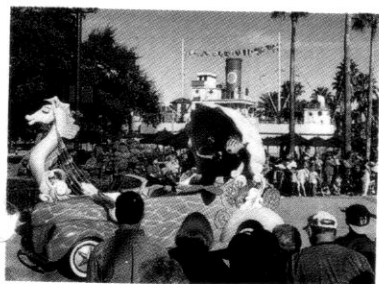


**ON THE MOVE** Kids love exploring Donald's boat at Mickey's Toontown Fair (above). The World's biggest star adorns a blizzard of souvenir balloons (left). Below: A parade of classic cars is a daily treat at Disney-MGM Studios.

tired and cranky," says one parent. Some young kids can rally for the fireworks and parades; others simply can't last that long, and it's not worth pushing them. "I regularly reminded myself that this trip was for my son," another mom says. "If he was afraid of a ride, we didn't go on it. When he'd had enough, we left."

**Give kids a choice.** If children are old enough to have preferences, let each family member pick two or three priorities in each park and try to accommodate those. Keep in mind that you can't do everything in one trip.

**Pack diversions.** Hand-held electronic games, audio books, and mini tape recorders help stave off boredom. Give each child a free map of the parks and a marker to circle the rides and attractions you've visited.




Special thanks to *Child* readers Marie Bartliff, Robin Chessick, Marilyn Carol Gray-Leonard, Karen Greer, Connie Hambley, Nori Jabba, Holly LaVine, Peggy Maisel, Randi Mazzella, Sherri Morlock, Catherine Murphy, Teresa Myers, Nancy Singer Olaguera, Chris Peterson, Jo-Ann Reuter, Annette Rodriguez, Camille Sanders, Dina Sexton, Mary Shelton, Louise Sperling, Jessie Thomas, Annette Winnick, and Jodee Zelenik.



## SPECIAL TREATS AND LITTLE-KNOWN OPPORTUNITIES

If you or your children have a special interest, it can be fun to indulge it at Disney. ● Captain the monorail. If you're near the front of the monorail at a Disney resort and it's not too crowded, ask if you can ride up front with the driver (for parties of four or less) for a great view. ● If you're a certified scuba diver, you can actually dive in the Living Seas aquarium at Epcot—and your family can watch you from a table at the Coral Reef restaurant! It's not inexpensive (about \$150 for a three-hour tour including a 30-minute dive). For the same price, you can also learn about and interact with dolphins in the aquarium in a 3½-hour tour. ● At the Grand Floridian, children can go on a treasure-hunt pirate cruise in the Seven Seas Lagoon or make cupcakes and have tea and storytime with Alice in Wonderland at 1900 Park Fare. (Call 407-WDW-DINE to reserve.) Daughters can even tag along with their moms to enjoy a mini manicure or facial at the Spa and Health Club (407-824-2332). ● Great Adventures in Cooking lets junior chefs make a dessert (themed to a story), then serve it to guests in this two-hour cooking class. ● Gather round the campfire near the Meadow Trading Post at Fort Wilderness campground and roast marshmallows, sing along with Chip and Dale, and watch a movie. ● Learn to surf at Typhoon Lagoon before the water park opens. The 2½-hour class is open to Disney guests ages 8 and older for \$125 (407-939-SURF). ● Try parasailing at the Contemporary resort. ● Go horseback riding (ages 9 and up; younger kids can enjoy a pony ride), or go on a hayride at Fort Wilderness. ● Play miniature golf at Fantasia Gardens or Winter Summerland (with Santa and his elves!), or try your football skills at the NFL Experience in Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex. ● If your kids love to know how things work or have a passion, say, for

trains or animals, you can sign up for a Backstage Magic Tour (407-939-8687). 

 For more insider tips on Disney World resorts and restaurants and a report on Disney's California Adventure park in Anaheim, CA, go to [www.child.com/web\\_links](http://www.child.com/web_links).

JILL KIRCHNER SIMPSON is a freelance writer and mother of two from Larchmont, NY.