



Children at Weddings – Little Angels or Disruptive Devils?

Have you ever been at a wedding where children start crying in the middle of the ceremony and then turn the reception into a demolition site? Over excitable youngsters can run havoc, but they can also bring a lot of fun and amusement. So do you invite the little tykes and pray for some prompt parental control? Or do you ask for them to be left at home so you can have the dignified ceremony you've planned?

Not having children around means it can be more of an adult occasion. You won't need to worry about the speeches getting interrupted by tumbling flower arrangements or the first dance invaded by nephews skidding across the floor on their knees.

However, banning children will impact your guest list. Whilst many parents will appreciate having a night of freedom, others might be offended. Mums who're breast feeding or don't want to leave their children with a babysitter might also be forced to decline. You should also consider preparing your reason in advance so there's no confusion and nobody takes it personally.

If you don't want the occasion to be overly formal, children can add an element of youthful joy and take away some of the tension. As with every part of your wedding, the trick is to be organised so you can limit the risk of children getting bored, frustrated and running amok.

Prior to the ceremony you could hand out boxes of raisins, quiet toys or colouring books to keep them occupied. Parents with young children should also sit at the back so they can make a sharp exit if their young ones start to play up.

Receptions can also be slow and boring for kids having to sit through the speeches and waiting for the food to be served. You could set up a separate table with colouring books and puzzles to keep them busy, rather than risk games of hide and seek breaking out under the dinner tables.

If money is no object then why not hire a crèche with babysitters to keep a watchful eye whilst the parents party. If there's plenty of outdoor space you could hire a bouncy castle or bubble blowing machine to sap some of the kids' bottled up energy.

Everyone loves to see children in wedding photos, dressed up in their smart clothes looking calm and well behaved. Helping them to remain this placid can be aided with a bit of extra planning to keep them occupied, and so they can enjoy the happy occasion as much as everyone else.

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