

A Question of Etiquette: 'Cocktail attire' for kids?

By [Catherine Michaels](#) on December 30, 2016 in [A Question of Etiquette](#), [Arts & Leisure Columns](#), [Arts & Leisure Features](#) · 0 Comments

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My entire family, children included, are invited to a New Year event that requests "cocktail attire." My husband and I are set, but clueless as to what our children should wear. Help?

Sure. What your children wear depends on their ages, but generally, a girl would wear a nice dress, and a boy would wear a collared, button-front shirt, tie, and dress pants. You don't need to invest in a blazer for young boys, but if they have them, they could wear them with their shirt and tie.



Our children are very young (three and four) and can't really write thank-you notes for holiday presents sent by relatives. Is it okay if I write the notes, saying how much they liked the gifts, along with thanks?

Yes, it's fine. What is important is that you acknowledge the gift, especially when it has been shipped to you and not delivered in person. You can write how much your children enjoy the gifts, and can even send an e-photo later of them using or playing with the gifts.

I need a quick answer! We are having a New Year's Eve party and have hired a server and bartender to help. Do we tip them?

Yes, you would give each of them a 20% tip, on top of the agreed-upon rate for their services. If you have hired them through a catering company, check first with the caterer as to whether they are including the gratuity in their costs and your final bill. If this is the case, be sure to let the server and bartender know that their gratuity will be distributed by the caterer.

Our thirteen-year-old twins recently celebrated their Bat Mitzvah. They each received a separate but identical gift from some people. May they send one thank-you note signed by both of them, or individual notes?

They should send individual notes, but make sure that they each write to each gift-giver so there is never a situation that creates a "polite twin" and an "impolite twin" response if one writes a note and the other doesn't.

I think you have answered this before, but can't find the column where you did. Our wedding rehearsal is coming up and I want to be sure that the ushers know what to do when escorting guests to their seats. Do they offer their right or their left arm?

Ushers offer their right arm to female guests. If a female guest has a husband or escort, he walks behind the usher and his wife or date. If two or more women are together, the usher, where possible to determine, offers his arm to the oldest woman in the group, and the others follow behind. A male usher does not offer his arm to a male guest, but rather walks beside him to escort him to his seat. If there are female ushers, they do not offer an arm to guests, unless someone needs help, but instead walk beside the guests to show them their seats.

Questions for Catherine? Send them to catherine.michaels@gmail.com.