

How to Drastically Improve Your Child's Behavior In Public

Are you 100% satisfied with the way your child behaves in public? Awesome. Stop reading and go enjoy a latte. If not, keep reading (you might still want to get that latte).

We've all been there. The shame. The embarrassment. The Anxiety. You just wanted to go pick up a few things at the grocery store. In and out. It was supposed to be simple. But these beasts you've brought along with you. They're... They're... What are they doing? Why are they on the floor? Why are they touching that? Get back over here! God, now they're screaming. STOP SCREAMING! No we're not getting ice cream. No were not getting fruit snacks. We have fruit snacks at home. I know they're not dinosaur fruit snacks.

It can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be. There was a time when I dreaded taking my kids anywhere in public. I just couldn't deal with the judgmental looks, and the shame of feeling like a bad parent. But I have since learned a secret that has revolutionized our trips into the wide world.

It was my anxiety, tension, fear, and dread that was feeding their undesirable behavior. We were caught in a vicious cycle. I would be stressed before they even had a chance to do anything wrong. They would pick up on that negative energy, get restless and irritable, and then start doing things that bothered me. I would over-react (since I had already been stewing in my head over it) and then the problem would get even worse. The only way to stop this cycle is to relax.

It almost sounds too simple, but it works. And the more you do it, the easier it gets. It can be as simple as remembering to breathe, giving yourself a pep talk before going out (and probably a few times while you are out; and over and over in the car on the way there and back; positive self talk can be extremely helpful). It also helps to be prepared, and to prepare the children. Let them know where you are going, what will happen, what your expectations are for them, and what positive thing they can expect to get from the whole experience. (Maybe some dinosaur gummy snacks? Snacks are super important. Next to a tense parent, low blood sugar is probably the top tantrum causer.)

The kids will be far from perfect, especially the first few times. But it will get better. Be patient with yourself, and with the kids. Smile, breathe, and relax. (And when you have some time for a little self discovery, maybe you can sit down and ask yourself what about their behavior really bothers you anyway, and why.)