

# BRIDAL CORNER

## Plan an adults-only wedding but exclude the children with tact

**TRESA ERICKSON**  
Special to The IFP

You recently got engaged, and as the wedding planning gets under way, your first tasks are to secure a location and make a guest list. One of the questions that may pop up as you are making your guest list is whether to invite children. While some brides and grooms invite children to their wedding, others prefer not to. They may feel their wedding will occur too late in the evening for young guests to attend or they may not have enough in their budget to make the necessary accommodations for young guests, such as baby-sitters, entertainment and special meals.

Excluding children from the guest list is not always a popular decision, so should you go this route, make certain you handle the matter with care. Discuss your decision with close family members as soon as possible and find someone on both sides who will field all questions on your behalf. You don't want to be inundated with phone calls when the invitations go out while you are trying to plan the rest of your wedding.

Next, make sure you word your invitations so that guests understand that children are not invited to your wedding. Usually, one line on the bottom of the invitations is all that is needed.

Suggestions for wording include:

- "Due to the formality of the event, the bride and groom request that adults 18 and older only attend the ceremony and reception."

- "The bride and groom respectfully request that individuals 18 and under do not attend the wedding or reception."

- "The bride and groom respectfully request that only

those specified on the invitation attend the wedding and reception."

To ensure there are no misunderstandings regarding your decision, you should reaffirm the number of people you are inviting to your wedding on the RSVP card and address the envelopes for both the invitation and the RSVP card only to those who are invited. If inviting three adults in a family of six, for example, you should ask on the RSVP card how many of the three will be attending and address the envelopes to just those three adults rather than the Smith family, which implies everyone in the family is invited.

For guests who have children, you may even want to include a list of area babysitting services. Not only will this illustrate your wishes further, but it may make it easier for guests to find someone to care for their children while they attend your wedding. For your guests' convenience, you may even want to arrange for an onsite babysitter. That way, guests can simply drop off their children at the designated area and pick them up when they are ready to leave the reception. Depending upon your budget, you can either pay the onsite babysitter or leave that to guests.

To reduce the risk of hard feelings, you may want to send a small gift to children whose parents have been invited to your wedding. Crayons and coloring books or small toys will ensure children, as well as their parents, that you have not forgotten them.

Even with gestures such as a crayons and a coloring book, some guests may be offended by your decision not to invite children and contact you about the matter. Be honest with them. If you think that your wedding will bore young guests and can't afford to provide entertain-



ment for them, say so.

For guests who leave you messages regarding the matter or want to discuss it further, don't be afraid to refer them to the family members you appointed to handle all questions for you. As a somewhat objective third party, they may be more successful in explaining the matter than you.

For many couples, making the decision to exclude children from the guest list for their wedding is easy. Informing guests of their decision is not. Approach the matter with tact and be prepared for some resistance. Not everyone will understand or accept your decision, and some in fact may choose not to attend your wedding. Try not to let that bother you.

Remember, it is your wedding, so stand your ground and be firm.



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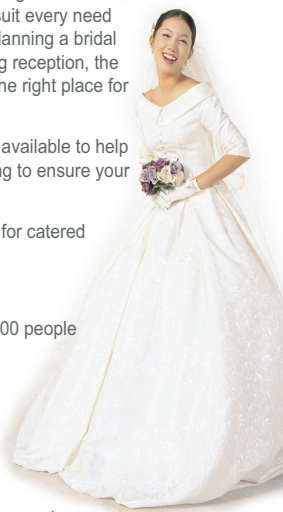
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