



HOSPITALITY AND PRIVATE RESIDENCE CONSULTING, INC.



## Teen Etiquette – Table Manners & First Impressions

Although today's teens may face many challenges on their journey to adulthood, empowering them with good manners helps ease a smooth and successful transition into adult social and business situations.

“Etiquette is all about learning proper social skills from how to make first impressions in interviews and during social events, to graceful dining habits that are vital signposts to success in today's very competitive business environment,” says Fiona Cameron-Williams, International Protocol Consultant to the United Nations International School in Queens, NY, and President of FCW Hospitality and Private Residence Consulting, Inc., New York, NY.

Ms. Cameron-Williams believes that table manners play an important part in making a favorable impression, be it at a business meeting, on a first date, or during a social gathering. “They are visible signals of the state of our manners and therefore are essential to personal and professional success,” she continues, “The point of etiquette rules is to make you feel comfortable - not uncomfortable.”

Good manners for teens include effective conversational skills, meet and greet essentials, gift giving and receiving protocol, telephone/cell phone etiquette, grooming, and table manners for informal and formal dining.

The following table manner tips for teens are provided by Ms. Cameron-Williams during her Teen Etiquette and UN International School Etiquette Courses:

### Simple table manners:

- Pass food from the left to the right. Do not stretch across the table, crossing other guests, to reach food or condiments.
- If asked for the salt or pepper, pass both together, even if a table mate asks for only one of them. This is so dinner guests won't have to search for orphaned shakers.
- Set any passed item, whether it's the salt and pepper shakers, a bread basket, or a butter plate, directly on the table instead of passing hand-to-hand.
- Never intercept a pass. Snagging a roll out of the breadbasket or taking a shake of salt when it is en route to someone else is a no-no.
- Always use serving utensils to serve yourself, not your personal silverware.

**In a restaurant:**

- As soon as you are seated, remove the napkin from your place setting, unfold it, and put it in your lap. Do not shake it open. At some very formal restaurants, the waiter may do this for the diners, but it is not inappropriate to place your own napkin in your lap, even when this is the case.
- The napkin rests on the lap till the end of the meal. Don't clean the cutlery or wipe your face with the napkin. NEVER use it to wipe your nose!
- If you excuse yourself from the table, loosely fold the napkin and place it to the left or right of your plate. Do not refold your napkin or wad it up on the table either. Never place your napkin on your chair.
- At the end of the meal, leave the napkin semi-folded at the left side of the place setting. It should not be crumpled or twisted; nor should it be folded. The napkin must also not be left on the chair.

**At a private dinner party:**

The meal begins when the host or hostess unfolds his or her napkin. This is your signal to do the same. Place your napkin on your lap, completely unfolded if it is a small luncheon napkin or in half, lengthwise, if it is a large dinner napkin. Do not shake it open.

The napkin rests on the lap till the end of the meal.

The host will signal the end of the meal by placing his or her napkin on the table. Once the meal is over, you too should place your napkin neatly on the table to the left of your dinner plate. (Do not refold your napkin, but don't wad it up, either.)

For more information about Teen Etiquette and Ms. Fiona Cameron-Williams' other etiquette courses and seminars, visit [www.fionacameron-williams.com](http://www.fionacameron-williams.com).

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**About FCW Hospitality and Private Residence Consulting, Inc.,  
and Fiona Cameron-Williams**

For over 20 years, FCW Hospitality and Private Residence Consulting, Inc, based in New York City, is a firm providing private residence and hotel consulting services in any location desired by a client, both nationally and internationally. President Fiona Cameron-Williams is certified by The Protocol School of Washington as an International Protocol & Etiquette Consultant, and Founder of the International Head Butler Network. She is an International Protocol Consultant to the United Nations International School, a hospitality management professor at City University of New York (CUNY) at location, and teaches hospitality management at both the French Culinary Institute and Culinary Institute of America. She also provides On-Site Etiquette Briefings and Seminars for teens, business professionals and corporations. FCW consultants are experienced, dedicated professionals with many years of estate and hotel management experience. They train existing staff, recruit new talent, train to Five Star hotel standards, and set up a new private residence once construction is complete. For more information, visit [www.fionacameron-williams.com](http://www.fionacameron-williams.com)

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