



Show Etiquette for Riders & Parents

Whether you're a veteran member of a show team, or this is your first time on show grounds, here are some tips and reminders to help you get the most out of your show experience:

1. **Release your child to the trainer.** This means you give the trainer authority over barn duties, training and strategy. Letting the trainer do his or her job is your child's best chance for finding success.
2. **Be a good role model.** Children want their parents to be model citizens on the sidelines. Kids embarrass easily and cringe from the negative attention brought on by a parent's poor behavior. Parents who speak disparagingly about judges, criticize fellow competitors, or break rules reflect poorly on the rider, the trainer, and their barn. Words have power. Use them positively – to instill confidence, and to encourage sportsmanship and a positive attitude in your child.
3. **Keep things in perspective.** Everyone wants to win. That's a given. You are not unique in your desire to see your child in the winner's circle. But at the end of the day, it is just a horse show. You are paying for one person's opinion on one day – sometimes you're going to win when you shouldn't win, and lose when you shouldn't lose. Take the gifts and chin-up for the disappointments. Respect the judge(s) and NEVER approach them about their decisions.
4. **Be courteous when you're ringside and on showgrounds.** Be mindful of the horses and competitors – both in and around the ring. Loud noises/talking, sudden movement, barking dogs, even standing close to the fence to take pictures, etc. may spook a horse. Never EVER throw things anywhere around horses – even if you think you're far enough away. If you can see the horses, they can see you and whatever you throw. Horses are flight animals - at the very least, a spooked horse will impact the riders' performance and at the worst, can result in injuries to the riders and/or horses.
5. **Never disparage other competitors, judges, or trainers.** Not only is it poor sportsmanship, but the owner, parent, sister, family could be standing right next to you.
6. **You are at a competition.** Showing horses is a sport and when riders are on the horse in the schooling ring or preparing to go into the show ring, it is not the time for friends/family to talk with them. Like any athlete, riders need to focus and mentally prepare.
7. **Tip your groom(s).** If your barn is a full-service barn that brings grooms to the shows, tipping is expected for the grooms – they work very hard to make sure your horse and tack are properly turned out and ready to go when you need them to be. Check with your trainer on the appropriate amount.
8. **Be respectful to show photographers.** Be sure you pay for any images of your rider and/or horse taken by a professional photographer. Do not screenshot watermarked images from websites – that is considered theft.
9. **Be mindful of dogs at shows.** We all love dogs! 😊 But please be mindful of your canine family members when on the show grounds. Be sure you're aware of the particular facility's rules regarding dogs: lease requirements, whether or not empty stalls can be used for dogs, whether or not dogs can be left overnight on the grounds, etc. Also be careful about barking dogs that may disturb riders and/or horses – especially if they're left unattended in crates or pens.