

Ideas for Extremely Long Courts

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1) Call children at the beginning of court: if children will be called for awards or what have you, handle these items at the beginning of court before kids get too restless, then they can go off to another area for the remainder of court

2) For a shorter court a play/craft area in a nearby location: an area set up with quiet play activities where the children will not cause distraction to the court, where they are safe from the elements (in case of rain, etc.), where they are close enough so that a child could pop into court to see a parent get an award if they like, etc.

3) For a longer court: prior to the start of court or at a certain point in the proceedings let dinner be served, then continue court during dinner (this is very period!)

We all get cranky when we are hungry and it's sad when drawn out courts cause it to be a problem. After all, our friends are being publicly recognized/rewarded! We want to be in a merry mood to share in their moment! Also, to do this to the children is just plain cruel. They don't have the coping mechanisms that adults do and if we make things unpleasant for the children and therefore the parents then we'll start losing some good people. I myself am against the idea of giving snacks in order to placate children who's welfare is being ignored.

Preparedness and punctuality should also be stressed for our nobility and court staff as well. Items to be handled in court should, for the most part, be listed ahead of time in order for court staff to adequately estimate the time needed. Also, when court starts late, it means that people are sitting around waiting and therefore most of our patience is used up before things even get under way.

As for the Nap Rooms, I brought up the idea of official nap tents and someone told me good luck. I think it would work without too much trouble. Here's the break down:

** Tent/area should be located where there will not be audio or visual stimulation to distract those inside (ie. the far edge of the event field facing away from the activities)*

** A tape player with soothing sounds (nature sounds, classical, gentle celtic/medieval folk) to dissuade from remaining sounds should be provided*

** Lots of comfy pillows and blankets laid out (harem like so parents can lay down/curl up with their kiddies)*

** No running/screaming/playing in the area around the nap area*

Let's face it, all day events are fun, but tiring, and having some place for kids to have a quiet rest break would make things easier/more pleasant for everyone involved.

2

*Long courts: Graidhne always had this *magic basket* and for as long as I can remember, snacks, juice boxes and crafts came out of like *fish and loaves* she always kept kids busy with quiet crafts. This was not *organized*, the kids just gravitated to her. If you know her, I need not explain this further. She is a goddess with children.*

I have rolled kid's medievalish movies during court and feast, played running games, medieval board games, etc.

My recommendation is this- provide snacks to the children on a paper plate or napkin (paper is quiet)snacks like grapes, carrots, tiny cheese cubes, small pretzels,giant goldfish crackers etc. prior to court. Offer them a quiet project to work on, stick weaving is the first thing that comes to mind. Keep the kids with their own parents, give parents support as mentioned above and let families take care of each other.

Please consider your energy level and give a thought to burn out because the best way to burn out children's officer's is to expect them to run activities all afternoon and for most of the evening. It also smacks of the whole baby-sitting mentality which we worked very hard to nuke several years ago.

3

Long courts are a very good point. It's hard to get through them with kids, and in the past I have run kids activities during Royal Court, with a snack and all just outside the door, just to make sure the kids weren't disruptive but the parents could check on them if necessary.

I also brought a bag of tricks when my own kids were little. Quiet toys, paper and crayons, interesting bits and pieces, and the inevitable snacks (nothing crunchy or with a wrapper--kids will get the most possible sound out of those!).

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What can we as Youth chancellors do to keep courts short, or deal with long courts better?

1. If it's a local event, talk to the Herald, and the royalty that are present -- BEFORE COURT.

Let them know that there are

A) children

B) adults

who would like to go to court, but there are A) attention span issues B) health issues, that require them

to have time to eat at certain points.

Suggest an "At Feast Court".

Or suggest a break in court for the feast -- this is one way to ensure that those people who tend to "leave just before the work to clean up" have less reason to do so.

(oooh did I say that with my outside mouth?)

In the past at events where we had no say in what was happening, we would sit at the back of court, and slip out as we needed to.

I have also held what I am going to call a "Youth Court"

where we would take the youth activity "winner" of the day, and help them setup a mini court.

This allowed the kids to play "grown up", and the youth who was "Youth King/Queen" got to give out the awards to the rest of the kids.

This turned out really well, for the 3 - 4 events we were able to pull it off.... then the families with kids faded into the background, and we couldn't get a group interested enough in continuing the tradition.

Most of all, what can we do to deal with this phenomenon when it occurs ?

Work with our groups to expand their understanding of the needs of the children in the Society, and how we can best serve the majority of our populace, including the children.

This also includes talking with your local officers (and yes Kingdom officers too) to help spread the concepts of short, or multiple court sessions in order to allow people to eat.

It's not just kids that have to eat either.

We have a number of diabetics in our group. Some of them got up and LEFT SITE when court went long. Why? they needed food and or inselin (spelling?) so they felt it was a better choice to leave.

This sucks because what happens when those people are the ones who are supposed to get an award?

"will lord so-and-so please approach?"

"Oh, sorry Lord Herald, they left, your court was too long"

Not how I would want to be remembered by the royalty holding court.