



Q: OK, before I begin my gripe, call me a nasty old man. That said, I believe cruise ships should ban kids under age 12. I spent many years working so I could enjoy my well-deserved retirement.

I love cruises, but not when the ship is full of screaming, out-of-control brats who hog the pools, spas, buffets, passageways, elevators and everywhere else. Am I wrong with this mean old Scrooge attitude? *LBL, Birmingham AL*      A: Cool it, nasty old man. There are solutions to your problem. First of all, families usually take their little darlings out to sea by booking 'em for a kid-themed cruise. They offer programs specifically to include kids. We advise old goats ... er ... seasoned citizens NOT to sign up for those.

When families pay for a cruise, they're entitled to bring anyone they choose. Some parents allow the little ones to run wild on the ship. Actually, they're less trouble than drunken adults or rowdy college students barging around the decks and passageways at midnight.

We just returned from a short holiday cruise from Los Angeles to Acapulco. It was loaded with kids, and we don't remember any extreme behavior. In fact, it was a delight to see kids enjoy themselves. Yes, there was some daytime crowding at the spas, pools and buffets. We just waited until well after dark to enjoy the facilities when they were practically empty. There were no kids there, just a few boozy, obnoxious adults.

Check the internet or with travel agencies for listings of cruises for adults only. Bottom line: don't diss parents for bringing their kids to enjoy the many pleasures of ocean travel and visits to exciting ports around the world. Next cruise, when kids are around, join in on the fun. Just maybe the nasty old man will become a nice old man!