

KNOW THE RULES[®]...

For Child Safety in AMUSEMENT OR THEME PARKS

Family outings to amusement and theme parks may be wonderful opportunities for family members to bond and spend quality time together. Visits to amusement parks often provide children with lifelong memories of "meeting" their favorite cartoon character or having their own "real-life" action adventure.

For a parent or guardian these outings may also be sources of stress and concern. Both adults and children may become distracted by the excitement of the rides and attractions. Taking the time to plan your trip with your children may help make your outing to the amusement or theme park safer and more enjoyable. Here are a few steps your family may take to help ensure happy memories.

Before going to the park, tell your children to...

- **PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION** to who they are with and where they are located in the park.
- **STAY** with others and never be alone in the park or become isolated with anyone, even characters in costume. Tell your children not to accept any prizes, offers, or gifts from anyone until they have **CHECKED FIRST** with you. Caution your children not to engage in conversation with or offer assistance to anyone until they have checked first with you.
- **TELL** you if anyone approaches them or makes them feel sad, scared, or confused. Teach your children if anyone tries to grab them to loudly yell, "This person is trying to take me" or "This person is not my father/mother."
- **TEACH** your children to **GO** to the closest "Help/Information Center" if they become lost or separated while in the park and ask the park staff members to "find my parents/guardians, and have them meet me." In the case of older children, make the "Help/Information Center" the designated meeting place. Make sure your children understand they should never search for you on their own or look for you outside the park, especially in the parking lot.



You can apply these same rules when your children are taking part in a field trip with their school or youth group. If you are not joining your children for the trip, instruct them to tell the responsible adult in charge or designated chaperone if anything makes them feel sad, scared, or confused.

As a parent or guardian you should...

- Get information about the park prior to your trip and review the park guidelines, particularly those regarding lost children. Discuss the information as a family, including what to do if lost or separated. Ask your children what they would do in certain situations and practice appropriate actions and responses with your children.

- Get a map of the park and identify the "Help/Information Centers" throughout, reminding your children these are places to go if they become lost or separated. Planning ahead can assist in a speedy and safe reunion.
- Talk to your children about park staff members who may be able to help them should they become lost or separated, need assistance, or are in trouble. Staff members may include uniformed law-enforcement or security officers and park employees with nametags.
- Instruct your children not to wear clothing or accessories displaying their names.
- Make sure your children know how to reach you if separated. Instruct your children to carry a contact card with your name and telephone numbers, such as work and cell, in case they become lost or otherwise need assistance. This card should be hidden from plain view. If your children have cell phones, make certain contact information for you and other trusted adults is programmed into those devices. A trusted adult is a person you have come to rely on and with whom you and your children feel comfortable. Talk with your children about who is a trusted adult, and how trusted adults may help them contact you.
- Consider having your children wear brightly colored clothes so they may be easier to spot in the park.
- Accompany young children on rides in the park. Older children should stay in groups and **TAKE A FRIEND** with them wherever they are in the park. If you decide to let young children go on rides without you, wait with them in line, watch them enter the ride, and immediately meet them when they exit the ride.
- Accompany younger children to restrooms in the park. Older children should **TAKE A FRIEND** with them when going to the restroom.
- Report any suspicious or inappropriate behavior immediately to authorities.
- Report your children missing immediately if they become lost or are separated in the park, and be prepared to give an accurate and detailed description of your children. You should carry a current color photograph and be able to describe the clothes your children are wearing. If you carry a camera with you in the park, consider taking each child's photograph when arriving.
- Make certain there will be qualified supervision of your children by trusted adults if you are considering granting permission for them to take part in a field trip to an amusement or theme park.



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