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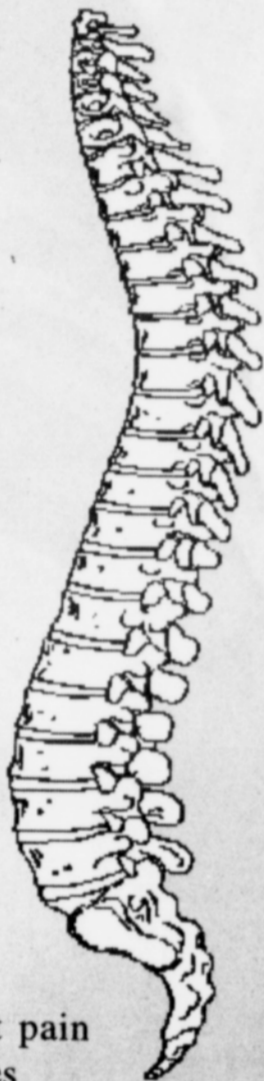
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Kids go on Expensive Buying Sprees

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in my wildest dreams did I think they would be charging things on it," the 36-year-old mother said.

She counts herself lucky that her son didn't start tapping on another purchase button, like the "wheelbarrow" of Smurfberries for \$59.99.

Rummelhart joins a number of parents who have been horrified by purchases of Smurfberries and other virtual items in top App Store games. The 17 highest-rated comments on "The Smurfs' Village" in the App Store all complain about the high cost of the Smurfberries, and two commenters call it a "scam."

Apple introduced "in-app purchases" last year, letting developers use the iTunes billing system to sell items and add-ons in their games and applications.

This year, developers have started to use the system in earnest as the main revenue stream for many games.

Of the 10 highest-grossing apps in the App Store, six are games that are free to download but allow in-app purchases. Four of those are easy, child-friendly games. Two of them, "Tap Zoo" and "Bakery Story," have buttons for in-app purchases of \$100 in just two taps.

Capcom Entertainment Inc., the

publisher of "The Smurfs' Village," says inadvertent purchases by children are "lamentable." When it realized what was happening, it added a warning about the option of in-app purchases to the game's description in the App Store, and it's updating the game to include warnings inside it as well. The game has retreated to being the fourth-highest-grossing app in the App Store.

The warnings may alert parents, but it's doubtful that they'd deter children who can't read and don't understand money.

Apple defends its system. Spokeswoman Trudy Muller says the password system is adequate and points

Zoo Sleepover for New Year's

Kids, families invited to unique experience

Children ages 6 to 13 and their parents are invited to ring in 2011 at the Oregon Zoo. The zoo's annual New Year's Eve overnight begins Friday, Dec. 31, at 5 p.m. and runs through Saturday, Jan. 1, at 9:30 a.m.

The evening begins with a pizza dinner and continues into the night with a behind-the-scenes "nighttime safari" and live indoor animal presentations, before culminating in midnight festivities with noisemakers, hats and special treats. G-rated movies will be a late-night option, along with crafts and games.

"The New Year's Eve overnight is



Kids can get a close-up look at a touchable animal such as a kinkajou during the Oregon Zoo's New Year's Eve overnight.

an exciting event for the whole family to enjoy," said Kim Smith, zoo director. "This special occasion allows guests to ring in the new year in a very unique way."

Sleeping bags, pajamas and a sense of adventure are required for the indoor sleepover. A continental breakfast will be available in the morn-

ing along with a chance to participate in an animal enrichment activity.

The cost is \$48 per person. For more information, visit oregonzoo.org or call 503-220-2781.

The zoo is a service of Metro and is dedicated to its mission to inspire the community to create a better future for wildlife.

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