

Tips for keeping children safe during holiday travel or shopping

Parents need to be careful not to let their guard down or become distracted while traveling or attending public functions during the 2011 holiday season. The Oregon State Police (OSP) Missing Children Clearinghouse and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) urge parents to consider what they should be telling their children to keep them safe while shopping and traveling this holiday

season.

Parents need to talk with children about safety before heading out to a busy shopping mall or boarding a plane, train, or bus this holiday season. Crowds are greater this time of year and children may easily become separated from their parents, causing confusion and fear. If that should happen, parents need a plan and children should know what to do.

Many adults and children

don't know what to do if they lose each other in a public place or are faced with other unsafe situations. That's why the NCMEC and the OSP Missing Children Clearinghouse is offering advice on how to remain safe and avoid panic and potential dangers.

ALWAYS:

- Keep children with you at all times while shopping.
- Accompany and supervise children in public facilities, in-

cluding restrooms.

- Have a plan in case you become separated, including a pre-designated spot to meet.

- Teach children to look for people who can help, such as a uniformed security officer, salesperson or mother with children.

- Remind children to remain in the area where they become separated.

NEVER:

- Dress children in clothing

that displays their first or last names, prompting unwelcome attention from people looking for an opportunity to start a conversation with your child.

- Leave children in toy stores or public facilities expecting supervision from store personnel.

- Go shopping or attend a public event with a child if you feel you're going to be distracted. Make other arrangements for child care ahead of time.

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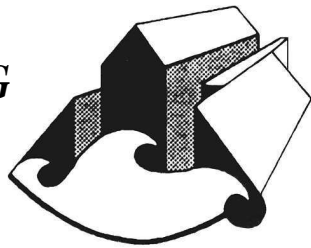
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