

KNOW THE RULES...

For Child Safety in AMUSEMENT OR THEME PARKS



Family outings may be wonderful opportunities for bonding and spending quality time together. And family outings to amusement and theme parks may be special times leaving children with lifelong memories of "meeting" their favorite cartoon character or having their own "real-life" action adventure. It's a "family-favorite" vacation enjoyed by millions each year.¹

As a parent or guardian you know such outings may also be sources of stress and concern for family members visiting an area with so many sights and sounds. It's easy for both adults and children to become distracted by the excitement and attractions. Taking the time to plan your trip and including your children in that process should help make your outing in the park a more enjoyable one from start to finish. Here are a few steps your family may take to help ensure happy memories.

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

- Enjoy their outing while **ALWAYS** paying careful attention to who they are with and where they are in the park.
- Stay with others and never be alone in the park or become isolated with anyone, even characters in costume. Also tell them not to accept any prizes, offers, or gifts from anyone until they have **CHECKED FIRST** with you. Children should also be cautioned not to engage in conversation with or offer assistance to anyone until they have checked with you first.
- **TELL** you if anyone approaches them or makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused. Tell your children if they are approached by anyone who tries to take them away to yell, "**This person is not my father/mother/guardian!**"
- Go to the closest "Help/Information Center" if they become separated while in the park and ask the people there to "find my parents/guardians and bring them to me here at this Center" or, in the case of older children, make the "Help/Information Center" the spot where you are able to "meet up." 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.
 - Apply these rules when they are taking part in a field trip through their school or youth group. And if you are not joining them for that trip, they need to check first with and tell the responsible adult in charge or designated chaperone if anything makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, 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 prior to the visit or immediately upon arriving, identify the "Help/Information Centers" throughout, and reinforce these as places for children to go when lost or separated in the park. Making a plan beforehand of what to do in case of separation should greatly speed a reunion.
- Talk to your children about who is able to help them if they become lost, need assistance, or are in trouble. Examples of these people may be a uniformed law-enforcement or security officer, park employee with a nametag, person with a nametag who is working in the "Help/Information Center," or mother with children. Children should never wander off or leave with anyone.
- Have your children wear clothes or carry items that **DO NOT** display their names.
- Make sure your children carry some form of identification and family/emergency-contact information with them in case they become lost, become separated, or need assistance.
- Consider dressing your children in or asking them to 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 go 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 not go to restrooms alone.
- Report, immediately and without delay, any suspicious or inappropriate behavior to authorities.
- Make certain your children know the numbers of any cellular telephones or wireless devices you may have and these devices are activated so your children may contact you if they become lost. Make certain they also know how to reach you if separated by asking adults you have identified to assist them with contacting you.
- Report, immediately and without delay, your children missing when lost or 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 accurately describe the clothes your children are wearing. If a cellular telephone with a camera function is available to you, consider taking each child's photograph when arriving at the park.
- Make certain there will be qualified supervision of your children by responsible adults if you are considering granting permission for them to take part in a field trip to an amusement or theme park.

¹In 2009 approximately 300 million people attended approximately 400 parks and attractions in the United States, per personal communication from David Mandt, Vice President, Communications Services, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, on March 18, 2010.



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