

Happy Holidays!

December 2009

# Parenting *Rules!*

No matter how your family chooses to celebrate the Holiday season, your schedule may become very hectic. When parents become stressed out and distracted by this busy time of year, children can be at a greater risk for injuries.

Following simple safety precautions can help you ensure a healthy and safe season for your entire family. You can enjoy the festivities and still keep your children safe.

Everyone here at Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island wishes you a safe, healthy and happy holiday season.

## Avoiding Food Poisoning....



Contaminated food may not be as obvious as you think. After just two hours at room temperature, harmful bacteria will begin to grow very quickly on left out food. Spoiled food may or may not smell badly and can even still appear edible. ***DO not take any chances with your family's health and safety.*** Food poisoning is a potentially deadly illness, especially for young children and the elderly.

Here are some tips to keep the foods you serve your family safe:

- **Wash your hands** thoroughly before preparing foods.
- **Wash all fruits and vegetables** thoroughly before consuming.
- Do not reuse the same dishes or utensils that have come into contact with raw meat or fish, always **wash them thoroughly first.**
- Cover and refrigerate food **within one hour of serving.**
- Only taste food that is **thoroughly cooked.** Use a clean spoon for each test to avoid contaminating the entire dish.
- **Refrigerate all leftovers** and consume them within 1 – 2 days.

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## Safe Shopping Trips....

Every year we spend an average of 15 hours shopping for holiday gifts. Many parents need to bring their children with them on these shopping trips. Children are at a higher risk of harm when their parents are distracted with shopping.

Here are some tips that can help you have a safe and happy holiday season:

### Always Keep an Eye on Kids:

Please remember that the world is a big and interesting place to explore, especially for young children. More than 2,000 missing children reports are filed every day.

When taking your children shopping remember:

- **Never** leave your kids unattended.  
*Not even for one second!*
- **Don't** put children in charge of watching other children.
- **Teach** kids to go to a store employee if they get separated from you.
- **Don't** let them play alone in the toy or video department while you shop.
- **Always** go with them when they use the public restroom.
- **Never** ask a stranger to watch your child while you try on clothing.



### Shopping Carts:

*Children can be seriously injured or even killed by shopping cart accidents.*

- ✓ **Never** allow your children to hang on the outside of the cart.
- ✓ **Always** buckle your child into the seat at the front of the cart.
- ✓ **Never** leave your child unattended, even for a second.

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## Safe and Age Appropriate Toys....

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Every year thousands of children are hurt, sometimes seriously, by unsafe toys. These injuries can happen because the toys are **not age appropriate, adults are not supervising, or the toys are defective.**

When you shop for toys this holiday season, keep these *guidelines* in mind:

- ❖ **Choose** toys that are **sturdy** and make sure they do not have sharp or pointy edges.
- ❖ Pay close attention to the **manufacturer's age recommendations**. Is your child is old enough to play with the toy?
- ❖ Avoid toys with **cords** that are long enough to **wrap** around a child's neck.
- ❖ **Read warnings** or other safety information found on the toy's package.
- ❖ Teach your children how to **properly** use their new toys.
- ❖ **Be careful with toys that have small parts, they can be a choking hazard to young children.**
- ❖ Check to be sure the toy has **no broken or loose parts**.

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## Holiday Decorations Can Be a Hazard....

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Holiday decorations can make your home feel festive. However, some decorations can pose a serious threat to the safety of your family.



When choosing decoration, keep the following in mind:

- Cans of snow spray may contain chemicals that are toxic if inhaled. Be sure to use these products in a **well ventilated area** to avoid inhaling.
- Do not let babies and children chew on foil or colored gift wraps, **they may contain lead.**
- Fireplace color crystals can look like candy to children; **keep them out of reach** so they will not accidentally eat them.
- Angel Hair is a holiday decoration made of **thinly spun glass**. Keep out of reach of children as it can cause **throat and intestinal irritation** if swallowed.
- Decorations with candles should be closely supervised and kept out of reach of children. **Blow out all candles when you leave the room.**
- Tree and wreath lights can be a serious fire hazard. Be sure to **unplug all lighted decorations** when leaving the house and/or going to bed.

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## Resources for Parents

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### **U.S. Consumer Product Safety**

Toll-freeHotline: 800-638-2772  
(TTY 800-638-8270).  
[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

### **Toys for Tots Rhode Island**

401-461-2473  
<http://providence-ri.toysfortots.org>

### **For fuel assistant:**

### **Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources**

One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908  
401-574-9100  
[www.energy.ri.gov](http://www.energy.ri.gov)

### **The Good Neighbor Energy Fund**

Salvation Army  
386 Broad Street  
Providence, RI 029107  
401-831-1119

### **Rhode Island 211**

Dial 2-1-1  
[www.211ri.org](http://www.211ri.org)

## Internet Resources

[www.preventchildabuse-ri.org/  
images/Age\\_Appropriate\\_Toys.pdf](http://www.preventchildabuse-ri.org/images/Age_Appropriate_Toys.pdf)

[www.preventchildabuse-ri.org/  
images/Shopping\\_with\\_Children.pdf](http://www.preventchildabuse-ri.org/images/Shopping_with_Children.pdf)

[www.nourishinteractive.com/parents\\_area/  
healthy\\_family\\_nutrition\\_newsletter/  
healthy\\_holidays\\_tips\\_foods\\_family\\_nutrition](http://www.nourishinteractive.com/parents_area/healthy_family_nutrition_newsletter/healthy_holidays_tips_foods_family_nutrition)

[www.memphisparent.com/2008/11/  
safe-travels-during-the-holiday-season/](http://www.memphisparent.com/2008/11/safe-travels-during-the-holiday-season/)

[www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/novtips.cfm](http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/novtips.cfm)

## **ABOUT PARENTING RULES! E-NEWS...**

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 Rhode Island  
Family & Children's Trust Fund  
Administered by the RI Department of Children, Youth & Families

*Parenting Rules! e-news is produced by Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island and is partially supported by an annual grant from the Rhode Island Family & Children's Trust Fund*

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Please share this information with the families in your programs. Thank you!