

Child Abuse Prevention and Santa Safety – {Preserving the Magic}

Be a Savvy Santa Consumer



The holiday season makes us wish that all children were busy with visions of sugar-plums dancing in their heads and that there would be no risk to kids from predators during this time (or any other). The emphasis on bringing good cheer to everyone we see and meet is very apparent in the person of a well-known man in a bright red suit — Santa Claus!

Santa (for those that celebrate in this fashion) is there for young and old alike and brings laughter, love, and good cheer wherever he goes. Children are anxious to talk with him about Christmas wishes and let him know that they have been good all year.

The problem is that some who seek out the opportunity to bring Santa to life in a child's world are not deserving of our trust. Child molesters are looking for just this kind of opportunity. Taking a few simple steps can help us make sure that a visit with Santa is a delightful fun experience filled with precious memories.

- Encourage children to stand next to Santa or sit on the floor between his feet. Only allow children to sit in Santa's lap **if** Santa is wearing gloves and you can see his hands at all times. Santa visits should also be in an open area where adults can observe.
- Dress children in long pants or add tights with girl's dresses.
- Make the Santa list with your child - **NO SECRETS HERE!**
- Make sure all contact between the child and Santa is OPEN - Observable, Proper, Effortless, and Non-sexual and that a responsible adult is with them at all times.
- Make sure that you take time to enjoy the experience through the eyes of your child! It is magical!!

Put safety first and you will bring a new level of joy and happiness to this holiday season. As the man in red was once quoted as saying

*“Happy Christmas (or Holidays) to all
and to all a Goodnight!”*

Do just one thing! Your one thing counts!

Many organizations sponsor Christmas parties for children that include a visit from Jolly Ole St. Nick. Establishing a few guidelines for “Santa's visit” can help make the celebration a joy-filled and magical experience for all.

- ✓ Make sure Santa has a background check or do it yourself
- ✓ Get and check references for previous work in this role.
- ✓ Invite parents/grandparents/guardians to come close and be with Santa and their children.
- ✓ Make sure Santa wears heavy white gloves (provide them yourself).
- ✓ Make sure that Santa is out in the open when interacting with children. Public interface allows everyone to monitor interactions between Santa and children.
- ✓ Post responsible adults beside Santa to be “helpers.” They should make sure everyone has a great time and the experience is safe and healthy too.
- ✓ Have helpers encourage children to tell parents and others all about your talk with him and shares list with everyone.

Agency Spotlight

Empowering Adults – Protecting Children offers a new approach to child sexual abuse prevention through educating adults about the potentially risky adult behaviors predators employ to seduce children. The organization presents free, open, community awareness presentations using interactive theater to raise awareness and establish a plan of action for protecting children from predators. Our vision is of a society where all adults are aware, responsible, and educated on how to prevent sexual abuse; no effects of child sexual abuse exist; and a child is never at risk of sexual abuse by someone who claims to care for him or her.

Upcoming 2014 Events

Keeping Them Safe – All Souls Unitarian Church (Tulsa)
Thurs, January 23rd, 6:30-8:30pm (Public Invited - **FREE**)

Upcoming CAP ACTION meetings:
Wed, January 17th, 10:00am & Wed, March 21st, 10:00am

CAP Day at the Capitol & Mini Conference:
Tuesday, April 8, 2014

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