



**KEEPING CHILDREN  
SAFE IN PUBLIC SPACES:  
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR  
FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS**

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# WHY THIS TOPIC MATTERS

- Increased crowds and overstimulating environments can create safety concerns for children.
- Children may respond differently to loud noises, transitions, waiting, heat, unfamiliar people, or changes in routine.
- Prevention and preparation are more effective than reacting.



# WHAT PUBLIC PLACES FEEL MOST STRESSFUL WITH CHILDREN?

- AMUSEMENT PARKS
- AIRPORTS
- FESTIVALS
- GROCERY STORES
- FAMILY GATHERINGS
- MALLS/SPORTING EVENTS



# WHY PUBLIC SPACES ARE CHALLENGING FOR CHILDREN

## Environmental Factors

- Noise
- Crowds
- Long waits
- Unpredictability
- Heat/fatigue
- Limited movement

## Child Responses

- Running away/elopement
- Tantrums/meltdowns
- Aggression
- Refusal
- Shutting down
- Increased anxiety
- Sensory overload



# PREVENTION IS KEY

- Teach Expectations
- Use Visual Supports
- Practice Before the Event
- Identify Triggers and Plan Ahead



# SAFETY STRATEGIES IN PUBLIC SPACES

- Prevent Separation
- Teach Safety Skills
- Manage Overstimulation in the Moment



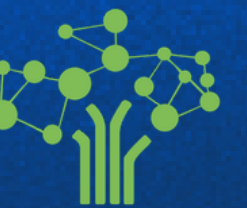
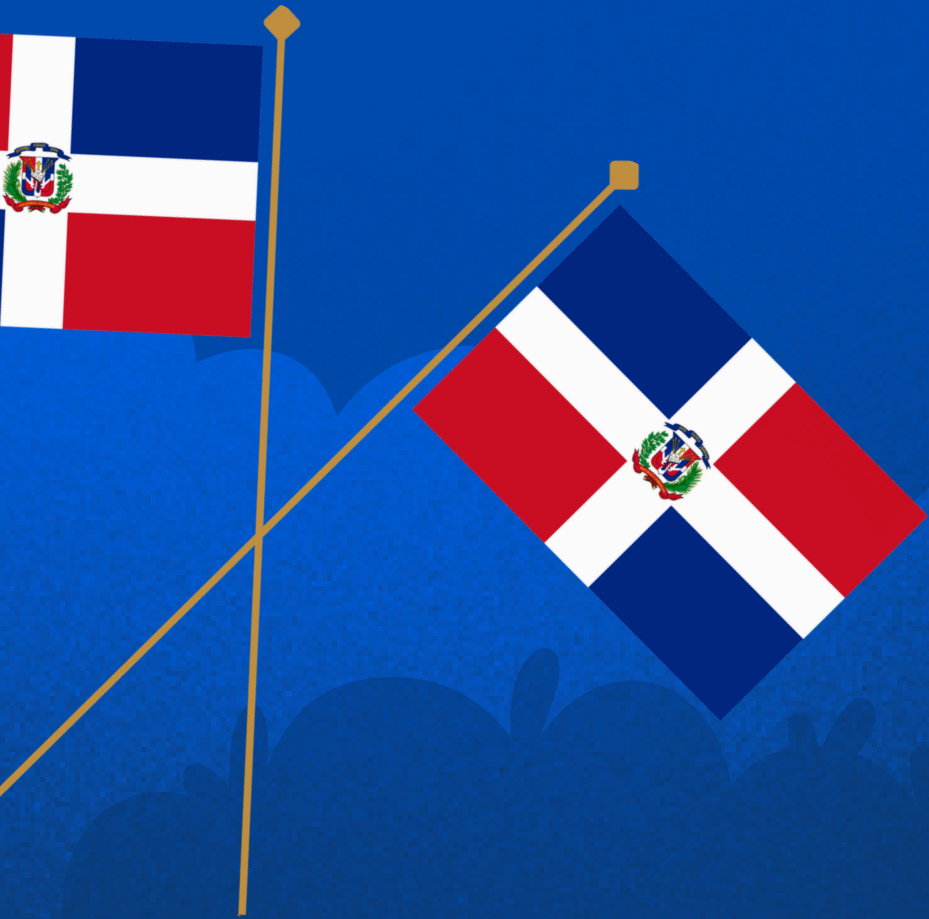
**YOU'RE WAITING IN LINE AND YOUR CHILD STARTS  
GETTING RESTLESS, LOUD, OR UPSET.**



**YOU OPEN THE CAR DOOR AND YOUR CHILD SUDDENLY  
STARTS RUNNING THROUGH THE PARKING LOT.**



**IT'S TIME TO LEAVE THE PARK, BUT YOUR CHILD DROPS TO THE GROUND CRYING AND REFUSES TO MOVE.**

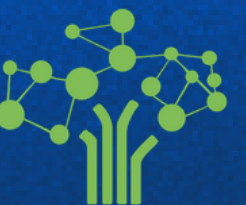


# FAMILY & PROGRAM EMERGENCY PLANNING

## Create a Simple Emergency Plan

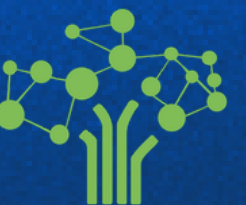
Families should know:

- Who is responsible for each child
- What are the meeting locations
- Who are the emergency contacts
- What are the medical/sensory needs/calming strategies.



# BEFORE YOU “GO” CHECKLIST

- Review expectations briefly
- Bring snacks/water
- Bring sensory supports
- Take a recent photo
- Identify a meeting point
- Discuss safety rules
- Prepare waiting activities



**THINK OF ONE STRATEGY YOU COULD IMPLEMENT THIS  
WEEK.**



**THANK  
YOU!**



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