

# Pointers For Parents

## Tips For Keeping Your Child Safe While Shopping

(NAPSA)—According to the FBI, 2,200 children are reported missing each day. Alarming statistics like these are leading communities and business leaders to step up efforts to ensure the safety and security of our nation's children. Many retailers are now employing added safety measures and, like so many other aspects of our lives, these precautions are getting a boost from leading edge technologies.

Following are tips to help keep children safe on shopping trips:

**1. Ask whether store employees are trained in the “Code Adam” system.** Code Adam is a simple yet effective program designed to train employees to quickly and efficiently locate missing children in a retail store. When a child is reported missing, a Code Adam alert is announced over the store's public-address system and employees immediately react, taking on specific responsibilities such as searching the store, alerting police and watching store exits.

“As soon as I realized my son was missing, I informed the store's customer service department, and the whole staff immediately went into action looking for my son,” said Laurie, a mom, recalling the incident that took place in her local supermarket. “It felt like an eternity, but in what must have been only 25 or 30 seconds, an employee was escorting my son back to me safely. There is no telling what would have happened if it hadn't been for Code Adam.”

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and corporate partner, Sensormatic Electronics, the leading provider of electronic security to the retail industry, have committed to expanding the Code Adam child safety program to retailers nationwide. The thousands of stores that already use Code Adam display this special decal at their entrances.



**Look for the “Code Adam” symbol to ensure your child's safety on shopping trips.**

**2. Register your child with the local police department.**

Most communities offer free or inexpensive registration for children, either in schools or at police departments. Authorities will photograph and/or fingerprint your child and record pertinent information and identifiable characteristics in a database, to be used by officials in the event that a child is missing or abducted. A child's dental records can also be included for additional identification.

**3. Look for Innovative Retail Safety Programs.**

Concerned companies like Sensormatic are also adapting existing anti-shoplifting technology to help protect children in retail stores. Under the SafeKids™ program, retailers with in-store playrooms can provide children with a SafeKids wristband, which is outfitted with a security chip. If a child tries to leave—or is taken—from the designated areas, the SafeKids system triggers an alarm and video surveillance equipment zooms in on the activity. Monitors set up throughout the store allow parents to see their children while shopping. Ask store employees if they have a program like SafeKids.

All shoppers can take comfort that an increasing number of retail stores and shopping malls are using technology to ensure safety in and around their premises. Look for stores that use video surveillance cameras in parking lots and dark halls. And remember to always stay aware and alert when out-and-about with your children.