

## **Not Even for a Second! ~ A Story About Kidpower's Underlying Principle**

Irene van der Zande, Executive Director/Co-Founder

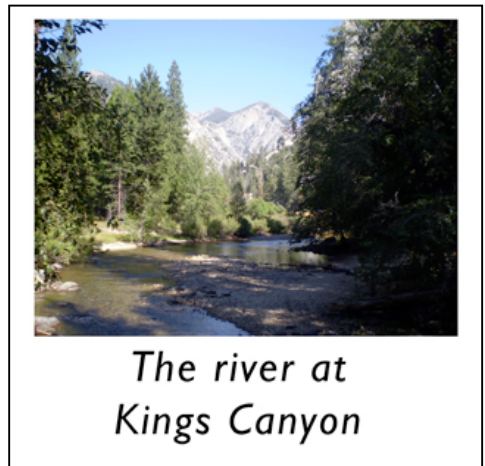
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Dear Readers,

This is a story about how Kidpower skills and principles were very helpful to me personally when I saw an unprotected small child in an unsafe place. A couple of weeks ago, my husband Ed and I took a vacation in Sequoia and King's Canyon National Parks in California, an area full of beautiful mountains and a great deal of wildlife.

One afternoon, I left Ed sitting by a trail and went back to the parking lot to get something for our hike. Suddenly, I noticed a small child of less than two years old sitting alone on a picnic table, next to a sign warning about this being an active bear area. She had rosy cheeks, a very pink dress stained with what might have been apple juice, and no adults with her. I could hear voices of people and splashing in the direction of the river where she was looking intently, but no one was in sight.



No part of me could have left this toddler alone there, but, especially with my husband waiting for me, I felt indignant and wished that parks and parking lots would have those signs that many stores do: "**Do not leave your children unattended!**" Surely, I thought crossly, this reminder is as important as the signs warning not to leave your valuables in your car and not to feed the bears.

I waited near this little girl for quite a while, not wanting to alarm her by staring at her or approaching her, hoping that her adults would appear. Understandably, she eventually started to get restless, so I called out towards the river, "HELLO! EXCUSE ME!"

A woman's head peeked out over the edge of the hill and called, "Is she all right?"

"She's fine," I reassured the woman. The woman's head then disappeared, as she headed back to the river. "WAIT!" I yelled. "Please come here!"

The child's mother reluctantly walked up the hill to us. She looked hot and tired and said apologetically, "I was only going to be gone for a second."

"Your child is too young and too important to be left here even for a second!" I said in a firm, kind voice.

"Really?" the woman asked.

"There are Bears," I pointed out. "And the River. And Cars. And People! You should not leave her in a place like this even for a second."

The woman lifted her child and put her on her hip. "Thank you," she said, doubtfully, and carried her daughter off to join the rest of their family.

Later, Ed and I told our story to a ranger who, with a great deal of emotion, described how children drown every year in that river because people are misled by the serenity of the surroundings into believing that it is safe.

Kidpower's Underlying Principle is that: *The safety and self-esteem of a child are more important than anyone's embarrassment, inconvenience, or offense.* Basically, this means that we are committed to putting safety first, ahead of uncomfortable feelings. A plan to Put Safety First makes decisions in a situation like this so clear – waiting with a child even if your husband must be wondering why you are taking so long; speaking up even if someone might be upset with you; and being supportive to a tired mother even though you feel frustrated about her lack of awareness.

With appreciation to each of you for your commitment to safety,  
Irene van der Zande  
Executive Director/Co-Founder