

## What can you do if you see an adult hurting a child in a public place?

It can be very uncomfortable to watch an adult mistreat a child. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to help.

- ❖ Strike up a conversation with the adult to direct attention away from the child. Say something like:
  - “She seems to be trying your patience.”
  - “My child has gotten upset like that, too.”
  - “He has beautiful (eyes).” (This will get the parent in a positive mood.)
  - “Children can wear you out, can’t they? Is there anything I can do to help?”
- ❖ Divert the child’s attention (if misbehaving) by talking to the child.
- ❖ Praise the child and parent at the first opportunity.
- ❖ If the child is in danger, offer assistance. For example, if the child is left unattended in a grocery cart, stand by the child until the parent returns.
- ❖ Avoid negative remarks or looks. These reactions are likely to increase the parent’s anger and could make matters worse.



Provided by Prevent Child Abuse Iowa  
A chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America

**Call 1-800-CHILDREN**

[www.pcaiowa.org](http://www.pcaiowa.org)

Adapted from Prevent Child Abuse America

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