



'Free Range' Parents Found Responsible for Child Neglect After Allowing Kids to Walk Home Alone

By CANDACE SMITH and LAUREN EFFRON · Mar 3, 2015, 5:05 PM ET

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'Free Range' Parents Found Responsible for Child Neglect

+ Should Kids Be Allowed to Roam Unsupervised?



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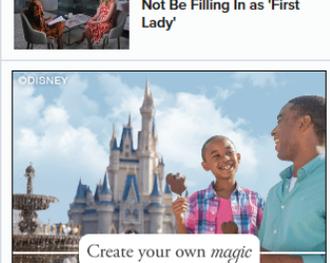
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A Maryland couple who was being investigated for allowing their two children to walk home alone from a neighborhood park have been "found responsible for unsubstantiated child neglect" by the state's Child Protective Services.

Maryland Child Protective Services began investigating Danielle and Alexander Meitiv of Silver Spring, Maryland, for practicing so-called "free-range parenting," a philosophy that encourages children to have some independence.

In the Meitivs' case, this means they allow their two children, Rafi and Dvora, ages 10 and 6, to play outside and walk home by themselves.

The couple told "Nightline" in an email today that they found out the results of the CPS investigation last week.

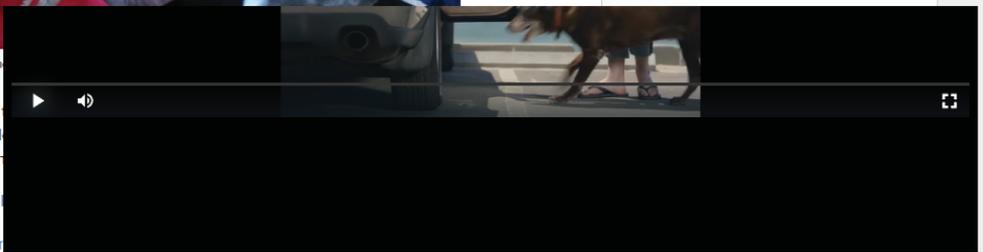


Rafi and Dvora Meitiv were walking home

"We are shocked and outraged at the simple freedom to play outdoors. We also have no intention of changing our philosophy."

[Free Range Parents Believe in](#)

The Meitivs told "Nightline" in an



and want to give them the freedom

"I'm just parenting the way I was parented," Danielle told "Nightline"

But that all changed after the Meitivs they were walking home from a

Maryland Child Protective Services then accused the Meitivs of neglect, saying they committed to a safety plan, the kids would have to go into foster homes. In fact, leaving anyone under age 18 unsupervised constitutes neglect.

Suddenly this middle-class suburban family found themselves smack in the national parenting debate.

When asked for comment, Maryland Child Protective Services referred the case to the Maryland State Department of Human Resources.

A Maryland State Department of Human Resources spokeswoman said that the law prohibits them from commenting on any specific case, and would only be used as "a point of reference that will be used in any future decision."

No criminal charges have been filed.

The Meitivs stand by their belief that they are the best ones to judge if their children are safe and if their neighborhood is safe enough, for them to be on their own, not the government.

"Frankly I think that raising independent children and responsible children and giving them the freedom that I enjoyed is a risk worth taking," Danielle Meitiv told "Nightline" in a previous interview. "In the end it's our decision as parents."

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By DAVID WRIGHT, CANDACE SMITH and LAUREN EFFRON - Jan 30, 2015, 12:11 AM ET

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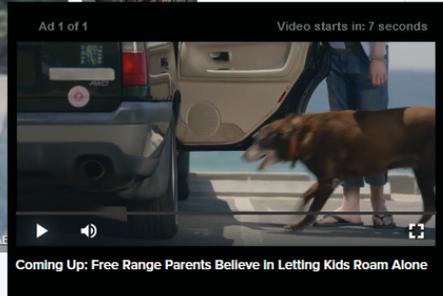
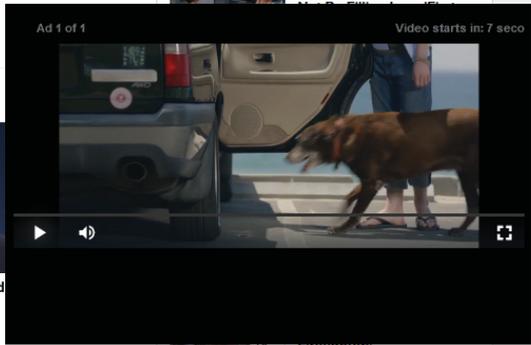
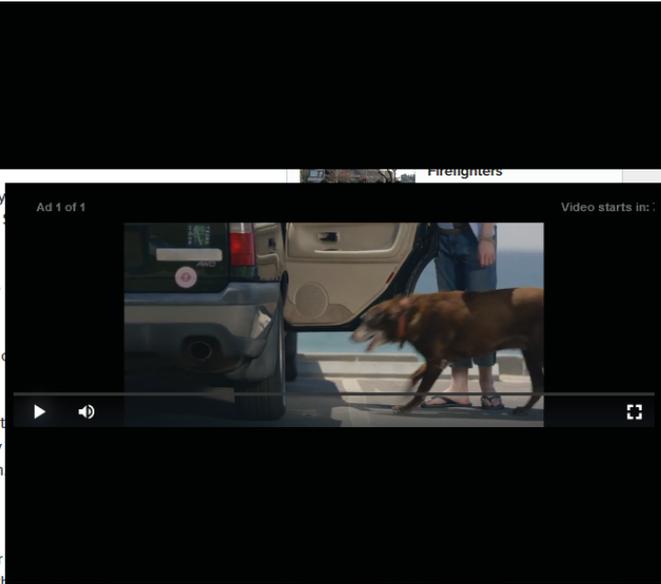
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Rafi and Dvora Meitiv were walking home from the park recently in Silver Spring, Maryland, when they were suddenly confronted by strangers.



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