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parking pandemonium

It's 2:45 p.m., time to fetch our giggly, grinning elementary-school children. Fast forward 10 minutes to the temper-flaring, mad dash, SUV derby to find a parking spot close to school. Nobody's smiling now. Fortunately, though, there's a simple way to overcome the madness. To wit, I'm here to tell you that parking lot etiquette follows the exact same rules as the school playground. In fact, you might just learn a thing or two by watching Joey's jungle-gym demeanor.

- (1.) No monkey business on the monkey bars. Especially cutting—which, in a parking lot, can lead to dangerous confrontations. Even if you are late for Joey's karate practice, wait your turn.
- (2.) The early bird gets the swing seat. The “first come, first serve” principle goes for parking spots, too. If they're all taken, don't make your own in front of two other cars.
- (3.) Don't block the slide. Just as it was infuriating to have a knee-knocking ninny hogging the top of the slide, you don't want to do the same thing at the parking lot exit. Even if you've driven around five times, fruitlessly, that doesn't give you license to block the exit.
- (4.) There are no time-outs in tag. Likewise, if you're behind the wheel, you're fair game. And if someone is waiting for your spot, don't ignore them just because you are engrossed in PTA gossip.

Melissa Leonard is an etiquette coach and mother of two extremely well-behaved children in Harrison. Visit her website at www.establishyourselfNY.com.

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