



“Let Go of Lottery Tickets” When Choosing Gifts for Children This Holiday Season

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The Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG) today announced its support of the 2021 Gift Responsibly Campaign, joining other state council affiliates, and more than 80 other lotteries and community organizations from across the U.S., Canada, and the world. The campaign, which raises awareness about risks associated with giving lottery products as gifts to minors during the holiday season or at any time of year, is organized by the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) and the International Center for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University.

This holiday season, the FCCG is sending the message that lottery tickets are not child’s play. According to Jennifer Kruse, Executive Director of the FCCG, “At a time when children are increasingly exposed to gambling concepts, it is imperative for parents and others to recognize that gifting lottery tickets to minors promotes a restricted activity that is intended only for adults, which sends a contradictory message, and is dangerous.” Gambling is legal within Florida only for persons 18 years of age and older (and 21 years of age and older for slot machine gambling), yet underage children in many instances have received lottery tickets as gifts or managed to place wagers online and elsewhere.

“According to our 2020-2021 Annual Helpline Report, overall, the reported age of initiation of gambling and when it became a problem revealed that 48% of problem gamblers this year, versus 40% in 2019/2020, started gambling before age 26, and 13% started prior to the legal gambling age of 18. Further, nearly 30% reported that gambling-related problems began before age 26 and 4% reported difficulties prior to reaching the legal gambling age of 18. This data demonstrates the involvement of minors in gambling and outlines the importance of gifting responsibly,” Kruse added.

The FCCG supports the 2021 Gift Responsibly Campaign and encourages parents and others to give gifts to children that are age appropriate. The FCCG further appreciates that both the World Lottery Association (WLA) and the North American Association of State and Provincial Lotteries (NASPL) have endorsed the campaign.

“We commend the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling for their comprehensive messaging approach to the Gift Responsibly Campaign,” said NCPG Executive Director Keith Whyte. “They have gone beyond simply educating the public about the potential harmful effects of adults giving lottery tickets to children. The FCCG also recognizes that alternative gift ideas, especially when last minute shopping is occurring, are an important part of the equation,” Whyte added.

To assist parents and others this holiday season, the FCCG is suggesting giving gifts to children that encourage participation and healthy engagement with others, many of which are both affordable and memorable, such as taking day trips to a museum, a beach, or elsewhere, starting a project together, playing sports, taking a hike, or engaging in other healthy activities, or by changing the mood of a living space with lighting or paint. “These activities are stimulating, fun and assure that children are spending quality time with family members and other loved ones on age-appropriate things,” added Kruse. “It’s time to let go of lottery tickets when choosing gifts for children,” concluded Kruse.

For more information on gift ideas for children and others, check out this month’s posts on the FCCG blog at blog.gamblinghelp.org. For assistance with a gambling problem, make the most of this holiday season by contacting the 24/7 Confidential and Multilingual Problem Gambling Helpline at 888-ADMIT-IT (236-4848), via text (321-978-0555), email (fccg@gamblinghelp.org), live chat (gamblinghelp.org), the 888-ADMIT-IT App (<https://landing.appypie.com/888-admit-it>), or on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

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