



## CHILD SAFETY TIPS

### What should your child be told about safety?

1. They should **ALWAYS** check first with a parent, guardian, or trusted adult before going anywhere, accepting anything, or getting into a car with anyone.
2. **Don't go places alone. ALWAYS** take a friend with you when going places or playing outside.
3. If you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, **tell a parent, guardian, or trusted adult.**
4. If someone tries to touch you, or treats you in a way that makes you feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, **SAY NO.** Get out of the situation as quickly as possible.
5. There will **ALWAYS** be someone to help you, and you have the right to be safe.

### What you as a parent should know when talking to your child about safety?

1. **Remember your older children.** Older children are equally at risk to victimization. As they receive more freedom, it is important to make sure they understand safety rules.
2. **Address safety in a manner that is calm and non-threatening.** You don't need to create an atmosphere of fear to make your point. Children do not need to be frightened to get the point across. Fear can impede the safety message. Fear can paralyze a child into not taking appropriate action under certain circumstances.
3. **Address safety openly.** Issues enshrouded in secrecy can make children less likely to come to you. If it appears you are comfortable discussing the subject at hand, your children may be more forthcoming.
4. **Don't overemphasize danger from strangers.** The concept of a stranger may be a difficult concept for a child to understand. People known to children and/or their families actually present greater danger to children than do strangers.
5. **Live out what you teach.** You may get the impression that your children understand your message, but until they can incorporate it into their daily lives, it may not be clearly understood. Take advantage of teachable moments and practice various scenarios to prepare them for different circumstances. "What if \_\_\_\_\_ happens, what would you do?"
6. **Safety is more important than manners.** It is more important for children to get themselves out of a threatening situation than it is to be polite. They need to know that it is okay to tell you what happened, and they won't be treated like a tattletale.

### Establish rules and guidelines:

1. Be certain to **ALWAYS** know where your child is at all times. Know their friends and make certain they understand the places they're allowed to frequent. Have them check in with you when they arrive and depart a particular location. Express that this is being done for safety and not to spy on them.
2. Teach your children their full name, full address, and phone number, including area codes. Teach them how to use a phone.
3. When going to public places, establish a place to meet if you get separated. Teach younger children to seek out someone in uniform or respond to a cashier if separated in a retail establishment.
4. Remind children never to approach a vehicle or converse with anyone in a vehicle that they do not know and trust. They are **NEVER** to go anywhere with anyone without your permission.
5. Teach that they have the right to say **NO** to any unwelcome or uncomfortable touch. If they feel uncomfortable or confused by the touching or actions of others they should get out of that situation as soon as possible. In this situation they should be taught to kick, scream, and resist. Let them know that they are to immediately tell you if this happens.
6. Be a good listener. Pay attention if they indicate that they don't want to go somewhere or be with someone. Encourage open communication as you look and listen for clues that something may be troubling them. Children may not be comfortable discussing certain disturbing events and may be concerned about your reaction. As you listen, try hard to remain calm and don't be critical or judgmental. Be compassionate and strive to get the help needed to resolve the problem.
7. Be available. Taking the time to genuinely get to know and listen to your children helps instill feelings of safety and security.

Many of you have children that have recently started school, some for the first time. Now is a good time to reinforce safety issues with them. Information on "child safety tips" can be found over the internet or at your local library. **Remember, teaching your children how to respond to a situation before it happens could make all the difference between a positive or negative outcome.**