

25 ways to make kids safer

to learn more about child safety, visit www.take25.org.



Once kids are able to talk, you can begin teaching them some basic safety essentials.

AT HOME

1. Teach your children their full names, address, and home phone number. Make sure they know your name.
2. Make sure your children know how to reach you at work or on your cell phone.
3. Teach your children how and when to use 911.
4. Make sure your children have a trusted adult to call if they're scared or have an emergency.
5. Instruct children to keep the door locked and not open the door to talk to anyone when they are home alone. Set rules with your children about having visitors over when you're not home and how to answer the telephone.
6. Choose babysitters with care. Obtain references from family, friends, and neighbors. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask children how the experience with the caregiver was and listen carefully to their responses.

ON THE NET

7. Learn about the Internet. The more you know about how the Web works, the better prepared you are to teach your children about potential risks.
8. Place the family computer in a common area, rather than a child's bedroom. Also, monitor their time spent online and the websites they've visited.
9. Use privacy settings on social networking sites to limit contact with unknown users.
10. Make sure screen names don't reveal too much about your children.

AT SCHOOL

11. Don't display your children's names on clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, or bicycle license plates. When children's names are visible, it may put them on a first-name basis with someone who means them harm.
12. Remind kids to take a friend whenever they walk or bike to school.
13. Walk the route to and from school with your children, pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. If your children ride a bus, visit the bus stop with them to make sure they know which bus to take.

OUT AND ABOUT

14. Take your children on a walking tour of the neighborhood and tell them whose homes they may visit without you.
15. Tell your children to get you if they come across a dangerous object or situation.
16. Teach your children to ask permission before leaving home.
17. Remind your children not to walk or play alone outside.
18. Teach your children not to approach any vehicle, occupied or not, unless they know the owner and are accompanied by a trusted adult.
19. Remind your children it's OK to say NO to anything that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused.
20. Explain to your children not to go near pools or other bodies of water without adult supervision. All pools your children attend should have a visible lifeguard on duty. If you have a pool at home, establish appropriate swimming hours and supervision.
21. Set up "what if" situations and ask your children how they would respond. "What if you fell off your bike and you needed help? Whom would you ask?"
22. During family outings, establish a central, easy-to-locate spot to meet for check-ins or should you get separated.
23. Teach your children to check in with you if there is a change of plans.
24. Teach your children how to locate help at theme parks, sports stadiums, shopping malls, and other public places. Also, identify those people who are safe to ask for help, such as law enforcement, security guards and store clerks with nametags.
25. Practice safety skills so that they become second nature to your children. While you don't want to scare your children, it is important to make sure they are aware of potential dangers, so that they can be prepared to avoid them, or confidently deal with them as they happen.

just for parents and guardians

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IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN
1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

NATIONAL POISON CONTROL CENTER
1-800-222-1222

MEDICAL SERVICES
911 or _____

HOSPITAL

FIRE DEPARTMENT

POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

PEDIATRICIAN

WORK
Mom _____
Dad _____
Guardian _____

NEIGHBORS' CELL PHONE AND/OR PAGER

NEIGHBORS AND/OR RELATIVES

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR CHILD IS MISSING

- Immediately call your local law-enforcement agency.
- If your child disappears in a store, notify the store manager or security office. Then immediately call your local law-enforcement agency. Many stores have a **CODE ADAM** plan of action—if a child is missing in the store, employees immediately mobilize to look for the missing child.
- When you call law enforcement, provide your child's name, date of birth, height, weight, and any other unique identifiers such as eyeglasses and braces. Tell them when you noticed that your child was missing and what clothing he or she was wearing.
- Request that your child's name and identifying information be immediately entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File.
- After you have reported your child missing to law enforcement, call the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children on our toll-free telephone number, **1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)**. If your computer is equipped with a microphone and speakers you may talk to one of our Hotline operators via missingkids.com.

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOUR CHILD HAS BEEN SEXUALLY EXPLOITED

- Seek appropriate medical attention to be sure your child has not been physically injured.
- Report the exploitation to your local law-enforcement agency.
- Inform child-protection, youth-services, child-abuse, or other appropriate social-service organizations about the exploitation.
- Seek counseling or therapy for your child.
- Contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at **1-800-843-5678** or www.cybertipline.com to find out what resources are available to you.

CHILD SAFETY

Adapted From: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, Copyright 1998

Tips For Talking With Children About Safety

Who?

A parent is the best person to teach a child about personal safety.

What?

Effective personal safety skills:

*Smart Thinking *Strong Character *Sticking Together

When?

Now!

*There is no perfect age when parents should begin teaching children about personal safety.

*A child's ability to comprehend and practice safety skills is affected by age, educational, and developmental levels.

How?

Listen to children.

*Know your children's daily activities and habits.

*Listen to what they like and what they don't like.

*Encourage open communication. Let your children know they can talk to you about any situation.

*Reassure your children that their safety is your #1 concern.

Teach your children.

*Set boundaries about places they may go, people they may see, and things they may do.

*Reinforce the importance of the 'buddy system'.

*It's OK to say NO – tell your children to trust their instincts.

Get involved.

*Know where your children are at all times.

*Your children should check in with you if there is a change in plans.

*There is no substitute for your attention and supervision.

Practice safety skills with your child.

*Rehearse safety skills so that they become second nature.

Crisis Connection

**24 - Hour Hotline
1-800-245-4580**

What Parents Can Do To Help Keep Their Children Safe

Safety At Home

- Children should know their full name, home phone number with area code and how to use the telephone. Post your contact information where your children will see it: office phone number, cell phone, pager, etc.
- Children should have a trusted adult to call if they're scared or have an emergency.
- Choose babysitters with care. Obtain references from family, friends, and neighbors. Once you have chosen the caregiver; drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was, and listen carefully to their responses.

Safety In The Neighborhood

- Make a list with your children of their neighborhood boundaries, choosing significant landmarks.
- Interact regularly with your neighbors. Tell your children whose homes they are allowed to visit.
- Don't drop children off alone at malls, movie theatres, video archades, or parks.
- Teach your children that adults should not approach children for help or directions. Tell your children that if they are approached by an adult, they should stay alert because this may be a 'trick'.
- Never leave children unattended in an automobile. Children should never hitchhike or approach a car when they don't know and trust the driver.
- Children should never go anywhere with anyone without getting your permission first.

Safety At School

- Be careful when you put your child's name on clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes or bicycle license plates. If a child's name is visible, it may put them on a 'first name' basis with an abductor.
- Walk the route to and from school with your children, pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. Make a map with your children showing acceptable routes to school, using main roads and avoiding shortcuts or isolated areas. If your children take a bus, visit the bus stop with them and make sure they know which bus to take.

What Youth Can Do To Help Stay Safe

Child's Safety Pledge:

I know my name, address, telephone number & area code, and my parents' names.

I always check first with my parents or the person in charge. I tell them before I go anywhere or get into a car, even with someone I know.
I always check first with my parents or a trusted adult before I accept anything from anyone, even from someone I know.

I always take a friend with me when I go places or play outside.

I say 'no' if someone tries to touch me or treat me in a way that makes me feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused.

It's okay to say 'no', and I know that there will always be someone who can help me.

I know that I can tell my guardians or a trusted adult if I feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused.

I am strong, smart, and safe.

What Teens Can Do To Help Stay Safe

*Don't go out alone. There is safety in numbers. This rule isn't just for little kids, it applies to teens, too.

*Always tell an adult where you're going. Letting someone know where you'll be at all times is smart. If you're faced with a risky situation or get into trouble, your family and friends will know where to find you.

*Say 'no' if you feel threatened. If someone – anyone – touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, you have the right to say no. Whether it is pressure about sex, drugs, or doing something that you know is wrong, be strong and stand your ground.

*Use caution. Communicate. Have confidence.

What Your Child Can Do At School And At Home

School Tips:

- Always take a friend when walking or riding your bike to and from school. Stay with a group while waiting at the bus stop. It's safer and more fun to be with your friends.
- If anyone bothers you while going to or from school, get away from that person, and tell a trusted adult like your parents or teacher.
- If an adult approached you for help or directions, remember grownups needing help should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.
- If someone you don't know or feel comfortable with offers you a ride, say 'no'.
- If someone follows you, get away from him or her as quickly as you can. Always be sure to tell your parents or trusted adult what happened.
- If someone tries to take you somewhere, quickly get away and yell, "This person is trying to take me!" or "This person is not my mom (dad)."
- If you want to change your plans after school, always check first with your guardians. Never play in parks, malls, or video arcades by yourself.
- If you go home alone after school, check to see that everything is okay before you go in. Once inside, call your parents to let them know that you are alright. Make sure you follow your 'home alone' tips.
- Trust your feelings. If someone makes you feel scared or uncomfortable, get away as fast as you can and tell a trusted adult.

Home Alone Tips:

*Check out the house before entering. Go to a safe place to call for help if something doesn't seem right.

*Lock all the doors.

*Call your mom or dad when you get home to let them know you're safe.

*Never tell callers that your parents aren't home. Instead say the he or she can't come to the phone right now and offer to take a message. Let the answering machine answer the phone if possible.

*Don't open the door for or talk to anyone who comes to your home unless that person is a trusted family friend or relative and your parents have told you it is okay.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

Precautionary Measures:

Necessary Materials

- *Keep a complete description of your child.
- *Take color photographs of your child every six months.
- *Keep copies of your child's fingerprints.
- *Keep a sample of your child's DNA.
- *Know where your child's medical records are located.
- *Have your dentist prepare and maintain dental charts for your child.

What To Do If Your Child Is Missing:

- *Immediately report your child missing to your local law enforcement agency.
- *Ask the law enforcement agency to enter your child into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Persons File
- *Limit access to your home until law enforcement arrives and has the opportunity to collect possible evidence.
- *Give law enforcement investigators all information you have on your child including fingerprints, photographs, complete description and the facts & circumstances related to the disappearance.
- *Call the National Center for Missing & Exploited Childre at 1-800-THE-LOST.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- **Staying Safe* booklet series, Girl Scouts of the USA, www.gsusa.org
- **Protecting the Gift: Keeping Children and Teenagers Safe and Parents Sane and The Gift of Fear*, both by: Gavin de Becker
- **The Safe Child Book: A Commonsense Approach to Protecting Children and Teaching Children to Protect Themselves*, Fireside Press
- **A Child Called It*, Dave Pelzer
- **Child Lures: What Every Parent and Child Should Know About Preventing Sexual Abuse and Abduction*, Summit Publishing Group

"How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide" is a tear-out booklet bound in with Boy Scout of America youth books. It is designed for parents or guardians and young people to use together for youth protection training. The Power Pack Pals comic books are also available in English and in Spanish.. The BSA has bilingual, age-appropriate videos for all youth age groups to address the problems of sexual abuse. They also have an online Youth Protection Training tool. www.scouting.org

- To report information about child pornography, child molestation, child prostitution, and the online enticement of children: log onto NCMEC's CyberTipline at: www.cybertipline.com

- Information about child safety, identification, abduction, fingerprinting and crime prevention: <http://mcgruff-safe-kids.com/>

The following websites provide additional information about protecting children from abduction and exploitation:

*Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Department of Justice, OJJDP Publications – Child Protection; <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/pubs/missing.html>

*NCMEC, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:
<http://www.missingkids.com> and www.netismartz.org

*The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Crime Against Children Program webpage: <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/crimesmain.htm>

*The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Tip and Public Leads webpage:
<https://www.ifccfbi.gov/complaint/terrorist.asp>

*Child Abuse Prevention Network: www.child-abuse.com

*Childhelp USA: www.childhelpusa.org, 1-800-4-A-CHILD

*Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.org

*Amber Alert: www.codeamber.org

*National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information:
www.calib.com/nccanch

*National Runaway Switchboard: www.nrscrisisline.org, 1-800-621-4000

*Prevent Child Abuse America: www.preventchildabuse.org

*Children’s Defense Fund: www.childrensdefense.org

*Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.org

*Adult Survivors of Child Abuse: <http://www.ascasupport.org/>

*Jacob Wetterling Foundation: <http://www.jwf.org/home.asp>

*Kempe Children’s Center: <http://www.kempecenter.org/>

*National Children’s Alliance: www.nca-online.org

*Witness Justice: www.witnessjustice.org

*Child Welfare Information Gateway: www.childwelfare.gov

*Escape School by Dignity Memorial: www.escapeschool.org

*Amber Alert: www.codeamber.org