

## Report # 6

# What Parents Can Do To Keep Children Safe

- .Know where your child is at all times.
- .Have your child fingerprinted and have their DNA information. Keep it in your wallet where you can find it in a hurry.
- .Always keep a current (yearly) photograph of your child with current height and weight.
- .Obtain a passport for your child. This must be done by both parents, unless the child comes from a single parent family.
- .Know who your child's friends are, their parents, address and phone number.
- .Never leave your child unattended (i.e. shopping malls, a car, home, etc.)
- .Teach your child how to use 911 and "0".
- .Make sure your child knows their full names (and yours), phone number, area code, and address, including city and state.
- .If you're separated or divorced, let your child's caregivers know about visitation rights, and whether or not your ex-spouse is allowed to pick up the child.
- .Take everything your child tells you seriously.
- .Kids should know that a stranger is any adult they don't know well. Even someone they see every day, like a neighbor or bus driver, can be a stranger. This doesn't mean all strangers are bad. It just means a child shouldn't be alone with them.
- .Discuss and rehearse scenarios with your child.
- .Teach them what to do if they get lost.
- .Abductors use many lures to attract children: They may ask for help, like asking for directions or finding a lost pet. Teach your child that adults never ask kids for help or directions. Adults should ask other adults for help, not

them. If a stranger asks for help, they should say no and stay away from them. Strangers may offer gifts, such as candy, money, jobs, or lure them with a pet or a toy. Teach your child to never accept gifts from a stranger.

.Strangers may pretend to be an authority figure, such as a police officer or a clergyman. Uniforms are easy to get. If a person in a uniform of authority approaches your child, teach them that they should ask another adult to help them.

.Strangers may create an emergency by saying something like; "your parents are hurt, I came to take you to the hospital." Tell your child this would never happen.

.A lot of kids are abducted on their way to and from school or the park. A child alone is an easy target. Teach kids to walk and play together and to watch out for each other.

.Teach your child that no one has the right to touch them or make them feel uncomfortable. Explain to young kids that the area their bathing suit covers, are their parts of their body "private parts" and that the no one has the right that the area their bathing suit covers, are their parts of their body "private parts" and that the no one has the right to touch them there.

.Teach them that if any of these situations occur, they should tell you immediately ... and never be afraid to tell you - even if someone has threatened them 'not to tell.'

.Assure your child that if they're ever lost or abducted, you will always love them and will look for them until you find them, no matter what. This is crucial! Most abductors tell kids that their parents don't want them anymore. If kids believe this, they don't have anywhere else to go.

.Children must know that you want them to come home.

.Reinforce these points to your child regularly.

.Never leave a small child alone at home or in a car.

.Make sure your child knows his or her full name, address and telephone

number.

.Make sure your child know where you work, and that telephone information.

.Know your child's friends and where they live.

.Teach your child about strangers. Tell him or her to never talk, take candy, or go with a stranger without your consent.

.Make sure your child knows never to get into a stranger's car.

.Tell your child that if approached by a stranger, run and scream.

Teaching children self-protective skills isn't just taking them to karate class. Parents can help children by encouraging them to trust their own instincts. If children are approached by someone and they sense danger, it is important that they pay attention to these feelings and let themselves be guided by them. Sensing danger and getting away as fast as possible can save a child's life. Children can learn self-protective skills that they can use throughout their lives.

By teaching children how to defend themselves, you acknowledge that you will not always be around to protect them. Handle this delicately - especially with younger children. One way is to tell kids that by learning these skills, they're a part of a safety team in the family and neighborhood. This makes them feel they're doing their part as members of a team of people who care about them. Refer to stories of kids in the newspaper and on TV, who saved the lives of siblings or friends or neighbors by knowing how to call 9-1-1.

Not everyone agrees on self-defense programs for kids - feeling that some children might try to beat up an adult aggressor. They question whether a child fighting to get away could provoke a kidnapper to more violence. Parents should stress that getting away and calling for help are the children's primary defenses. While karate or other martial arts may help develop physical strength and self-confidence, make sure that your children do not overestimate their abilities.

It's impossible to give children rules for every possible danger. Focus on a few simple skills.



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