

RAISING A STREET SAFE CHILD

WOULD YOUR CHILD KNOW WHAT TO DO IF...

He or she became lost in a store?

He or she was being followed by a stranger?

A stranger asked for help finding a lost puppy?

A babysitter wanted to play a secret game that no one would know about?

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD REMAIN SAFE WHEN A POTENTIAL PROBLEM ARISES?

FOLLOW THESE TIPS:

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO BE FAMILIAR WITH HIS OR HER SURROUNDINGS:

When walking with your child through your neighborhood point out people, places and activities that are usually present at any given time. Assist your child in recognizing what is normal for your area so changes will be noticeable.

TEACH YOUR CHILD TO BE ALERT TO HIS OR HER SURROUNDINGS:

When walking with your child, make a game of observing activities and persons on the street. See how many potential problems you and your child can spot e.g. isolated parking lots, poorly lit alleys, abandoned houses, cars stopped near parks.

DEVELOP A PLAN:

Using the same game ask your child to see where the nearest telephone or safe house is. Ask your child to tell you what he or she would do to obtain help if he or she or one of their friends was in trouble. Ask your child what number would they call if there was an emergency.

Teach your children the following basics:

- ✓ Teach your child their full name, address and phone number (include area code).
- ✓ Have a family code name to be used to verify the authenticity of an emergency concerning other family members.
- ✓ Teach your child how to make an emergency phone call (911). Practice on an unplugged phone.
- ✓ Teach your child to go to a store clerk or security guard and ask for help if you become separated in a store. Tell your children to stay with you at all times while shopping. And, accompany your child to the restroom.
- ✓ Tell your child to never accept gifts or rides from someone he or she does not know well. Talk about who you would feel comfortable driving the children. And make sure your child knows to never hitchhike!
- ✓ Teach your child that no one, not even someone they know, has the right to touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Tell them they have the right to say NO to an adult in this situation.

Should your child, despite his or her best efforts find himself or herself in danger here is the action to take:

- If he or she is physically held by someone, tell your child to YELL, loud and long, and to keep it up until the person lets go or until help arrives.
- RUN- tell your child to put as much distance as possible between himself or herself and a problem.
- Run directly to the NEAREST safe location e.g. police station, fire station, to a group of adults, to a crowded area.

SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR CHILDREN

1. Always tell an adult where you are going and when you are going to be home.
2. Know your full name, address and phone number
3. Know the name, address and phone number of someone else you can call if your parents are not at home.
4. When possible, never travel or play away from your yard alone.
5. If someone asks for help, go to a trusted adult and explain what that person wants.
6. Always check first with your parents or trusted adult before going anywhere, accepting anything, or getting into a car with anyone.
7. Use the buddy system when you are going places or playing outside.
8. Say no to anyone who tries to touch you any place a bathing suit would cover. Get away from that person and tell someone if anyone violates this rule.
9. Never open the door when you are home alone. If someone calls you when you are at home alone, tell them your parents are busy and can't come to the phone. Never tell the caller you are home alone. Always keep all the exterior doors locked.

SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. Network with your child's friends and their parents to safeguard all children in the community.
2. Insist all slumber parties are well chaperoned.
3. Never leave children unattended, especially in a car.
4. Notice when a stranger pays attention to your child and find out why. Question the motives of adults or older children who want to spend time alone with your children.
5. Do not let your child spend time in an unsupervised home, and know who their friends are.
6. If your child prefers to spend a lot of time at a neighbor's home, find out why.
7. Play "what if" games: "What if a stranger offers you a ride home or asks you to help find a lost puppy?"
8. Screen baby-sitters and other care givers carefully- both male and female.
9. Be alert to unexplained toys or money. Find out who gave them to your child and why.
10. Develop and maintain open communication with your children so you can talk about any subject comfortably.