



TIP OF THE WEEK

Keeping Kids Safe

There are four reasons why a child could be missing:

- Stranger abduction
- Parental abduction
- Running away
- Lost

They all have different beginnings, reasons for occurring, and patterns. However, they all have the same unfortunate ending: missing children. This information is designed to help both parents and children handle the situation should it occur.

There are precautions you can teach your child to significantly reduce the risk of his or her being the victim of abduction. A well informed child has the odds in his favor. Take time to teach your children about personal safety.

- Talk to your child – from an early age and without instilling fear – about the facts of abduction.
- Clearly define what a stranger is.
- Abductors play on emotions of children, such as fear or compassion. Teach your child the different lures used.
- Shopping centers are a haven for abductors. Keep your child at your side. Explain to them that if they lose you, they should go to the nearest cashier or information booth and ask for help.
- Have your phone number engraved on the back of a bracelet or any other inconspicuous place; write it inside all articles of clothing. Tape coins in your child's shoes or sew them into clothing.
- Teach your child to avoid isolated areas such as parks, school grounds, and fields.
- Teach them to "buddy up" as there is safety in numbers.
- Establish ground rules as to who will pick up your child and stick to them. Establish a code word, which you and your child know, to be used in emergencies.
- Teach your children to never give any information to a stranger over the phone when they are alone at home. The same applies to callers at the door.
- Instruct your child to report to you or an authorized adult any suspicious incident.
- Tell your children to walk facing oncoming traffic. If a car stops, teach your child to run home or to the nearest commercial establishment.
- Teach your child to say "NO" to an adult; to scream, kick, or fight if a stranger tries to take him away. Doing so will draw attention to the situation.
- Remind your child often that an adult in trouble requires the assistance of another adult, not a child.

Be sure your children know:

- That Police, Peace Officers, and Security Guards are there to help them.
- They know their full names as well as your full name, address, and telephone number.
- How to use both the telephone at home and pay phone, and how to make a long distance call. Explain who the operator is, how to reach him or her, and how he or she can help in an emergency.
- What to do if they become separated from you in a large store or shopping center. Have a pre-arranged spot to meet in case this occurs.
- That no one can forbid them from contacting their parents.
- About their neighborhood. Point out useful landmarks to them while walking or driving. Draw maps with them to see how large their "world" really is. This can be very useful to a lost child in trying to find his or her way home.

Here are some other tips to keep your children safe:

- Always know where and with whom your child is.
- Keep a list of emergency telephone numbers beside your telephone.
- Never leave your child unattended in a car.
- Be selective in your choice of babysitters (or anyone you may leave your child with).



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If you have information a crime, contact Protective Services at 780-471-7477. If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). Your identity will remain anonymous, and if the information you provide leads to a conviction, you could eligible for a reward of up to \$2000.00.

Everybody benefits, except the criminal.