

## Essential Safety Tips

The FBI estimates that at least 2300 children are reported missing every day. Parents need to begin educating their children about safety issues at a young age, starting around 3-4 years old. Review these tips with your child, and also take our quiz to reinforce safety issues.

1. Approach the subject of safety in a non-threatening way. It is important that you don't make your child fearful of dangerous situations or people, but cautious and able to recognize when something is not right.

2. Encourage your child to trust his or her intuition, and to be able to talk to you when something is bothering them. They should know not to keep secrets from you. Open communication is very important. **Really LISTEN to your child.**

3. Let your child know that their body belongs to them. No one has the right to touch them inappropriately. If someone is touching them or making them feel uncomfortable in any way, they should let you know immediately, even if it is a family member.

4. Inform your child of the rules pertaining to strangers. Namely, that a stranger looks just like any other person, not like a monster or creature. A stranger is someone that your child does not know, nor does his or her friends and family.

5. Strangers will use different ways to lure a child.

6. The most common lures are:

- \* Pretending to look for a lost dog
- \* Offering candy or money to make the child go to their car
- \* Telling the child that family members will be hurt if he or she doesn't comply
- \* Asking for directions

***Let your child know that adults DO NOT ask children for help nor do they threaten them.***

7. If they do encounter any of the above situations, they should immediately scream, "NO," and run as quickly as they can in the opposite direction and try to find a trusted adult. They should never approach an unknown car or get into a car with an adult that they do not know. If someone tries to grab them, they should scream, "THIS IS NOT MY PARENT!" to attract attention.

8. Share an easily remembered secret CODE WORD. Tell your child that if anyone approaches them and says they are a family friend who needs to take them somewhere, (sometimes they say that a parent is hurt and in the hospital, or there's a family emergency) your child must ask for the code word. If the person really is a friend, they will know it. If they don't know it then your child should run away as quickly as possible.

9. Never label your child's clothing, backpack, or other personal items with their name. An abductor could use this information to try to gain trust.

10. Give instructions on what to do if your child gets separated from you in a mall, supermarket, or other public place. Tell them to go to a checkout counter, information desk, or to approach a security officer or mother with children, and let them know that they are lost and looking for their parent(s). Make sure your child knows his or her full name, address, phone number, and the place where you work or can be contacted, as well as how to dial 911, make collect calls, and dial the operator on a pay phone.

11. Know where your child is at all times, and keep a list of their friends, addresses, and phone numbers.

12. Keep an up-to-date record of your child's personal and medical information on-hand in case of emergency. Make sure they are fingerprinted and that you have a recent photo of available at all times

13. Try not to panic if your child is missing. First, check everywhere in the house, then check with the neighbors and your child's friends. If you still cannot locate them, immediately call the police.

14. THERE IS NO WAITING PERIOD REQUIRED TO REPORT A MISSING CHILD TO THE POLICE. Provide them with a description of what your child is wearing, , along with your ChildPrint ID Kit®. Let them know when you last saw them. Request that their name be entered into the National Crime Information Center Missing Person File (NCIC), which enables any law enforcement agency in the U.S. to identify them. Call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST to have them entered into their database. Post signs around your neighborhood and town with their photo and vital information. Be persistent in your search efforts and keep hope alive that they will be found and returned home safely.

## Abduction Escape Strategies

We sincerely hope that your child will never have to use any of these instructions, but knowing them will be empowering if an abduction occurs, and may save their life.

1. If they are grabbed from behind, around the neck and shoulders, they should drop down, twist their body, and scream.

2. If they are grabbed by the wrist, they should pull down and twist the attacker's thumb to break the hold. They should NOT pull away because that's where the adult has strength.

3. To escape if in a store, they should knock things off shelves, run, fight, and scream.

4. To escape if outside, they should run into the nearest house, ask for help, and call 911.

5. To escape if in a parking garage they should:

1. Run between cars.
2. Knock against cars.
3. Pull on door handles to set off the car alarms.

6. If locked in a car trunk they should:

1. Kick out the car's stop lights for air and wave out of the hole for help.
2. Pull out any wires they can get their hands on.

7. If they are grabbed and put into a car they should:

1. Try to climb into the back seat so they can get the back door open and escape.  
The front doors are usually locked.
2. Slide down onto front floor and reach up under the dash and pull any wires they can get their hands on.  
Often this will bring the car to a stop.
3. Pound the car horn and scream as loudly as they can
4. Jam their foot on top of the kidnapper's foot on the accelerator and ram the car in front,  
if stopped at a light.

8. If they are kidnapped and kept in a house or apartment they should:

1. Flash room lights as an SOS signal.
2. Clog the toilet with a towel and keep flushing to flood the apartment below.
3. Try every window and door in the house.

9. Your child should not remain quiet or still, even if the abductor threatens physical violence. Teach them to fight for their life. ***First and foremost, make sure your child knows never to go with someone they don't know.***