

## Child Safety Tips for Families

Children need to play and learn in an environment where they are safe and secure.

Nonetheless, the safety of children rests primarily with the parent or care giver.

This responsibility cannot be abdicated.

Additionally, preparing for an unsafe world comes after the child feels secure in their home-school-play environment.

This security can be accomplished by strengthening the child's personal power.

Encourage children to make choices and decisions daily and engage in regular family discussions.

Effective 'street proofing' begins at home .

Teach children their name (especially their last name), address, telephone number and parents' names, places of work and contact numbers.

Also, how to Dial 911 at home and from a public telephone in an emergency situation.

Keep in mind that the extent of information learned will depend upon the child's age and maturity level.

To help children remember, review this important information often and reward progress.

Insist that very young children hold the supervising adult's hand continually while walking to and from stores, play areas, school grounds, camping and the like.

Older children should stay close by the parent.

Children must be taught not to wander away from

you in public places or play 'hide and seek'.

If they become separated or lost, teach them to tell someone with a name tag, a cashier or a security guard right away, preferably a female.

Encourage children to travel in groups , regardless of their age. The popular " buddy system " works best.

Insist that children check with you before accepting a ride, gift or candy from someone , even if they know the person.

Children should be told that adults do not ask children for help.

Always have a family secret code word that only the family knows. This code must be used to identify the "safe" person if a child is to be picked up in an emergency situation by someone other than their parent or care giver.

In addition, a child should never leave with anyone without notifying the person in charge .

Teach children it's OK to say "NO" .

Also, if a person tries to grab or restrain them, teach them to scream loudly , scatter belongings, knock over furniture, make a loud noise and shout, "THIS PERSON IS NOT MY PARENT."

Take your child around the neighborhood where they frequently walk and play, pointing out 'safe houses' - houses they should feel safe to approach or enter in an emergency.

Establish a ' Communication Center ' in your home so you will know where family members are at all times. It should be set up in a prominent, easily accessible location, supplied with sufficient pencils and paper to write notes, and where a list of important contact and

emergency numbers are posted.

Never give an infant to anyone not known well to hold or watch for a moment .

The same tip applies to the care and supervision of young children.

Never leave a small child unattended in a car or vehicle.

Children have been known to perish in a car fire, wander away from the vehicle and become lost and traumatized by an accidental abduction when the vehicle was stolen.

Never justify to yourself that it is safe to leave your child ' just for a minute ' .

Promise your children that you would never abandon them.

Assure your child that they would be told immediately by a family member or 'good' friend if a parent(s) dies.

Assure your child that if she/he were missing, you would never stop looking for them no matter how long it took to find them.

## Holiday Child Safety Tips

Never leave your child alone, even for a minute.

Your child might wander away from you while you are busy shopping, banking and mailing items, so it is helpful to ask a friend or relative to come with you or hire a caregiver during the busy holiday season.

Remember young children have a very short attention span, so if you are waiting for a considerable length of time in a line, carry a toy or book with you to entertain your child.

Children should not play “hide and seek” in the store.

Always accompany your child into a public washroom and stay with them the entire time.

Never leave your child unsupervised and alone in arcades, store play areas, movie theaters or toy specialty sections and stores.

These are places where predators look for children.

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Never leave your child unattended in the family car, van or truck; a child may accidentally start the car, play with the cigarette lighter and start a fire, or be a victim if the car is stolen.

Talk to your child about what you expect them to do if they become separated from you and lost in a store or mall.

Options are to find and tell the nearest cashier or

security guard that you are lost.

Insist that your child NEVER go with anyone who does not know the family predetermined secret password.

Always decide upon a predesignated spot in the store to meet, if you and your child or teen become separated.

Indeed, this practice is a good one to enforce with all members of the family during the busy holiday shopping season.

Insist that your child never leave the mall building with anyone even if it is to look for you or to assist another person with a task, like find a lost puppy.

Additionally, if any person threatens them in any way, assure them that it is OK to say “No” and quickly return to their parent or to a cashier or security guard at the store.

Teach them, that if threatened in any way, to scream loudly, scatter their belongings, make a big commotion and shout “This person is not my parent.”

Also, inform them that adults do not ask children for help.

Insist that older children go shopping with friend or have a buddy with them at all times, that is walking to the mall, during shopping and walking home.

Decide upon a clear plan of action for picking up your child or teen from an activity or event before they leave you, including where and when.

Be sure the spot is safe, well lit and has people passing by or around.

Always be early for the pick up.

Teach your child his/her name, address, telephone number, parents’ name, place of work and work telephone numbers.

Most teens can keep such information in their wallet.

Review this critical information often.

Remember to keep it simple for very young children as maturity affects how much information they can learn and remember.