

Raising Safe Kids

A great thing about children is their ability to trust people, especially adults. It can be difficult for parents to teach children to balance that trust with caution. However, children need to know basic, common-sense rules that can help keep them safe.



BE PREPARED

- Make sure children know their name, address (city and state) and phone number with area code.
- Instruct children how to use a phone and how to call 911 in emergencies.
- Advise children to find a store clerk, security guard or police officer for help if they are lost in a mall, store or on the street.
- Set a good example with your own actions — lock doors and windows and check who is at your front door before opening it.

AT SCHOOL AND PLAY

- Encourage your children to walk and play with friends. Tell them to avoid places that could be dangerous — empty buildings, alleys, playgrounds, or parks with broken equipment.
- Teach children to settle arguments with words not violence and to walk away when others are arguing.
- Encourage your child to be alert in the neighborhood and tell an adult about anything that does not seem quite right.
- Carefully check out childcare programs — look for certifications, staff qualifications, rules for field trips, reputation in the community, parent involvement and visitation rules.

AT HOME ALONE

- Leave a phone number where you can be reached. Post it by the phone, along with numbers for a neighbor and emergencies.
- Have your child call you or a neighbor when he or she gets home. Discuss rules for having friends over and going outside when no adult is home.
- Teach children never to enter a house or apartment when something does not look right, such as a broken window, ripped screen or an open door.
- Make sure your child knows how to use the window and door locks.
- Tell your child no one is allowed into the home without your permission. Insist that he or she never to let a caller at the door or on the phone know that no adult is home.
- Take time to talk to children about the deadly consequences of guns, medicines, power tools, drugs, alcohol, cleaning products and inhalants. Take steps to keep these items in a secure place out of sight and locked up, if necessary.

PROTECTING YOUR CHILD AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE

- Teach your child that no one — not even a teacher or close relative — has the right to touch him or her in a way that feels uncomfortable. It is O.K. to say no and tell a trusted adult.
- Do not force kids to kiss, hug or sit on a grown-up's lap if they are against it. This gives them control and teaches they have the right to refuse.
- Always know where and with whom your child is.
- Be alert for changes in your child's behavior that could signal sexual abuse, such as sudden secrecy, withdrawal from activities, refusal to go to school, unexplained hostility toward a favorite babysitter or relative. or increased anxiety. Some physical signs of abuse include bedwetting, loss of appetite, venereal disease, nightmares and pain or irritation around the genitals.



Prevent Child Abuse
Georgia

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