

How To Prevent Child Abduction

Once, child safety was taken for granted. Now, it is a major concern. Should we live in fear? It *is* possible to feel safe again. This page will tell you how.

Prevention

Preventing child abduction is a two-step process: educating yourself and educating your children.

NO is the magic word. Teach your child that not every adult has the right to touch her or to tell her what to do. This is especially true when your child is asked to do anything you have told her is wrong. In these instances, it is okay for your child to say "no" to an adult.

Educating Yourself

- **Never** leave your child alone in public, period.
- Know where your child is and know who his friends are and where they live.
- Avoid dressing you child in clothes that display her name. Your child may not realize that someone who knows her name is not necessarily a friend.
- Make it a habit to know what your child is wearing every day.
- Let the school know who is authorized to pick up your child.
- File a request with your child's elementary school to notify you when your child is absent without prior notification and consent.

Educating Your Child

Communication is the key. Be someone your child can talk with. Try to be sensitive to what your child is saying. Let him know that you love him no matter what and that he can talk to you about **anything**. Properly taught, safety can become as automatic as learning to look both ways before crossing the street.

Teach Your Child

- His full name and address and how to write them.
- Her full telephone number, including the area code, and how to dial it. Teach her that the operator is a friend.
- **Never** to enter anyone's home or car without your permission whether your child knows the person or not.
- Not to answer the door when your not home, and never to say that he is alone over the phone.
- That if you are separated in a store or other public place, she should go directly to a clerk at a desk and ask for help. She should never leave the store or go into a parking lot.
- Not to go near anybody's car unless they have your permission.
- To go to places in a group and not alone.

Be Organized

- **Keep a list** of your neighbors and their phone numbers for this purpose only.
- **Keep a list** of the names, phone numbers, and addresses of:
 - your child's schools and teachers
 - the school transportation coordinator
 - all your child's friends and their parents' names
 - your child's workplace, if applicable
 - the park, playground, or recreational facilities
 - all family members and relatives
 - babysitters
 - non-custodial parent or biological parent if either is applicable
 - hospitals
 - law enforcement agencies
- **Have in a safe place:**
 - A recent clear photograph of your child. School photos are ideal. Note height, weight, hair and eye color on the photo. If your child is under two, take new pictures at least four times a year.
 - Fingerprints of your child taken by the police, and any additional forms supplied by the police at the time of the fingerprinting.
 - A detailed, written description of your child, including height, weight, hair and eye color, skin

complexion, build, any eye disorders, moles, freckles, scars, pierced ears, skin discoloration, tattoos, type of jewelry usually worn, and any unusual habits.

- Update once a year your child's medical history, and check with your child's doctor and dentist to make sure their records are ready for release, if necessary

If Your Child is Missing

- Follow your plan. The sooner the search begins, the better the chances are for recovery.
 - Search out of the way places, including closets, attics, basements, crawl spaces, garage, tool shed, bushes, etc.
 - Call the people on your list.
 - Call the police.