

SAFETY TIPS PARENTS SHOULD TEACH THEIR CHILDREN

Your child should:

- Know his/her full name, address, and phone number.
- Know his/her mom's and dad's (or guardian's) first and last name.
- Know how and when to dial 911 and how to make a long distance telephone call.
- Know a stranger is someone they or their parents do not know well.
- Never go near a car with a stranger in it, or someone your family does not know well.
- Know if a stranger tries to talk to them, they need to ignore them, and get away from the stranger.
- Never get into someone else's car without your permission.
- Never tell someone on the phone that they are home alone. They can politely say, "Everyone is busy right now. Please call back later."
- Know if they are alone they should always have the door locked, and never open the door to a stranger. If it is important, the person can come back. Depending on maturity level, children 10 and under should not be left alone. They do not have the experience to deal with certain situations.
- Never go into anyone's home without your permission.
- Know that no one has the right to touch them, or to make them feel uncomfortable; they have the right to say "no!" If someone does attempt to touch them, he or she should tell you.
- Tell you if someone has asked them to keep a "secret".
- Tell you if someone has offered them candy, money, a gift, or wants to take their picture.

A GREAT SAFETY TOOL FOR PARENTS TO USE

Have a secret family code that only you and your child knows. If there is an emergency and someone you don't know well has to pick your child up, that person should know the secret code. If this person does not know the secret code, your child should not go with them. They should get away and go to a grown-up they know and trust.

WHO IS A STRANGER?

A stranger is a person whom you have never met before; a person you may have seen before, but whom you don't know anything about (for example, someone you've seen walking around your neighborhood); a person whom your parents do not know well.

WHAT DO STRANGERS LOOK LIKE?

Strangers can be men or women, young or old. They can have any skin color. Some are tall, skinny, short, or fat. Some strangers are pretty and some are not so pretty. They can speak different languages. Most strangers are nice, but some strangers are very mean. Since children don't know if someone is a good stranger or a bad stranger, they should not talk to anyone they or their parents do not know.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU GET LOST?

If you get lost outdoors, in a park or zoo for example, stop where you are. You may be scared, but your mom and dad (or the grown-up you were with) will come looking for you. Walking around makes it harder for them to find you. If you see a police officer, tell him/her that you are lost and ask for help.

❖ RESPONSIBILITY AS PARENTS

Educating our children is one of the easiest ways to protect them. We do not want to scare them, but our children need to be informed on how to maintain stranger awareness. Not only do we need to educate our children about stranger awareness, we need to ensure their awareness several times a year as they grow and threats to them change.