



Keeping Our Children Safe

In a perfect world, our children would be safe from all harm. They could play with friends and go off to school without any worries or concerns. But this is the real world. And although most kids grow up without any serious negative experiences, we have to do our best to prepare them in case they are ever in danger or threatened in any way. Here are things you can do to help keep your children safe.

Walk with your child to school or the bus stop to point out areas that might not be safe. Play a game called “What If” by using pretend situations to help them decide how to react in a real emergency. (Refer to the Parent/Child Activity on the back to help get you started.) Point out houses along the way that they could go to for help. Remind them to use the buddy system; it’s always much safer than walking alone.

Never allow your child to play away from home alone. Remind them to avoid talking to adults who appear to be alone or kids much older than they are. Tell them to stay at least an arm’s length from anyone they don’t know. If they feel uncomfortable or suspect they are in a dangerous situation, they should leave quickly.

Be sure to supervise your children when they are in public areas. They should also avoid public

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restrooms unless they are with a trusted adult. If your child should become lost inside a store or shopping center, tell them to go to a nearby clerk or security guard for help. Your child should never leave the store to look for you inside the mall or out in the parking lot.

Explain that a stranger is anyone your child does not know well or has never seen before. A good rule to remember is: a stranger is someone who has never been invited to your house as a guest. That means delivery persons, mail carriers or door-to-door sales people should be considered strangers.



Instruct your child to never tell a caller their name or give any information about the family when answering the telephone. Older children who are ready to handle being home alone for brief periods should be instructed to never say they are alone. Young children should never be left home alone. Have a back-up arrangement to leave them with a neighbor or family member if an emergency arises.

It’s best not to let your children wear clothing or carry articles with their names on them. A stranger may pretend to know the child by calling their name and acting like a friend.

Source: The American Legion Edition McGruff Safe Kids I.D. Kit.

Parent/Child Activity

Teach children that they are not powerless in the face of danger by teaching them some safety measures for handling certain situations that might arise. Ohio State University Extension suggests acting out certain situations like the ones given below with your child. If the real situation occurs, your child will be better able to handle the situation safely.

SITUATION:

You are walking home from school and a stranger pulls up to you and says, “Hi, I make movies and have been looking for a cute kid like you to be in my next one. Could I take your picture? My studio isn’t far away. Get in.” What do you do?

SUGGESTED RESPONSES:

- Instruct your child to not go near the car and to stay out of reach of a stranger.
- Run back to the school or wherever there are people.
- If the stranger follows you, scream and make as much noise as possible to draw attention to yourself.
- Tell your parent what happened.

SITUATION:

You are playing at your friend’s house and your friend shows you where their parents have a gun hidden. Your friend suggests playing cops and robber with it. What do you do?

SUGGESTED RESPONSES:

- Tell the friend how dangerous guns are and that they should never be used as toys or handled by children.
- If your friend will not listen, go find an adult and tell them what is going on.
- Leave the room immediately if the friend starts to touch the gun.
- Tell your parents what happened.

Here are some additional safety situations you may want to address with your child:

- Answering the Telephone if You Are Home Alone
- Fire Safety
- Poisons
- Proper and Improper Touching

For additional information on child safety issues, call your local Ohio State University Extension Office.

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