

Teaching Your Children How to Be Safe in Various Situations

These are the basic things to teach your children:

- Their full name, address, and phone number.
- How to make phone calls within and outside your area code, use **911** in an emergency, and reach an operator.
- How to use a cellular phone.
- Your full name, exact name of your place of work, work phone number, and any pager or cell phone number you have.
- The names of the streets and landmarks in your neighborhood.
- Be alert to and aware of your surroundings. Escape routes and safe places to go if they need help
- Never to give out any personal information that can identify them.
- Tell you about anything unusual or suspicious that bothers them, or if anyone approaches or touches them in any way that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused.
- Take advantage of situations in which you are out with your children to point out dangers and teach safety skills.
- Trust their instincts. If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't. They have the right to say **NO** if they sense something is wrong.
- How to do basic first aid

When making **911** calls:

- Never say "nine eleven." There is no eleven on a telephone keypad or dial. Always say "nine-one-one."
- Always call from a safe place. If there is a fire in the house, get out first and then call.
- Post your address near the phone.
- Never call **911** as a prank or joke. You can get into trouble and keep someone who really needs help from getting it in time.
- Call **911** if you think you have an emergency and explain the situation to the dispatcher.
- If you call **911** by mistake, don't hang up. Explain the mistake to the dispatcher and say there is no emergency.
- **911** is not for animal emergencies. Call your vet or the County Department of Animal Control at **(619) 236-2341**.

When in day or home care:

- Say **NO** when anyone asks you to do something painful, embarrassing, or wrong. Do not be tempted by gifts or candy, or be compelled by threats.
- Not allow anyone to touch the parts of your body covered by your bathing suit. And don't touch anyone else's body in those places.
- Do not remain alone with an adult in a bathroom, office, bedroom, closet, or other isolated place.
- When in a bathroom, do not allow anyone to too much time watching you or fixing your clothes. And never touch bodily wastes or blood.

When going to and from school:

- Avoid shortcuts, deserted or abandoned buildings, and dark or isolated areas.
- Turn around and run to the nearest safe place if a person appears to be following them on foot, or a vehicle slows or stops by them. Run away from danger, never toward it. Safe places would be neighbor's or friend's homes, businesses, offices, etc.
- Not to hitchhike or accept a ride from anyone unless you have told them it is OK in each instance. Tell them to say NO and run away to a safe place if offered a ride by a stranger.
- Never to leave school with anyone they don't know. Establish a simple code word to be used if someone your children don't know comes to pick them up. Remind them about the word periodically and tell them not to accept a ride or go anywhere with anyone who does not know the code word. Stress that this word must be kept secret.

When out and away from home:

- Play with others, not alone.
- Teach the difference between a stranger who may be a danger and one who may be helpful, e.g., in an emergency rescue situation. The simple "stranger-danger" message is inappropriate and misguided because the danger to children is much greater from someone who is not a stranger.
- Say NO to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touching or actions by others and to get out of these situations as fast as possible. If avoidance is not possible tell them to make a big scene by screaming, yelling, kicking, and resisting. Their safety is more important than being polite.
- Not to get in a vehicle or go anywhere with a person without your permission
- Not to respond just because a person tries to start a conversation.
- Stay away from any adult who asks for help, e.g., "Can you help me find my dog?" or asks for directions (an adult should ask another adult, not a child for help), or tries to get you to go somewhere with them, e.g., "Your mom's hurt and she told me to come get you."
- How to use a pay phone to call 911 in an emergency. Be sure to say that they don't need to put in any money.
- Not to let anyone take their picture and tell you if someone asks.
- Not to accept gifts or money from strangers. Have them tell you if anyone offers them gifts or money. Be alert for any new things they acquire.
- Not to be out alone at night.
- Not to go into anyone else's home without permission.
- If they get lost, remain where they first became lost and wait for a rescue. Make noise by yelling or some other means of attracting attention. Go to the nearest safe place if necessary.

When returning home alone:

- Carry his or her house key in a secure hidden place. Leave an extra key with a neighbor or trusted friend and tell your child where it will be if it's needed.
- Not to enter the home if a window or screen is broken, a door is ajar, or a strange vehicle is parked in the driveway. Go to a neighbor's home and call the **911**.
- Turn off the burglar alarm.
- Lock the door immediately after entering and make sure the home is secure.
- Check in with you after arriving home to let you know that he or she has arrived safely.

When at home alone:

- How to answer the door and when not to answer it. Never open the door to a stranger or let an uninvited neighbor or acquaintance into your home.
- How to use caller ID. How to respond if someone calls on the phone.
- Not to tell a caller that you are not at home. Have your child say you cannot come to the phone, ask the caller to leave a message, and say you will call back.
- If your child cannot take a message tell him or her not to answer the phone.
- To keep all doors and windows locked and how to unlock them in an emergency.
- Which appliances can be used and how to use them. Leave written instructions.
- Who to call, what to say, and where to go in an emergency, and what constitutes an emergency, e.g., a fire, gas leak, smoke, etc.
- Who to call, what to say, and where to go in a non-emergency, and how they differ from emergencies.
- About all the safety and security features of the home, including smoke and burglar alarms, panic buttons, fire extinguishers, outside lights, etc.
- How to get out quickly in case of fire.
- What to do if they smell smoke or gas.
- What to do during an electrical storm and a power outage.
- To follow a schedule you set for homework, chores, TV watching, computer use, etc.
- When to leave the house.
- When to invite a friend or friends over.
- When to use the phone.

When babysitting:

- Know your employer. Only work for people you or your parents know, or for whom you have a good personal reference.
- Give us your employer's name, address, phone number, and where he or she is going and when he or she expects to be home.
- Have your employer show you all the safety and security features of the home, including smoke and burglar alarms, telephones, panic buttons, fire extinguishers, door and window locks, outside lights, etc.
- Keep all doors and windows locked while inside. Leave an outside light on after dark. Keep drapes or blinds closed at night but leave some lights on.
- Keep front door locked if you are out in the back yard or in a common play area.
- Follow the same security principles you use at home in answering the door or the phone.
- Don't say you are alone and babysitting when answering the door or phone. Say you are visiting and that you will take a message for the parents.
- Hold hands with the children when walking. When walking along a street, keep between the children and the street.