



## Child Safety Tips for Parent/Guardian

1. **Make sure you know where your children are at all times.**
  - Know your children's friends and be clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit.
  - Make it a rule that your children check in with you when they arrive at or depart from a particular location and when there is a change in plans.
  - Let them know when you are running late or if your plans have changed so that they can see the rule is for safety purposes and not being used to check up on them.
  
2. **Never leave children unattended in an automobile whether it is running or not.**
  - Children should never be left unsupervised or allowed to spend time alone or with others in automobiles, as the potential dangers outweigh any perceived convenience or fun.
  - Remind children to **never** hitchhike, approach a car or engage in a conversation with anyone within a car that they do not know and trust or go anywhere with anyone without getting your permission first.
  
3. **Be involved in your children's activities.**
  - Be an active participant, you'll have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children.
  - If you are concerned about anyone's behavior, take it up with the sponsoring organization.
  
4. **Listen to your children.**
  - Pay attention if they tell you that they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.
  
5. **Take time to talk to your children.**
  - Notice when someone shows one or all of your children a great deal of attention or begins giving them gifts.
  - Talk to them about the person and find out why the person is acting this way.
  
6. **Teach your children.**
  - Teach your children the proper names of body parts, good touch, bad touch and what to do if someone tries to touch them in a sexual way.
  - Talk about acceptable behavior between family members and develop clear house rules so everyone feels respected and safe
  - Teach your children they have the right to say **NO** to any unwelcome, uncomfortable or confusing touch or actions by others. Never keep secrets about touches.

- Teach them to tell you immediately if this happens. Reassure them that you're there to help and it is okay to tell you anything.
  - Let them know it is okay to ask you question about sexual development.
- 7. Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude.**
- Encourage open communication and learn how to be an active listener.
  - Look and listen to small cues and clues that something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings. This may be because they are concerned about your reaction to their problems.
  - When your children do confide problems to you, strive to remain calm non-critical and non-judgmental. Listen compassionately to their concern and work with them to get the help they need to resolve their problem.
- 8. Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers.**
- Many states now have a public registry that allows parents to check out individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses.
  - Check out references with other families who have used the caregiver or babysitter. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing.
  - Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was and listen carefully to the response.
- 9. Practice basic safety skills with your children.**
- Make an outing to a mall or park a teachable experience in which your children can practice checking with you, using pay telephones, going to the restroom with a friend and location the adults who can help if they need assistance.
  - Remember that allowing your children to wear clothing or carry items in public on which their name is displayed can bring about unwelcome attention from inappropriate people who may be looking for a way to start a conversation with your children.
- 10. Remember there is no substitute for your attention and supervision.**
- Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.

Adapted from the National Center for Mission & Exploited Children, Copyright 2000.