

Protecting Your Child from Abduction or Sexual Abuse

Experts estimate that every 2 minutes a child is sexually abused in the United States. Sexual abuse in children is the most concealed form of child abuse and occurs in all races, socio-economic groups and ages. Victims are male and female, and in over 90% of reported cases, the assailant is known by or related to the victim. Thankfully, child abductions are very rare in the United States. Nonetheless, parents should know the basic rules to teach their children concerning abduction. Below is a list of general safety rules that parents should teach to their children. At the bottom of this page you will also find links to additional resources on the Internet concerning Child Abduction and Child Sexual Abuse. If you suspect that your child has been involved in an incident, or if your child is missing, immediately dial "911".

1.) Teach your children to never approach vehicles with strangers in them. If a vehicle pulls up, tell your child to immediately step back to a comfortable safety distance. Teach your children about the dangers of vehicles, especially vans. The doors on the side and rear can pose a serious danger.

2.) An adult asking a child for directions should raise a red flag. Tell your children, especially younger ones, that an adult asking a child for directions could be dangerous. This has been noted by the F.B.I. as a commonly used ploy in child abductions or abuse cases.

3.) Teach your child to never keep secrets from you. If an adult asks your child to keep a secret, you want your child to immediately inform you of this.

4.) Tell your children where and who they can visit and play around. Anyone outside of these "approved" friends and places should be mentioned to you before the child can visit.

5.) Establish a "secret code" in the event that another adult must pick up your child in your absence. Have the adult who is picking up your child use this secret code when approaching the child.

6.) Tell your children to never walk or play alone in open areas. Also, shortcuts from one place to another should never be used, especially closed in alley ways and wooded areas.

7.) Teach your children that if they feel that they are being followed not to hide. They should immediately run to a responsible adult. These adults could be family members, Emergency Personnel in Uniform (Police, Fire, Rescue), Mail or News Paper Carriers, or store clerks in business dress.

8.) Teach your child about "Body Ownership" and that Nobody has the right to touch certain areas of their body. Should anyone touch an inappropriate area of the body, the child should know how to firmly say "No". The child should then immediately tell their parent, teacher or person in charge.

9.) Don't allow your children to accept gifts outside of your presence. If an adult offers the child food, candy, money, toys, etc., tell your children to immediately notify you.

10.) Remind your children that simply yelling can be a tremendous deterrent from attack. Yelling "Help", "Police" or "Fire" will draw immediate attention from surrounding people.

11.) As a concerned parent, you should always keep the following items readily available: A current photo of your children, a list of medications (if any), phone numbers for their close friends and a list of places that your children visit. It is also a good idea to obtain an ID for your child to carry on

them in case of emergency.

For more information on Child Abduction and Sexual Abuse, follow the links below.

Missing Children Help Center

**The National Center for
Missing and Exploited Children**