

Stranger-Danger Tips

Children can be taught safety rules at a very young age and parents should begin instructing their children as soon as they begin teaching kids how to feed or dress themselves.

General Safety Tips

- Children should always carry some sort of identification including name, address (with street address, city, state and zip code), telephone number and emergency contact person(s). Have the identification card plastic laminated to last longer.
- Keep your personal records on your child up-to-date including, but not limited to a complete set of fingerprints, a lock of hair (in a plastic bag), age, blood type, height, weight, eye and hair color, date of last dental x-rays and any other special characteristics.

Once your child is school age

- Map your child's route to and from school with them. Walk with them occasionally.
- Make certain they follow this route with no deviations unless they get your permission FIRST.
- Determine if your school has an attendance callback program to let you know if your child does not arrive at school.

Stranger Danger Tips

- Teach your child that most people are okay but there are still some who cannot be trusted.
- Let them know if they learn abduction prevention, they will be more likely to protect themselves.
- Focus on prevention methods rather than quoting stories from the news, which concentrate on the frightening experience of a child victim.
- Provide your child with a secret code word that YOU will give an adult who must use that word to pick up your child in an emergency. Without that word, children should be taught to NEVER go with anyone, not even a family friend.
- Teach children about answering the telephone. Instruct them to never tell someone on the phone that no one is home.
- Teach your child that if they get separated from you in a public place to wait for a few moments in the place they last saw you and call out for you. After a few moments, they should ask for assistance from store employees, uniformed security personnel or an uniformed police officer.
- If a stranger asks your child for help, the child should tell them to ask another adult. Children want to help but need to understand they have to maintain a safe distance from strangers.
- If your child has occasion to sell items door-to-door, counsel them on the polite way to turn down offers to go inside someone's home or business.
- Avoid buying clothing that publicizes a child's name to potentially dangerous strangers. Label clothing in inconspicuous places.
- If a stranger comes to the door, children should not let them in. They may answer through a window or closed door. If the stranger "has a package", tell your child to advise them to leave the package on the porch or come back later.
- If your child has to ask for help from a stranger, instruct them if possible to seek help from a police officer, teachers or parents with children of their own. Encourage them to remain in a public place and not to enter anyone's car or home.
- Teach your child that if someone should attempt to take them against their will, say repeatedly and very loudly, "I DON'T KNOW YOU!"
- Teach your child to lock house doors automatically when they come home.

Note: We teach our children to be respectful of adults. We also teach them to avoid strangers and, if the situation dictates, directly disobey an adult. Therefore, be understanding during this safety instruction process. With experience and patience, your child will be able to differentiate between adults who should be obeyed and those who probably should not be obeyed. It is often the most obedient and respectful children who are preyed upon because they think it always wrong to disobey an adult. Try role playing with your child to help teach these valuable lessons.

Discuss the following questions:

- What is a stranger? [A person that you and your parents do not know.]
- How might a stranger try to fool you into getting into their car? [By telling you that your parents couldn't come so he/she was sent to give you a ride home.]
- How can you protect yourself? [By asking the person to give you the family's secret code word.]
- What would you do if someone brought a package to your house when you're home alone? [Speak to him/her through a closed door, telling them your mom/dad is resting and cannot come to the door. Then tell them to leave the package on the porch.]
- Is it safe to accept gifts from strangers? [NO!]
- If a stranger stops their car near you and asks for directions, what should you do?
[Stand at a good distance from the car, even if they ask you to come closer. Suggest the person ask an adult.]
- If you become separated from your parents at a store or mall, what should you do?
[Tell someone who works in the store that you are lost. Do not wander. If you cannot find a store employee, go to another adult with children.]
- What should you do if someone grabs you and starts taking you out of the store? [Yell, "I don't know you!" clearly and repeatedly.]
- In an emergency, how can you call the police or fire? [Dial 9-1-1]
- What is a secret family code word use for? [To let you know that it is safe for someone to pick you up.]
- If you come home to an empty house after school, what is the first thing you should do? [Lock all the doors.]

Remember, it is important to review the above with your child on a regular basis to insure they remember the information provided.

Source: Franklin County Sheriff's Office