

TEN WAYS TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFER

1. Prepare Your Child

Teach children basic safety rules so that they are confident and prepared, rather than fearful.

2. Role-Play

Act out or discuss potentially dangerous situations so that children can practice how to respond.

*Resource: *What Would You Do? A Kid's Guide to Tricky and Sticky Situations* by Linda Schwartz is an excellent resource guide for parents and their preteens and young adolescents.

3. Review and Practice

Children learn from repetition. Research shows that safety lessons need to be reviewed 5-10 times per year.

4. Set Body Boundaries

Make children aware of the private areas of their body (“the areas covered by your bathing suit”) and explain that they should say no and then tell a trusted adult if anyone tries to touch them.

5. Discuss Good and Bad Secrets

Teach children that some secrets are okay to keep, but help them to understand that some secrets are not okay. Tell them that if anyone wants them to keep a secret about touching, they should not keep the secret and should tell a trusted adult right away.

6. Teach the Buddy System

Children and teens are safer when they stay with a friend or adult. This applies to walks, trips to the bathroom, outings, etc.

7. Use a Code Word

Choose a special code word that only you and your child know. Explain that if you ever send anyone unexpected to pick up your child, that person will use the code word.

8. Help Children Identify Trusted Adults

Talk with your child about trusted adults. Specifically identify who a child should go to in an emergency, such as a person using a cash register, a mother with children, a teacher, etc.

9. Teach Telephone Skills

Teach your child your home or cell phone number and how to dial “911” for help.

10. Insist on Background Checks

Insist that all adults who work with your children have had background checks.