

SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS AND PARENTS

- Though well-meaning, the advice “don’t talk to strangers” is ill-conceived. Most children are sexually abused by someone they already know, be it a family friend, a neighbor, a babysitter, a coach-----even a family member. • Pedophiles are notoriously personable with children and will go out of their way to put a child at ease. Even a complete stranger who engages a youngster in a friendly conversation can quickly become someone the child “knows.”
- When talking to children, avoid scary tactics. Explain that most adults would never do anything to hurt a child; those who prey on children are the exception.
- Teach your child basic sex education, i.e., the areas of the body covered by a bathing suit are private. Molesters admit that a child’s innocent curiosity and/or ignorance make that child easier to abuse.
- Establish that sexual advances from adults are against the law. This gives children the confidence to assert themselves with adults who seek to abuse them.
- Do not instruct children to “give Uncle Jimmy a kiss” or “Give Aunt Susan a hug.” Allow children to express affection on their own terms.
- Develop strong communication skills with your children. Explain the importance of reporting abuse to you or another trusted adult.
- Stress that there should be no secrets from you, especially those involving another adult.
- Make a strong effort to know your children’s friends and their families.
- Volunteer to chaperone extracurricular activities like Boy Scouts and sporting events, especially those involving overnight trips.

- Do not rely entirely on “The Buddy System.” While it may make children (and parents) feel safer, its effectiveness is questionable. In many instances, sisters, brothers, and playmates have been raped, abducted, and even murdered together.
- Make a commitment to spend more time with your child; the lonely and attention-starved child is an easy target.
- Instruct children never to go with or get in a car with anyone, unless you have given them direct permission.
- Above all, encourage children to recognize, trust, and follow their instincts and listen to your own instincts. If a situation or person makes you or your child uneasy, believe in your feelings and act on them.
- Make your child familiar with the common lures used by child molesters and abductors.