

25 WAYS TO MAKE KIDS SAFER

AT HOME

- Teach children their full names, address, and home telephone number. Make sure they know your full name.
- Make sure children know how to reach you at work or on your cell phone.
- Teach children how and when to use 911, and make sure they have a trusted adult to call if they're scared or have an emergency.
- Instruct children to keep the doors locked and not to open doors to talk to anyone when they are home alone.
- Choose babysitters with care. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask children about their experience and listen carefully to their responses.

GOING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

- Walk or drive the route to and from school with children, pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help.
- Remind children to take a friend whenever they walk or bike to school and to stay with a group at the bus stop.
- Caution children never to accept a ride from anyone unless you have told them it is okay to do so in each instance.

OUT AND ABOUT

- Take children on a walking tour of the neighborhood, and tell them whose homes they may visit without you.
- Teach children to ask permission before leaving home.
- Remind children not to walk or play alone outside.
- Remind children it's okay to say no to anything that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused. Teach children to tell you if anything or anyone makes them feel this way.
- Teach children to never approach a vehicle, occupied or not, unless they are accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other trusted adult.
- Practice "what-if" situations and ask children how they would respond. "What if you fell off your bike and you needed help? Who would you ask?"
- Teach children to check in with you if there is a change of plans.
- During family outings, establish a central, easy-to-locate spot to meet should you get separated.
- Teach children how to locate help in public places. Identify people who they can ask for help, such as uniformed law enforcement, security guards, and store clerks with nametags.
- Help children learn to recognize and avoid potential risks, so that they can deal with them if they happen.
- Teach children that if anyone tries to grab them, they should make a scene and make every effort to get away by kicking, screaming, and resisting.

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ON THE NET

- Learn about the Internet. Visit www.NetSmartz.org for more information about Internet safety.
- Place the family computer in a common area, rather than a child's bedroom. Monitor their time spent online and the websites they've visited, and establish rules for Internet use.
- Know what other access children have to the Internet at school, libraries, or friends' homes.
- Use privacy settings on social networking sites to limit contact with unknown users, and make sure screennames don't reveal too much about children.
- Encourage children to tell you if anything they encounter online makes them feel sad, scared, or confused.
- Caution children not to post revealing information or inappropriate photos of themselves or their friends online.