

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

A Parent's Guide

The Archdiocese of Washington is dedicated to promoting and ensuring the protection of all children. This flier is one in a series produced by the archdiocese to help parents better understand how to protect their children from victimization, both inside and outside the home. This guide provides useful tips for keeping your children safe and the best way to talk to them about important safety issues.

Archdiocese

Safety Tips

Technology

Relationships

Of all the questions that cross parents' minds when they hear about child abductions, the most common question may be how can I stop this from happening to my child?

Teach Children To Take Action! The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's review revealed an important fact: 83% of children who escaped their would-be abductors did something proactive. They walked/ran away, yelled, kicked, or pulled away. Use this information to set up a safety plan for your kids- and don't forget to include teens!

WHEN IT COMES TO KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE, YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S BEST RESOURCE.

TALK WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT SAFETY

1. Teach your child their full name, address and home telephone number.
2. Teach your child how and when to call 911.
3. Instruct children to keep doors locked and not to open doors to talk to anyone when they are home alone.
4. Walk or drive the route to and from school with your child, pointing out safe places to go if they need help.
5. Remind your child not to play alone outside and to stay with a group when going on outings.
6. Remind your child it is OK to say no to anything that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.
7. Caution your child never to accept a ride from anyone unless you have told them it is OK to do so in each instance.
8. Teach your child how to locate help in public places.
9. Help your child learn to recognize and avoid potential risks so they can address them if they happen.
10. Teach your child if anyone tries to grab them, they should make a scene and make every effort to get away by kicking, screaming and resisting.



All information from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and KidzSmart.org

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ABDUCTION

Parents should learn when and where kids are most vulnerable in order to better protect them.

In an analysis of attempted abductions, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children found that many:

- Involved a suspect driving a vehicle
- Occurred between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Occurred when the child was traveling to or away from school
- Involved children between the ages of 10 and 14

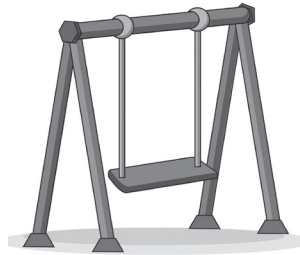
Archdiocese of Washington Child and Youth Protection

SAFETY SCENARIOS FOR KIDS

Here you'll find a helpful activity to educate your child about safety. Be mindful that focusing on "stranger danger" ignores the fact that most children are abducted by someone they know. Avoiding strangers will not help if the abductor is a family member, neighbor, or family acquaintance. Instead of focusing on people, teach your child to recognize and respond to threatening situations.

TELL YOUR CHILD:

It's OK to be rude if someone is making you uncomfortable. Say "no," walk away and tell a trusted adult.



HOW TO PRACTICE:

Ask your child to pretend they are at the playground. An adult approaches and asks for help. What should they do? (Say "no," and walk away. Adults shouldn't ask a child for help; they should ask other adults.)

TELL YOUR CHILD:

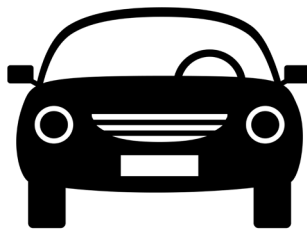
If we are separated and you need help, ask a police officer, a store clerk or a parent with children.

HOW TO PRACTICE:

When going places, point out people your child can ask for help, especially when you take them somewhere new. Let your child practice interactions with these helpful people, like asking a store clerk for help finding an item. This will make it easier for your child to approach them in case of an emergency.

TELL YOUR CHILD:

You should never get into a vehicle without my permission. If someone is following you in a vehicle run in the other direction. Tell me or another trusted adult what happened right away.



HOW TO PRACTICE:

Using a parked car as a prop, have your child pretend someone is driving along beside them. Have them practice refusing the ride and running in the opposite direction.

TELL YOUR CHILD:

If someone grabs you, kick, yell and pull away. Do not worry about hurting feelings.

HOW TO PRACTICE:

Adults may believe that a yelling child is misbehaving. The phrases below make it clearer that a child is asking for help. Have your child practice saying them in a strong, confident voice.

No! Stop it! Leave me alone! I don't like that! You're not my mom/dad!