

KANSAS CITY MISSOURI POLICE DEPARTMENT



CHILD SAFETY



Kansas City Missouri Police Department

For more information contact your local Community Interaction Office:

Central Patrol Division	816-759-6313
Metro Patrol Division	816-581-0715
East Patrol Division	816-482-8506
South Patrol Division	816-672-2828
North Patrol Division	816-437-6230
Shoal Creek Patrol Division	816-413-3440



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Child safety is an important topic for both parents and the community. When things happen that could harm a child, it is especially horrifying. The Kansas City Missouri Police Department would like to take this opportunity to provide some instructive points of discussion and ideas to help improve your feelings of safety and reduce the chances of another child being victimized.



A majority of suspects are not strangers.

“Stranger Danger”

“Strangers pose the biggest safety risk to my child...” This statement may be the most common myth surrounding child safety. In many cases, victims and parents know the perpetrator who is often a family member or trusted friend and responsible for your child’s safety.

While diligence is needed at home, children also need protection when they are out. Unfortunately, they are confused with the complex concept of strangers which makes “Stranger Danger” difficult to grasp. A better approach is to teach children about good “friends” who help during emergencies. Some friends are: Teachers, Police Officers, Firefighters, Doctors, and Medics.

Talk with children about the likely types of situations, not just types of people. By teaching them critical thinking skills, they will be more apt to choose good avenues of safety, escape and avoidance. Teach them to be wary of people who make them feel uncomfortable, re-

caring adult will likely ease the fears of both the adult and child.

In Case of a Missing Child

Quickly calm yourself, if you are panicked you will have less ability to think clearly.

Try to determine possible destinations the child may be headed to from your given location.

If in a home setting thoroughly search the residence including closets, crawl spaces, under beds, laundry piles and inside vehicles, including the trunk or places the child might go to feel safe.

If in a Store, or outside the home enlist the help of store managers and those nearby that might be helpful. Most stores, shopping areas and public facilities have missing children plans in place to assist.

If you still do not locate your child call 911 immediately.

Write down the best description of the child’s clothing, outstanding features, and habits.

Note important information such as when and where the child was last seen.

Child Safety Rules

Don’t allow children to accept gifts or favors. They might be used to gain silence or cooperation. The more extravagant the gift is *to the child*, the more dangerous the situation.

Don’t let your child accept rides.

Teach your children to not let someone touch them in an uncomfortable or scary way regardless of who they are.

Manners should never get in the way of safety.

Make sure they know the need to tell a trusted adult about any situation that has made them uncomfortable. No matter the situation someone will help and all children have the right to be safe.





CHILD SAFETY



Photographs should be updated.

Some organizations that do fingerprinting also include photos, fill in the blank forms for description, and possibly information on how to recover DNA samples. Fingerprints and DNA rarely need to be updated once taken from an adolescent,

however photos should be less than 6 months old. With the advent of computers in police cars and e-mail contact with officers, it may be wise to have this information in an easily transferrable electronic format to expedite delivery and distribution in the event your child is in danger.

Have a plan for an emergency and review it when a teachable moment arises or prior to embarking into a strange environment. The plan should include what children need to do to provide for their own safety such as finding a store manager, park attendant or other likely to be encountered "friend". It might also include a plan for them to find their own way to a regrouping location.

Consider giving your child a form of identification with your contact information. NEVER put any information such as your name or the child's name where the general public might see it, such as on their shirt or backpack.

Working with and discussing positive safety steps with a



Teach children to be wary of people who make them feel uncomfortable.

regardless of their community role or position of custody - control.

Right to say "No"

Parents should not "force" their children to give hugs/kisses/physical affection to others (grandparents, aunts, uncles...) because "you will hurt Grandma's feelings if you don't give her a hug". Allowing children to make their own decisions on when to give/allow physical affection empowers them to know they have the right to say no to ANY adult if they are being touched in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. It will also open the lines of communication for a child to tell a parent if something they don't like happens.

Lead By Example

Children see you sharing and chatting with other people they believe are total strangers to you, such as a store clerk, the person in the check out line and others that live in your neighborhood whom you haven't met yet. All fall under the category formerly given to children as strangers. Learn to be a realistic role model and understand the skewed perception children have of your



CHILD SAFETY

interactions with other people. Avoid teaching strict “Stranger Danger,” and instead use a positive, critical thinking method. Refrain from relaying horrific tales of abuse to scare children. Use everyday opportunities and teachable moments to have a two-way conversation about safety. Overwhelming fear will only create a barrier to action if children find themselves in an already stressful situation.

Use “what if…” scenarios and examples the child might possibly become involved in. Using these allows them to better picture themselves properly reacting in a dangerous situation.

Caregivers Outside the Home

Be sure to provide an open line of communication for the child to discuss situations they have heard of or encountered while in someone’s care outside the home. Pay attention and try to determine the reasons why the child might not want to go to a place or to a trusted person’s care and be aware of changes in behavior or attitude.

Parents should be very knowledgeable and vigilant about the people who are commonly given “control”

over their children. They should understand that predators put themselves in certain positions to better enhance their ability to victimize. Use your own critical thinking skills to understand why someone would desire an association with the child or children’s group. For example,



a coach who has no children of their own, is not getting paid, and has little or no previous playing or coaching experience or references, should cause a parent to ask questions. It is imperative to screen, check for licenses and get references for people such as day care providers and baby sitters. Additionally use unannounced visits to ensure the appropriate safety and care of your child.

What Age to Start

There is no golden age to start or stop discussing and teaching your children about safety. There is a risk for abuse or harm at almost any age. Although younger children may be easily manipulated with candy and stories of lost puppies, other influences such as drugs and alcohol may come into play as the child matures. Be aware of any changes in behavior, friends, or physical appearance which may indicate potential abuse.

The Best Tools For Safety

There is a tendency for parents to rely on others and safety “tools” to keep their children safe. These can include internet filters, GPS and monitors. While these can, and do, have a place in protecting children, they should never be used to replace true interaction and direct parental supervision. Be involved in your child’s life to ensure you know their activities.

What Can You Do Now

A popular step some parents take when they fear a child might be in danger or at risk of becoming missing is to have fingerprints taken. While this is a great opportunity to spark a conversation with your child about security and safety, a parent should know that the first thing the police must have to assist in the location of a missing person is a current picture and detailed description.





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The following page is designed to be taken out.



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For emergencies, call 911

Safety Tips:

- ◆ Children should know their full name and home phone number
- ◆ Teach children that adults shouldn't approach kids for help or directions and to immediately tell a "friend"
- ◆ Don't drop off children at malls, movie theaters, video arcades, or parks for unsupervised time
- ◆ Never leave children unattended in automobiles
- ◆ Tell children its OK to say "NO" to strangers

Home Address_____

Home Phone_____

Safety in the Neighborhood

- ◆ Pick neighborhood boundaries using significant landmarks
- ◆ Regularly check to make sure your child remains inside the boundaries
- ◆ Reinforce the "buddy system"
- ◆ Tell children which neighbors they may visit
- ◆ Be aware of unfamiliar cars in the area
- ◆ Interact regularly with neighbors

Safety at Home:

- ◆ Post rules where children see them
- ◆ Choose baby-sitters with care. Contact references and listen why children do not like the baby sitter
- ◆ Teach children to lock doors and to not open or talk with anyone at the door
- ◆ If children are home alone arrange for a family friend to stop by or call often
- ◆ Store poisonous materials out of child's reach
- ◆ Set the water heater below 120 degrees
- ◆ Keep pot and pan handles turned toward the back of the stove
- ◆ Keep knives, forks, graters and other sharp utensils away from children
- ◆ Jewelry can choke children if swallowed

Baby Sitter Information:

We are at_____

We will return by _____am / pm

You can contact us at_____

Parents may want to laminate this form and post it in a conspicuous place for use by children, day care providers and baby sitters.