

25 ways to make kids safer

to learn more about child safety, visit www.take25.org.



Once kids are able to talk, you can begin teaching them some basic safety essentials.

AT HOME

1. Teach your children their full names, address, and home telephone number. Make sure they know your full name.
2. Make sure your children know how to reach you at work or on your cell phone.
3. Teach your children how and when to use 911 and make sure your children have a trusted adult to call if they're scared or have an emergency.
4. Instruct children to keep the door locked and not to open the door to talk to anyone when they are home alone. Set rules with your children about having visitors over when you're not home and how to answer the telephone.
5. Choose babysitters with care. Obtain references from family, friends, and neighbors. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask children how the experience with the caregiver was and listen carefully to their responses.

ON THE NET

6. Learn about the Internet. The more you know about how the Web works, the better prepared you will be to teach your children about potential risks. Visit www.NetSmartz.org for more information about Internet safety.
7. Place the family computer in a common area, rather than a child's bedroom. Also, monitor their time spent online and the Web sites they've visited and establish rules for Internet use.
8. Know what other access your child may have to the Internet at school, libraries, or friends' homes.
9. Use privacy settings on social networking sites to limit contact with unknown users and make sure screen names don't reveal too much about your children.
10. Encourage your children to tell you if anything they encounter online makes them feel sad, scared, or confused.
11. Caution children not to post revealing information or inappropriate photos of themselves or their friends online.

GOING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

12. Walk the route to and from school with your children, pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. If your children ride a bus, visit the bus stop with them to make sure they know which bus to take.
13. Remind kids to take a friend whenever they walk or bike to school. Remind them to stay with a group if they're waiting at the bus stop.
14. Caution children to never accept a ride from anyone unless you have told them it is OK to do so in each instance.

OUT AND ABOUT

15. Take your children on a walking tour of the neighborhood and tell them whose homes they may visit without you.
16. Remind your children it's OK to say NO to anything that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused and teach your children to tell you if anything or anyone makes them feel this way.
17. Teach your children to ask permission before leaving home.
18. Remind your children not to walk or play alone outside.
19. Teach your children to never approach a vehicle, occupied or not, unless they know the owner and are accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other trusted adult.
20. Practice "what if" situations and ask your children how they would respond. "What if you fell off your bike and you needed help? Who would you ask?"
21. Teach your children to check in with you if there is a change of plans.
22. During family outings, establish a central, easy-to-locate spot to meet for check-ins or should you get separated.
23. Teach your children how to locate help at theme parks, sports stadiums, shopping malls, and other public places. Also, identify those people who they can ask for help, such as uniformed law enforcement, security guards and store clerks with nametags.
24. Help your children learn to recognize and avoid potential risks, so that they can deal with them if they happen.
25. Teach your 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.