



CHILD ABDUCTION



Child abduction is a tragedy that devastates parents and touches all of us. These tips tell you how to keep your children safer.

WHAT TO DO:

Know where your children are at all times.

Never leave children alone in cars.

Establish strict procedures for picking up children at school, after movies, at friend's homes, etc. Don't let your children accept rides from people with whom you haven't made prior arrangement, even if they say they are police officers, teachers, or friends of the family.

Teach your children their full names, your full name, address, and telephone number. Teach them how to reach either you or a trusted adult and how to call for police assistance. Make sure they know how to make local and long distance telephone calls. Even small children can learn to dial 9-1-1 to get help.

Tell your children about the abduction problem in a calm and simple way, as if you were teaching any other important coping skill.

Listen attentively when your children discuss anyone they've encountered in your absence.

Establish a family code word. Tell your children never to go with anyone who does not know the code word.

Have photographs taken of you children four times a year (especially for preschoolers). Make note of birthmarks or other distinguishing features. This won't protect you child, but will help to make it easier to identify them whether they are found safe, injured, or deceased.

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN:

Never leave the yard without your permission. Very small children should play only in the backyard or in a supervised play area.

Not to wander off, to avoid lonely places, and not to take shortcuts through alleys or deserted areas.

They are safer walking or playing with friends.

Always to come straight home from school unless you've made other arrangements.

Never to enter anyone's home without your prior approval.

To scream, run away and tell you or a trusted adult if anyone attempts to touch or grab them.

Not to give any information over the telephone, particularly their name and address, or that they are alone.

Never to go anywhere with anyone who does not know the family code word.

To keep all doors locked and admit only authorized people into the house.