

Safety Programs

Voluntary Fingerprinting

Child Protection Education of America (CPEA) strongly encourages parents to participate in the voluntary fingerprinting of their children. This is not a deterrent to kidnapping. It is a record-keeping device for parents to use if that child is ever missing. This is to be given to your law enforcement agency when reporting a missing child.

Fingerprints need to be classifiable. This means that your child's fingerprints must be rolled or digitally scanned on a law enforcement agency approved card. We also suggest you keep the following information with your prints:

- Birth certificate and hospital where child was born.
- Medical records with current doctor's name and address.
- Dental records with dentist's name and address.
- Recent facial photograph with date picture was taken.
- Recent full-length photograph, along with date picture was taken and description of child (height, weight, distinguishing marks, etc.)

Note: Update this file regularly and store it in a safe place.

Block Parent Program

The Block Parent Programs encourages awareness in your neighborhood, banding residents together to be on the lookout for children's safety. Neighborhoods who participate in this program have greatly reduced the risk to their children. The following suggestions provide a start for your area:

- Hold a meeting to inform all parents about neighborhood safeguards for children.
- Speakers from the CPEA or law enforcement agencies should be asked to speak. They will alert your community of the problems that exist and how the block parent program will help.
- Select a chairperson and form a committee to decide the hours and the scope of your program. Invite input from everyone.
- Keep in touch with all block parents by phone, mail or fax notices. Names and numbers should be provided for quick reference.
- Provide signs for windows. Set up a publicity program among parents and children in your area about the block parent program. This publicity will be a deterrent to a potential criminals.

Absentee Reporting System

- Coordinate with school officials so that absentee lists may be obtained each school day.
- Request school officials send home with each student a letter requesting parental permission to be called if the child is not in school by a certain time. Make a central file with names and numbers for quick reference. This letter should also ask for volunteers to make the calls.
- Set up volunteers to come in and call parents whose children are not in school. You may need a back-up caller from time to time.

- In most schools, your group may need to supply a phone list to be used for this purpose. By placing this special line in the school's infirmary, volunteers may serve two jobs at once.

School Psychologist/Guidance Counselor

School psychologists are there as a friend, but they are there for a more specific purpose -- to help. They are trained and can spot children who may be abused or distressed. They are able to provide help both for the children and the family. If you know a child who needs help, alert the school psychologist.

If your school does not provide a psychologist, work with your Parents Teacher Association to find ways to get one assigned. If there is no PTA in your school, study ways in which you can assist faculty members in their efforts.

Tips for Parents

The Internet

It is nearly impossible to estimate how many children are sexually victimized on the Internet. The exploitation takes various forms. Some child molesters use online chat rooms to openly solicit sexual favors from users they know to be children. Others are subtler, establishing friendships with the children. Those friendships later lead to meetings and sexual victimization, sometimes hundreds of miles away.

Still other pedophiles use the Internet to communicate with other child molesters, discussing and exchanging child pornography and children they have sexually abused.

Law enforcement find it very difficult to catch these criminals. Therefore, it is up to you to protect your children. If they use the Internet, you must oversee with who they are communicating. Never let your children meet with anyone they have been in contact with over the Internet and report to your local law enforcement agency any strange communications you observe. Molesters may pose as baseball card enthusiasts or doll collectors. It is your job as parents to ensure your children are not in contact with them.

Do You and Your Child Know

There are certain facts that must be faced even though we do not like to think about them. As concerned parents, we can all do something effective. Here are a few tips:

- Does your child know his name, address and telephone number, including area code?
- Does your child know how to use a public telephone and how to call home collect? Have your child carry small change to contact the operator if necessary.
- Does your child know the danger in approaching a vehicle of a person asking for directions? Never allow your child to approach a vehicle or walk alone.
- Do you know that you should never allow your child to go to a public restroom alone? Do you know many children

disappear on their way to and from school? These are two of the most dangerous places for assaults and child abductions.

- Do you know that having your child's name on a visible place, such as clothing or a book bag, makes it easier for strangers to be on a first name basis with your child?
- Do you know that a pedophile is an adult male whose sexual preference is confined to youngsters? The classic pedophile preys on runaways or children from unhappy homes. He showers a child with affection. By the time sexual activity takes place, the child is often an uncomplaining partner and it goes unreported. Please show your child affection.
- Do you know that children do not fantasize about sex with adults? When they mention something has happened, they are asking you for help.
- Do you know that your child has access to pornography by merely dialing the phone or turning on the computer? These telephone numbers are circulating through the schools so if a suspicious number appears on your bill, contact an operator immediately and investigate.
- Are you aware of the Rene Guyone Society and NAMBLA(North American Man/Boy Love Association) who have thousands of members who claim to have deflowered a child under eight years of age?
- Do you know your child's friends along with their telephone numbers and addresses, especially out of town acquaintances he/she may run away to?

Day Care Facility Tips

- Do not be afraid to ask questions of day care owners and workers.
- Request to see the facility's licenses and credentials. Also request information on the owner.
- Ask if the facility carried out background checks on the employees and if they were fingerprinted.
- Request to see employee resumes and references.
- The owner's reactions to your questions should be considered. Did they maintain eye contact with you when you talked with them? Did they seem honest and sincere with their replies? Did they supply the information you requested?
- Talk to other parents whose children are cared for at the facility. Ask them about their experiences with the facility.
- Ensure the facility maintains an open door policy allowing you to pick up your children at any time.
- Meet the employees and watch how they work with the children. See if the children appear to be happy.
- Do not sign a blanket authorization for field trips and make sure you know where your child is being taken when away from the facility.
- If possible, spend some time at the facility. If you are discouraged from visiting, be wary.

Babysitter Tips

Do not leave your child with a babysitter unless you are confident he/she is capable and mature enough to handle the responsibility. It is best to employ a babysitter from your own neighborhood,

preferably someone you know who lives nearby.

The following guidelines should be taught to your baby-sitter:

- Your baby-sitter should know where you are and the telephone number where you can be reached.
- The police emergency number and fire department number should be in plain view, preferably on your telephone.
- Your babysitter should know your complete street address in the event he/she needs to call the police or fire department.
- Make sure your sitter knows how to give explicit directions to your home.
- Give your sitter the names and telephone numbers of neighbors who are able to assist in the event of an emergency.
- Assure that your babysitter is aware of any medical problems that may arise and how to deal with these problems.
- Leave your family doctor's name and telephone number with the sitter.
- Make certain your babysitter knows where his/her parents are in case they are unable to reach you.
- The babysitter should lock all doors and windows and keep them locked while you are away.
- Instruct the babysitter not to tell a stranger on the phone or at the door they are the baby-sitter. This implies they are alone.
- The babysitter should never allow a stranger into the house, no matter what reason that person gives.
- If you are expecting any deliveries, inform the baby-sitter. It is best, however, to arrange no deliveries or telephone calls while you are away.
- Show the baby-sitter around the house, pointing out fire escapes and any potential danger.

Child Abduction/Abuse Prevention

The following guidelines should not be viewed as a guaranteed prevention, but as safety precautions.

- Love your child. Show your love for your children everyday. Since the abuser or abductor may often use affection or attention to lure the child, it is vitally important to provide these needs at home. In addition to lots of hugs and kisses, give praise to build self-esteem and remember even teenagers like a pat on the back or a hug.
- Listen to your children. Turn off all distractions, like the television, and stop what you are doing. Look your child in the face when he is talking and listen to his words and feelings. Do this now, so that if anything happens later, your child will know you are willing to listen.
- Be alert to with whom your child associates. Watch for variations in routine -- different peer groups, strong attachments to non-family adults, a coach keeping one child late for practice, etc. Be involved in your child's activities.
- Watch for telling signs of abuse -- headaches, sleeping problems, anxiety around a certain adult or genital complaints.

Teach your child

- The parts of his/her body covered by a bathing suit are not to be touched by anyone, including doctors, friends or relatives unless you are present.
- They have the right to say "no" to adults who are making them feel uncomfortable.
- Your child should never keep a secret from you. This includes secrets with neighbors, strangers, babysitters, coaches, club leaders and relatives. The pedophile is absolutely dependent on the child not telling anyone.
- If someone grabs them, yell, "Help! I don't know you!"
- Their name, address and telephone number as well as how to use the telephone to get the operator and what to say.
- A code word. If someone comes to pick up your child anywhere, he should first check with a teacher, even if he knows the person. He should know the code word.

Tips For Teenagers

Think before you act

- Always consider your community resources when looking for help.
- Be cautious and evaluate all options.
- Running away from home is a very serious thing.

Seek help

- Remember that nothing is impossible.
- Speak to your teacher, counselor, minister, friend or parents.

Someone cares

- You will find a friend if you look for one.
- Consider a crisis center, they are there to help you.

Signs of affection

- Be careful when strangers offer you friendship. Remember when you are troubled, you are vulnerable.
- Tricking, forcing or luring teenagers is a skill among people who profit greatly by exploiting them. Child pornography and prostitution is a multi-billion dollar industry.

Stay together

- Always travel in groups.
- Never hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.

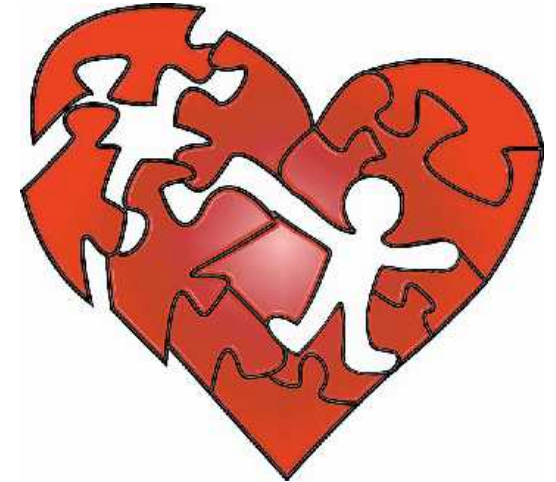
Let someone know

- Always tell your parents where you are going.
- Call home if you are going somewhere else.

Job offers

- Always check out job offers through school officials and/or your local Chamber of Commerce.
- If someone tries to molest you, report them to school officials and your parents immediately. This will protect any other child that might be the next victim. Give a good description of this person to the proper authorities.
- Remember, you did not bring this on yourself so don't accept the burden of keeping it quiet.

PROGRAMS AND SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS



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IRS 501c3 #01-0591203