

Prevention Tips for All Ages

As children grow, their responsibilities, freedom and exposure grow. Child Find Canada has developed these lists of prevention tips for each age of child development, as well as for parents. This information will help provide a safe and secure environment in which children can develop and flourish to enter adulthood as full filled, productive members of our society. Please use and encourage your schools, day care centers, churches and other organizations to use these tips to educate the children and adults in your community.

TIPS FOR TOTS

Parents: Use these "Tips for Tots" with your children who are too young to read. It is important that you not frighten your child, but with repeated lessons - teach him/her the following:

- ✓ Never get into a car with a stranger or someone you don't know well. Tell your parent(s) if someone asks you to go with them.
- ✓ Always play with a friend - "Be a buddy."
- ✓ Do not accept presents, candy, food - anything from strangers or someone you don't know well. Tell your parent(s) if someone offers you these things.
- ✓ If a car pulls up where you are playing and the person in the car tries to get you to go with them, either run home or to a safe house.
- ✓ Know the location of safe homes - places children can go if they are frightened, lost or being bothered.
- ✓ Cry loudly for help and run if you are followed by a person or by someone in a car.
- ✓ Know your name, address and telephone number and how and when to call 911 (Emergency) and/or 0 for Operator.
- ✓ Know how to dial your telephone number - including area code. (Parents: Make a list of important names and numbers and leave this list by the telephone. Go over the list with your child and have him/her practice dialing and talking to these people.)
- ✓ Know and remember your code word; only go with someone who knows the code word. (Make it simple and practice often). Remember, the word is a secret - not to be shared with anyone other than your parent(s).
- ✓ Never open the door when home alone. Phone a trusted neighbor or the police if the person continues to try to get into the house.
- ✓ Never let anyone touch you in a way that you do not like - especially in an area normally covered by a bathing suit, and if they do, tell your parents about it at once.
- ✓ Never go anywhere without asking a parent(s) or the person looking after you for permission.
- ✓ It is sometimes a better learning experience if you teach several children at the same time. Repeat often because young children have a short memory span. Be sure to assure them of your love and approval.

TIPS FOR GRADE SCHOOL CHILDREN

- ✓ Always tell your parents where you will be.
- ✓ Travel in groups or with a buddy. There is safety in numbers.
- ✓ If you see someone hanging around the schoolyard, go back into the school and tell an adult. Learn to give a good description - Is the person tall or short, dark or light; color of eyes and hair, if he/she is driving, make and model of car, and license number? Try to remember as much information as you can.
- ✓ If you see someone hanging around the park, tell your parent(s).
- ✓ Do not travel in areas that are dark and vacant.
- ✓ Do not accept job offers, rides, or gifts from a stranger or someone you don't know well.
- ✓ If a person you know asks you to go with him/her, do not go unless you first get permission from your parents, and let the person know that your parents have given permission.
- ✓ Do not take dares to go into rough or poorly lit areas.
- ✓ It is not fun to run away from home. There is nothing so terrible that you cannot tell someone you trust.
- ✓ Do not answer the door when you are home alone.
- ✓ Do not tell people you are home alone.
- ✓ If someone keeps calling or trying to get in, call the police at once.
- ✓ If people in cars ask directions; step back and tell the people that you do not know, and walk quickly away. Adults should not be asking children for directions.
- ✓ If someone touches you in a way that feels bad, say "NO" and tell. It is your body and nobody has a right to touch you in a way that feels bad. TELL and keep telling until somebody believes you. Remember, YOU did nothing wrong.
- ✓ If people promise you a TV or modeling career, tell your parent(s) and let them check out the agency for you.
- ✓ If scared or frightened, go to a safe house. Your parent(s) can tell you which house is safe and/or you may see a Block Parent sign in the window showing that the people can help you.

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TIPS FOR TEENAGERS

- ✓ Think twice before running away from home. If living at home is impossible, speak to your teacher, school counselor, social worker, relatives, minister or doctor about it. **NOTHING** is impossible! There are good people who will help you. If you run away, you will soon be at the mercy of street people who may try to get you involved in drugs, pornography and prostitution. **TALK IT OVER WITH A FRIEND WHO CARES.** If you think that you have no friends, you will find a crisis center in your community that will reach out to you. If after speaking with someone, you decide you still cannot stay at home, make sure you have a safe place to go before you leave.
- ✓ Be careful of offers of friendship from strangers or people you do not know well. You may be lonely and/or unhappy, and could be tricked by signs of affection from strangers.
- ✓ Do not accept job offers that require you to go to off-beat, lonely areas. Beware of job offers that seem to offer too much pay. Use legitimate channels, such as the student placement offices for your part-time jobs. Check all references.
- ✓ If someone offers to take your photograph to make you famous, think twice! These people may be trying to take advantage of you and you should tell someone about this right away.
- ✓ Do not get into cars with strangers or people you do not know well for any reason or approach the car near enough to be grabbed. **DO NOT HITCHHIKE;** you could be setting yourself up for trouble.
- ✓ Travel in groups or with a friend. Remember — there is safety in numbers!
- ✓ Do not go into dark, secluded areas at night.
- ✓ Do not take dares to do foolish things, such as going into a desolate or rough area alone.
- ✓ Tell your parents or people you trust where you are going to be, and let them know when things change.
- ✓ Do not babysit in the home of or for people you don't know — it could be dangerous.
- ✓ If anyone tries to touch you or fondle you in a way that you do not like, say **"NO."** Remember to tell someone you trust immediately. Even in a date situation you have the right to say **"NO."**
- ✓ Be aware of people "hanging around" your school, home or hangouts. Get a good look at them in case anything inappropriate happens and the police need to be told.
- ✓ Do not accept offers of drinks, cigarettes and/or drugs.
- ✓ Listen to your gut feeling... that little voice inside. It is usually right. Learn to trust it.
- ✓ Sometimes parents are overprotective because they love you and want to protect you. Rules may need to be negotiated. They'll worry less if you keep them up on your life. Let them know where you are going and with whom.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- ✓ Have your child fingerprinted and keep the card in a safe, accessible place together with photos which are updated every 6 months, and an accurate physical description, including scars and birthmarks.
- ✓ Teach your child their telephone number, area code and address.
- ✓ Show your child how to dial the operator and what to say (tell them to stay on the line, if possible). Practice this.
- ✓ Know where your child is at all times.
- ✓ Don't let your child go to a public restroom alone. Accompany the child or for older children, wait outside the door.
- ✓ Don't leave your child alone in the car.
- ✓ Don't put your child's name, first or last, visibly on hats, caps, jackets, bikes, wagons, etc. Remember, a child responds to a first name. A person using that name will automatically not be thought of as a stranger.
- ✓ Teach your child to be wary of strangers. A stranger is anyone they don't know very well.
- ✓ Don't leave your child in the toy section of a store or wandering in a mall. If they do get lost or bothered, tell them to go to the cashier for help.
- ✓ Know your child's friends, the location of their homes and telephone numbers.
- ✓ Be involved in your child's activities - go to their sporting events, group meetings. Volunteer as a helper with their clubs, etc.
- ✓ Practice with your child the route he/she may walk to and from friend's homes or school.
- ✓ Make it clear to your child the homes he/she may go to play or visit.
- ✓ Teach your child which homes are "safe" to go into when you are not around.
- ✓ Listen when your child tells you that he/she doesn't want to be with someone. Find out the reason.
- ✓ Notice if someone pays undue attention to your child.
- ✓ Encourage parent-child communication.
- ✓ Never minimize any fear or concern your child has, real or imaginary. Seriously listen to their concerns.
- ✓ Tell your children that if they should become lost or taken, that you will look for them until they are found.
- ✓ Organize safe houses in your neighborhood with signs in the window indicating it is a safe house. Teach children to go there if they are lost, frightened or bothered.

**This Informational Sheet
Courtesy Of:
St. Francois County
Sheriff's Office**