

Parent's Guide to Preventing Child Abduction

Strangers Are Not Always Evil Looking

Child molesters and abductors usually look like everyday people. Tell your kids not to talk to adults they do not know. Anytime they are approached by an adult they should check with a parent or trusted adult immediately.

How Child Molesters Gain A Child's Confidence

Often times they will befriend a child by asking for help. Some examples are: Asking to help find a lost pet; asking directions to someone's house; offering reward money for assistance; saying Mom or Dad have been hurt or need their help; acting like an undercover police officer (children should only approach uniformed police officers, and/or marked police cars).

They may also gain your child's trust by very minor contacts over several days, such as saying hello to them repeatedly. Make sure your children know to tell you if a stranger is trying to make friends with them.

Children Are Most Vulnerable When Alone

Individuals who prey on children wait for an opportunity when the child is alone. Children should not be outside their home by themselves, even for short periods of time. They should walk to and from school and bus stops in groups.

Working together with other families in your neighborhood to develop a formal plan for kids to walk together is a good idea.

Parents are encouraged to join or organize a Neighborhood Watch program in their community.

Tell Children To Stay Away From Cars

A car or other vehicle is often the means by which the abductor removes the child from the neighborhood. Children should never approach a vehicle unless they are **absolutely sure** they know the occupants. Abductors entice children to walk near their vehicles and then pull them inside.

If children routinely see the same car parked (or following them) on their normal walking routes (to and from school, etc.) they should report it to trusted adults immediately.

Role Play With Your Kids

Act like a stranger and see how your children react. Teach them the proper way to respond. Kids should:

- Run away.
 - Yell loudly.
 - Say exactly what is happening
- Examples:
- "Help, this is not my Dad."
 - "Help, this is not my Mom."
 - "Help, I'm being kidnapped."
 - "Help, call the police."

If Children just scream, people may think they are only throwing a temper tantrum. The more you practice the better your children will be at responding to difficult situations.

Report Any Suspicious Activity Immediately

Talk to your children about safety practices on a daily basis. Children do not put the same emphasis on suspicious activity as adults. Asking them direct questions ("Did you talk to anyone new today?") may bring suspicious acts to light. If they report anything suspicious call the nearest local law enforcement agency or the nearest [Illinois State Police District](#).

Tips for Reporting Suspicious Activity

Obtain the following information and report immediately.

SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE

- 1. License Plate Number and State
- 2. Color of Vehicle
- 3. Body Style (2dr, 4dr, Wagon, etc.)
- 4. Location and Direction of Travel
- 5. Description of Occupants

SUSPICIOUS PERSON

- 1. Race
- 2. Sex
- 3. Clothing (Hat, Jacket, Shirt, Pants, Shoes)
- 4. Facial Features
 - Hair Color
 - Hair Length
 - Mustache, Beard
 - Glasses
 - Scars
 - Missing Teeth
- 5. Height
- 6. Weight
- 7. Location and Direction of Travel

IMMEDIATELY REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Help Keep Your Child Safe

Children Should Try To Stay In Groups...

There is strength in numbers. In each of the recent cases the children have been alone.

Take Time To Know Your Surroundings...

Be aware that the most dangerous times can be just before and after school.

Strangers Don't Always Look Evil...

A child should **never** talk to people they don't know.

Walk Away From Streets...

Children should stay on sidewalks or at least six feet from the street.

Stay Away From Cars...

Children should **never** approach a car or truck no matter what the occupants say.

Yell And Tell...

If someone grabs a child, the child should **scream** and **yell** out "**HELP ME -- CALL THE POLICE.**"

Recognize, React, and Report...

When children think they see danger, they should run and **tell** an adult immediately.

[View the State of Illinois Amber Plan.](#)

If you have information about the location of a missing child, please call the ILLINOIS STATE POLICE at toll-free number 1-800-U-HELP-ME 1-800-(843-5763)

