



Safety Tips

Empowerment Not Fear

The **Empowerment Not Fear Program** is about giving children the knowledge and skill sets needed to make the best decisions possible. Building confidence in kids, teaching them about respecting personal boundaries and how to properly react when their own boundaries are crossed can help children in so many ways. Not only will such abilities help protect them from sexual predators, they will enhance the quality of their lives forever, providing a well-balanced, healthy, empathetic and yet empowered adulthood.

Part of the knowledge needed, is how to recognize potentially dangerous situations. In some of these cases, we can provide specific action plans to help kids make those good decisions.

Fear is simply not knowing what to do... so, when possible, let's teach children what to do.

Below are a few scenarios that are potentially dangerous along with the suggested action plans:

Scenario 1:

When a child gets separated from his or her parents, that certainly is a potentially dangerous situation. One in which a predator may try to take advantage. What happens if that predator has a fake \$5 badge and tells your child to come with him?

◦Action Plan:

◦Play the **FREEZE Game!** As soon as your child realizes he's gotten separated and can no longer see you, he should stop, stay put and don't go anywhere with anyone... period. This does two things, it keeps you and your child from

wandering opposite directions looking for one another. You simply retrace your steps and he should be found pretty quickly. This plan also prevents your child from making the wrong decision. He doesn't have to try to guess who to trust.

- Remember when this happens, praise your child for following the plan. Don't yell for him to keep up.

- If someone offers to help your child, he can simply ask the person to wait with him. NEVER go anywhere with anyone.

- It is also important to teach your kids what to do if someone tries to force them to go somewhere they should fight and yell as loud as they can, "THIS IS NOT MY DADDY/MOMMY, HELP". A screaming child may be throwing a tantrum, but a child yelling for help cannot be misinterpreted.

Scenario 2:

Secrets = Blackmail: Most child molesters will try to "groom" a child. They will test the boundaries with a child to find out how close they can get, how much they can get away with and what the child may do. Often it can start with something as simple and apparently benign as, "Don't tell your parents I gave you some candy", but the truth is the boundaries are being tested. And if those boundaries are not strong, a molester will continue to go further until the child feels like they have no options but to do as the molester demands.

◦Action Plan:

- Teach your children that anytime an older child or adult asks them to keep a secret their answer is always, "**I don't keep secrets from mom and dad**". A child who can say 'NO' when boundaries are crossed can stop most predators in their tracks. They don't want a strong child, they want one they can control and manipulate.

- Explain the difference between a secret and a surprise, such as what mom got dad for his birthday.

◦It is also important that parents don't ask kids to keep secrets from the other parent. Keep the message consistent and don't keep secrets in your family. Of course there is privacy and that should be respected, but secrets are potentially dangerous.

Scenario 3:

Imagine the scenario of your child walking home from school and a guy who lives in your neighborhood that your child sort of recognizes pulls up and yells, "Your dad has been in an accident and your mom asked me to come and get you." What would your child do? You may actually have to send someone to pick up your child at some point. What would your child do?

◦Action Plan:

◦**Have a Family Code Word!** Teach your child that if you ever have to send someone to get them, to always keep their distance and ask "What is the code word?" If the person knows the word, then your child can rest assured that you trust the person and sent them. Your child knows it's safe.

◦If the person doesn't know the Family Code Word, teach your child to run away and tell.

Scenario 4:

Many times potential child molesters will ask a child for help. "Can you help me find my lost puppy?" "Can you help me with directions?" Predators use this tactic because it works. Kids love to help and being asked makes them feel important.

◦Action Plan:

◦Teach your children to respond only one way whenever someone asks them for help or asks them to do something. **"I have to check first"**. Your child should

contact you for permission, which gives you the opportunity to help your child make a good decision.

- We recommend that you create a very short list of people (5 or 6) you trust completely. Call it whatever you'd like, "Our Trusted List", "Our A List"... and share it with both the people on the list and your kids. You are basically saying to your child that when any of these people ask you to do something you should do it. They have your best interest in mind. The list might include some family members and not others or it might be a close friend. The above Action Plans should be used whenever anyone who is not on the list interacts with your child.

Scenario 5:

Believe it or not, parents are the most influential part of a child's life. What you do and how you behave makes a huge impact on how your children will deal with life. What kind of role model are you? What kind of environment are you providing for your children? What kind of person do you want your child to be?

◦Action Plan:

- **Set the example.** Behave in a manner that provides a true role model for how your child should act. How do you react when cut off in traffic? How do you treat your spouse and other people? Are you moral and ethical? Your actions speak volumes and will have a tremendous impact on how your child develops and what type of adult they will become.

Important Facts

- In the year 2000, 57,979 children in Canada were reported missing, of which 79.1 % were runaways.
- 23% of all missing children reports happen in December.
- If your child is missing or you see a missing child call 1-800-387-7962

Try these “What if Scenarios” with your children

"What if Scenarios" at school

You are walking back from school and someone in a car stops and asks you directions. What do you do?

It is raining and you are waiting for the school bus. The mother of a student in your class offers to drive you home. What do you do?

Your father or mother is late picking you up from school. What do you do?

You are walking back from school and a neighbor invites you into his home in order to see his new puppy. What do you do?

You think someone is following you in the street. What do you do?

"What if Scenarios" Home alone

Your father or mother is in the shower and the phone rings. What do you do?

You are at your friend's house and his sister, who is babysitting you, leaves with her friend and says that she will be back soon. What do you do?

You are coming home from school and you forgot your key. What do you do?

Your parents will not be home for another 30 minutes. Your house is up for sale and someone that is interested in buying it is at the door. What do you do?

You are home alone and you hear a very loud noise as if someone is trying to break in. What do you do?

You are home alone and someone dressed as a plumber insists you let him in because he has an urgent repair to make. What do you do?

"What if Scenarios" on the internet

You are visiting an amusement park website and there is a form to complete in order to win a family trip. What do you do?

You are surfing the Net for a school project and a pop-up window showing inappropriate images appears. What do you do?

You are chatting on-line with a family member and she asks for your address in order to send you a birthday card. What do you do?

Your best friend asks you if you would accompany her as she wants to meet with a very cool friend she met on the internet. What do you do?

"What if Scenarios" Travelling

At the hotel your parents ask you to go fill the ice bucket. Upon returning to your room, you realize that you cannot remember your room number. What do you do?

You are at the restaurant with your parents. On the way to the washroom a waiter asks you to follow him because he has a surprise for you. What do you do?

While your parents are registering at the hotel someone approaches you and asks for your help to carry his luggage. What do you do?

You are swimming in the ocean. When you return to shore you don't see your parents and realize that you are no longer where you were earlier. What do you do?