

SAFETY TIPS

Courtesy of Child Safe Canada

For years parents have been telling their children not to talk to strangers, but child safety experts believe it's not about not talking to strangers, but *how*, and teaching children to know who they can go to in an emergency.

Here are some tips on street-proofing your kids:

Talking To Strangers: Don't teach your child to fear strangers, but strangeness. If a youngster can't talk to strangers, who will they go to in an emergency?

Trust Your Instincts: If someone doesn't make you feel safe, it's OK to run away and tell an adult you trust.

Vehicles: Never approach vehicles. In fact, if ever approached by a vehicle, RUN in the opposite direction that the vehicle is traveling and tell an adult.

Names: No visible names on outerwear or backpacks.

It's OK To Yell: If someone grabs your child, they should hit, kick, and yell as loudly as possible.

Password: Use a password that is easy for your children to remember, so that if you must send a friend or family member to pick them up, they will know it's safe because that person has the password.

Emergency Numbers: Remind children that in an emergency, they can dial 911 or 0 from a phone booth, without any money.

Safety In Numbers: Children should always travel in groups of 2 or more. Always take the same route and check in when you arrive home, if necessary.

Teach More Than Once: Start young, teach them again and again - and practice dangerous situations, modifying and adjusting to fit their growing understanding.

Adults Don't Ask Children For Help: So if someone does, it's a sign of danger. Run, and tell an adult you trust.

People With Bad Intentions Don't Always Look Like Bad People: Dangerous people can look friendly. You know they aren't good people if you feel badly when you're with them. Again, trust your instincts.

Secrets: If someone tells you to keep a secret from your mom or your dad, don't do it! Tell your parents right away. That's a big sign of danger.

Ask First: Don't go anywhere, with anyone, without your parent's permission.

Lost In A Store: If you get lost in a store you can ask for help from a person in uniform who works for the store, or you can go to the till, or find a woman - especially a woman with a child - and ask for help). Don't ever leave the store with anyone, even with the woman or someone else in a uniform.