

CHILD SAFETY

Important
information
you should
know

The
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Klaas[®]
Foundation

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What parents and children need to know...



You ask yourself, as a parent, whether you are doing all you can to keep your children safe. Tougher laws may help, but parents and children will always have to bear the greatest responsibility for their own protection.

Simple rules like, “never talk to strangers” are inadequate and can be misleading. Most cases of abuse or abduction involve someone the child knows, a family member, a neighbor, or someone who has befriended them. Scaring a child by talking about the awful things that can happen is definitely the wrong approach. Fear can be counter-productive, possibly even harmful.

A good safety program will provide children with important information and skills. It will foster self-confidence and teach children to trust their own feelings and instincts.

Children need to know they are special
and deserve to feel safe.

PARENTS

- Set an example of good safety habits for your child. For instance, when away, tell your children how long you will be gone and where you can be reached.
- Allow your children to talk freely about themselves and their feelings. Children who are listened to, and have their needs met in the home, are less vulnerable to abuse or exploitation.
- Talk about sex and sexuality. A naive child is more vulnerable to predators.
- Know your children's friends and their parents. Keep lists of their phone numbers and addresses.
- Know your neighbors. Teach your children where they can go and which neighbors they can seek out if they feel threatened.
- If there is a “Block Parent” or similar program in your community, your child should be able to recognize the placard or sign that indicates a “safe” house.
- Know how your child's day care center, youth organization, or school screens its personnel.
- Know the times and route(s) your child travels to and from school or activities.
- Make sure your child does not wear articles of clothing with his name visible on them. The knowledge of a child's name can be used to gain his confidence or put him off guard.
- Raise your child with a strong sense of self-respect and with good self-esteem. Predators are looking for the lonely child who is hungry for attention.

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Teach Your Children To Protect Themselves



PRESCHOOLERS

A preschooler should always be under the supervision and protection of a responsible adult.

The preschooler should know:

- Full name, address (including city and state), and phone number (including area code.)
- How to make a phone call, including how to dial 911.
- What private parts are (places covered by a bathing suit). A child needs to be able to tell the difference between an “Okay” touch and a “Not Okay” touch.
- Low risk adults to approach when lost or afraid might be a police officer in uniform, store cashiers, a pregnant woman or a woman with children.
- Always ask a parent’s permission before accepting candy or gifts, or going somewhere with anyone.
- Understand that it’s okay to tell a parent or a trusted adult if anyone hurts them or tries to make them keep a secret.

SIX TO TEN YEARS OLD


As children get older they want more freedom and responsibility. Grant privileges only when you are confident your child is ready. Don’t let your child get into a situation he or she is not ready to handle. Keep reviewing the rules. Use “What if?” scenarios to check to see if your child knows what to do in risky situations.

The older child should know:

- Always use the BUDDY SYSTEM and never go places alone. Predators usually focus on the “loners.”
- CHECK FIRST! Always let someone know where they are going.
- Never get into a car or go with a person unless a parent has given permission. Keep a safe distance (10 ft.) from a car with someone in it.
- It’s okay to be suspicious of adults who seem too friendly. The safe thing to do is to say “NO!”, then Go and Tell someone.
- Tell a parent or a trusted adult if anyone offers gifts, money, or a job; if someone wants to take their picture; if someone tries to make them keep a secret.
- Predators use tricks to lure children. For instance, a child should know that grown-ups do not need to ask children for directions, or for help finding something like a puppy or kitten.

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Our
children
are our
future,
they
deserve
the highest
priority



- Know the family password. Don't go with anyone that doesn't know the password.
- If home alone when answering the phone, never say that a parent isn't there. Don't open the door if someone knocks or rings the bell. Children should know who to call if they are scared or need help.
- If threatened by someone, loudly yell "NO!" Screaming and attracting lots of attention is one of the most effective things a child can do in a frightening situation.
- If a child feels threatened or is being followed, the child should run to a safe house, or a store, or somewhere where there are a lot of people.
- Children should trust their instincts. If a situation doesn't feel right, yell, get away and seek help.
- A child shouldn't keep secrets. When problems are too big to handle, talk about them with a trusted adult. If that person won't listen, find one who will listen.

PRETEENS AND TEENS

As a child matures keep going over the rules. As they grow older, they will want more freedom and privileges. This is natural, however before granting increased freedom, a parent should be comfortable with the child's ability to follow the rules of safety as well as to demonstrate the maturity to use good judgment.

Preteens and teens should know:

- Basic rules still apply, such as always using the buddy system and always letting someone know where you are.
- Children are still vulnerable to predators and should recognize the various lures or cons these people use to prey on them.
- Naivete about sex and sexuality makes a person more vulnerable to sexual advances by predators.
- When out in public be aware of what is going on around them in order to avoid dangerous situations.
- Drugs and alcohol can affect judgment and make a person more vulnerable to being exploited.
- Things can be replaced, people cannot. If someone on the street is threatening or demands money or property, the safe thing to do is to give it to that person.

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Our Mission



Polly Hannah Klaas was a vibrant, talented child, full of life with the promise of a bright future. When she was kidnapped at knifepoint from her bedroom slumber party on October 1, 1993, the community of Petaluma, California responded with a spontaneous and unprecedented effort to find her. Thousands of volunteers from the San Francisco Bay Area and across the nation joined in what became an international search for the missing 12-year-old.

The Polly Klaas® Foundation was formed October 23, 1993, to continue the search for Polly. Following the discovery of her murder, the Foundation adopted a new mission:

Make America Safe For Children

The goals of the Foundation in support of our mission include:

- Education, technical assistance and support for individuals and the public to prevent crimes against children
- Assistance in the recovery of missing children
- Support for legislative and regulatory protection for children

Our dedicated volunteers across the country are working together to realize these goals.

Polly is truly "America's child." The Polly Klaas® Foundation is committed to turning the tragedy of her death into a force of positive change for the protection of our children. Children are our future. They deserve our highest priority.

What Can You Do?

Get Involved In Your Community

- Be a part of a neighborhood watch program
- Know your neighborhood and your neighbors
- Participate in volunteer programs that support your local law enforcement agencies

Write To Your Elected Representatives

- Let your elected representatives know how you feel
- Tell them what you believe must be changed
- Be sure they understand the priority you place on child safety