



Keep your child safe from strangers

Ann Arbor Police Department

301 E. Huron, 2nd Floor, P.O. Box 8647, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8647

Phone (734) 794-6920 FAX (734) 994-6959 Website: www.a2gov.org

Children need to know the difference between a good or safer stranger than a bad stranger:

Examples of “good” strangers may include police officers, security guards, teachers, store clerks, etc. These are all examples of people to turn to if when your child needs help. On the other hand, a “bad” stranger – is someone who approaches a child in the park, or on a residential street, and attempts to lure the child to them. Your child should know that there really are many more “good” people, than “bad.”

Children need to learn how to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous situations.

They need to know what to do if they become involved in a dangerous situation and then they need to learn effective steps they can take to remove themselves from the situation.

It is important so children understand where to go and who to turn to if they are ever lost or feel scared, threatened, or if they think someone may be following them. Tell them that if they think someone is following them, cross the street and go into a store. Tell a police officer or a mother with a child. Don't try to hide go to where you know you can find other people.

Children need to be empowered with positive messages and safety skills that will not only build their self-esteem and self-confidence but also help keep them safer.

Roll play and practice different scenarios with your child. This does not come naturally. They need to practice it and they need to know that it is ok to resist an adult

Your children must be empowered to tell an adult “No”.

Teach your children:

- Not to play in isolated or deserted areas (empty playgrounds, parks, construction sites or dumps).
- Stay alert and trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, like you think someone is following you, you are probably right. Try to notice if an adult is hanging around your school playground, your park or yard, and then go to where you know you can find other people.
- “Stay with a parent in public places. Use the buddy system. Play, walk, bike and skate with a friend”.
- If you are out somewhere with an adult and you lose them, don't go looking for them. Stay where you are.
- If you are in a store, go to the cashier or security guard and ask for help. If you can't find a cashier or security guard and you are in trouble, look for a woman with small children for help.

Teach your children that adults DO NOT ask kids for help. If they are approached by a “bad” stranger who tries to lure or physically pull them away then they must get the attention of other adults. This can be done by:

- Running to the nearest home, store or business
- Yelling and screaming or making enough noise to be heard by someone, the vast majority of adults will help a child in danger.

If the person is in a car,

- Stay as far away from the car as you can. Go into a store or turn around, and walk or run in the opposite direction the car is going.
- NEVER go near a stranger's car. NEVER get into a car with someone you don't know, for any reason. Sometimes people use tricks, like saying your mom is hurt, or they lost their dog or kitten -to try and get you to go with them. DO NOT GO WITH THEM!
- Parents do not put your child's name on his or hers coat, jacket, shirt or book bag. This allows the stranger to call you child by name and shows familiarity
- Make sure you child know his or hers full name address, date of birth, phone with area code and parents full names

Teach your child that "If they are grabbed by a stranger children" they should:

- Yell and scream "You are not my parents...I don't know you"
- Bite, kick and fight to get away
- Run away
- Never get into a car or let yourself be taken into a car

Practice this with your child like any new skill you must practice to be good at it

How to survive if someone does manage to get you in their car:

- Do not put on your seatbelt.
- Jump out when you see people and the car has to make a stop.
- If you are trapped in an abductor's car: Don't sit there quietly. The person is taking you somewhere and wants to hurt you. If the car has back doors, try to scramble quickly to the back seat while the car is moving.
- Try to open a window and scream.
- Try to reach over and blow the horn, or grab the steering wheel. Scream as loud as you can while you do this.
- If the car is stopped or slowed behind another car, reach over with your foot and quickly stomp on the gas pedal as hard and as long as you can. This is a time you will be much safer if you cause an accident than if you behave.