

Be Safe

SAFETY DURING AND AFTER SCHOOL HOURS

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Going to School and Returning Home Safely

If your children have to wait for the bus or walk to and from school, these tips will help you prepare them for a safer journey.

- 1.** Instruct your child to take a friend when walking or riding his or her bike to and from school. Talk with other parents in your neighborhood to organize a walking group.
- 2.** Your child should stay with a group while waiting at the bus stop.
- 3.** If anyone bothers your child or makes him feel uncomfortable, teach your child to move away from that person. Encourage him to immediately tell you or another trusted adult.
- 4.** Tell your children to NEVER accept a ride from someone while they are waiting at the bus stop. This means NEVER, not even if it is raining, snowing, or very hot.
- 5.** If your child thinks someone is following her when walking, tell your child she should immediately enter a store or office building with a reception desk. Your child should tell the store owner or receptionist that she is being followed. Then she should ask to wait there until the suspicious person leaves.
- 6.** Teach your children if someone ever tries to take them, they should quickly try to get away and yell, "This person is trying to take me away" or "This person is not my father (mother)." This is the one time when children should be taught to scream, yell, kick, bite, and make a fuss.
- 7.** Make sure your children know important numbers such as: their home phone number and address, your work number, the number of another trusted adult, and 911.
- 8.** Walk the route to and from school with your children. Point out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. Make a map with your children showing the safe way to get to school. Teach them to use main roads and avoid shortcuts and isolated areas.
- 9.** Teach your child to obey all traffic signals, signs, traffic officers, and safety patrols when walking, biking, or riding the bus to school.
- 10.** Remember to practice these safety rules with your children to make sure that they really know and understand them.



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If your son or daughter will be home alone after school, these tips will help keep your child safe:

- Agree on a daily check-in procedure; set a time when you will call home or your child will call you so you know he or she made it home safely.
- Tell your child to NEVER let anyone into your home without your permission.
- Tell your children to never let a caller on the phone or at the door know that they are alone. Teach them to say that you are unavailable, take a message and then hang up.
- Write down emergency numbers and keep them in an easy-to-see place near all the phones in your home. The list should include 911, poison control, hospital emergency room, fire department, police department, your child's doctor, parents' telephone numbers at work, including cell phone and pager, and numbers for trusted neighbors and relatives.
- Talk to your child about which neighbor to go to for help if there is a problem. Let that person know that he or she is on your family's emergency contact list.
- Take a tour of your house or apartment and look for potential hazards to your child, such as electrical appliances and heating equipment. Tell your child that he or she must NEVER turn on the oven or stove while alone, and must NEVER play with matches.
- Prepare a snack or meal for your child before you leave for work, preferably one that does not need to be heated.
- Make sure your child is familiar with the sound of the smoke alarms in your house. Teach them that the sound means there is a fire and they should call 911 and go to a trusted neighbor's house. If you do not have a smoke alarm, you must buy one right away. They are not expensive and can save your family's life.
- Teach your children how to get out of the house in case of fire, and where they should go.
- If you own a gun, be sure it has a child safety lock AND is locked in a drawer or cabinet. Be sure the key is with you and not left at home with the child. Children find even the best hiding places and could get to your gun — with deadly results.

When to Call 911

Teach your children what they need to know to call 911 and talk with the operator:

- How to dial 911 (show them on the telephone dial pad)
- His/her full name
- His/her full address
- A short description of the emergency

- 1.** Remind your children to dial 911 when they need help to save a life, stop a crime or report a fire.
- 2.** Tell your children that if they ever have to call 911, there will be a person on the other end who is going to help them.
- 3.** Teach your children not to dial 911 (or play with the phone) when it is not an emergency.

Sources:

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
Kidshealth.org
Mcgruff.org



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