



CHILD SAFETY FOR PARENTS

Provided by the Weatherford Police Department



The Child Safety Checklist is an opportunity to sit down with your child and discuss situations that your child might encounter. It is suggested that you discuss a few situations each day. Children respond better to the “little at a time” approach, so there is no need to turn the checklist into drudgery and criticism. Remember, they are trusting little souls and precious gems of inexperience. Try not to scare them to death, but make them **aware** of the possible dangers around them.

Don't take anything for granted about what you *think* your child knows!

GENERAL INFORMATION YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW:

- **When** to call 911 and **what** to say to the dispatcher (name, address, and tell what is happening)
- Know your parent(s) full name(s) (“Mommy & Daddy” is not enough)
- Home address and phone number
- Know where the parent(s) are employed
- Know at least one close friend and/or relative's phone number

CODE WORD

A “code word” is a word or a phrase that you use with your children to confirm messages or rides with other adults. Example – You need to have another adult pick up your child, and the child does not know about the arrangement. You tell the other adult the code word, and the child knows that it is OK to enter the vehicle. After using the word/phrase, change it.

PRACTICE WAYS YOUR CHILD CAN
PROTECT HIMSELF



CHILDREN'S CHECKLIST:

- Have you taught your child to recite his or her names, address and phone number? Sometimes putting the information in a simple song may help a child remember.
- Does your child understand that s/he should NEVER get in a car with anyone but Mom or Dad, or someone that parents have given permission?
- If you must send someone else to pick up a child, do you have a secret code word?
- Does your child know to ALWAYS ask for the code word (while standing a safe distance from the vehicle) before getting into anyone else's car?
- Does your child know not to get into cars or go into the houses of neighbors he or she doesn't know very well? (Go over a list of *acceptable* neighbors).
- Have you explained to your child that, if lost or in danger, he or she can locate a pay phone and dial 911? **Children should know that they do not need money to call 911.** Remind them that 911 is a safety tool, and not to be played with (now is a good time to tell them the story of the "Boy Who Cried Wolf").
- Does your child know to NEVER use a public restroom *alone*?
- Does your child know that it is OK to say "no" to adults when they feel unsafe?
- Does your child know to be as loud as possible if he or she is in danger?
- Do your children know that it's OK to use physical force--such as kicking or biting--if they need to protect themselves from harm?
- Does your child know to approach a police officer if s/he has a problem or needs help?

**PLEASE DO NOT TELL CHILDREN THAT POLICE WILL
“TAKE THEM AWAY IF THEY ARE BAD.”**

- Does your child know the body parts that are unacceptable for others to touch?
- Does your child know to shout “NO!” or “STOP!” if someone touches him or her inappropriately?
- Does your child understand that even trusted people shouldn’t ask him or her to do something that makes them uncomfortable? Only 1.4 percent of abductions are by total strangers!

PARENT’S CHECKLIST:

- Are you careful to **never** leave your child unattended in a public place or in a car?
- Do you know your child’s friends and their parents? You should have a list with their phone number(s), address and e-mail address.
- If your child is going to play at a friend’s house, do you call their parents to confirm that it is OK and/or if they are at home?
- Do you know the route your child takes from school to home?
- Have you designated “safe houses” in your neighborhood where your child may go if s/he is being harassed, followed, or made to feel uncomfortable?
- Are you involved in your child’s after-school activities?
- Do you have a current photo and/or video of your child?
- Do you observe what your child is wearing on a daily basis?
- Do you have your child’s fingerprints or DNA Samples (plucked hair with follicle, fingernails clippings, and baby teeth)?
- Do you remember to **never** print a child’s name on the outside of their clothes or use nametags when they are in public?
- If your child does not want to be with someone, do you ask why s/he is uncomfortable with this person – and pursue until you find the reason?
- Have you told your child that if s/he gets lost, you will look for them for as long as it takes?
- Do you **always** perform a reference and background check on a new caregiver? You can do this on the Texas DPS website or at www.publicdata.com to obtain updated information. You will need the name and preferably a date of birth on the person.
- Have you checked the sex offender website at the police department or through Texas DPS? It is available for you online at www.weatherfordtx.gov/police listed under Services and outreach or at [https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS WEB/Sor/index.aspx](https://records.txdps.state.tx.us/DPS_WEB/Sor/index.aspx)

ROLE PLAYING

What would you do if...

- you are home alone and a repairman comes to the door?
- you are shopping and become separated from your mother or father?
- you see someone trying to get into your home?
- a stranger tries to get you to go for a ride?
- someone is calling you bad names and trying to pick a fight with you?
- you are home alone and a stranger came to the door?
- you are home alone and you got a phone call that scared you?
- there is a big dog in your neighborhood that barked at you and scared you?
- you are playing outside and a person asks you for directions?
- you are walking home and someone asks you for help to find a lost pet?
- a person wants to take your picture?
- someone says that your parents want him/her to take you home?
- a stranger wants you to come over to the car to see something?
- someone touches you and makes you feel uncomfortable?
- it is very cold outside and your friend's mom stops to ask if you would want a ride home from school?
- you are home alone and someone calls and asks if your mom or dad are home?
- you have a baby-sitter who makes you feel uncomfortable?
- a grown-up you know tickled and tickled you and wouldn't stop when you asked them to?
- you are home alone and some friends want to come over?
- someone you do not know gives you a compliment ("You are a very pretty girl")?
- your favorite uncle comes to visit and gives you a big hug and will not let you go?
- you were waiting for mom or dad to pick you up but they had not yet arrived and it was getting late?
- you were walking home from school and a car kept following you along the street?
- someone that your family knows well wanted you to break a family rule?

MORE TECHNIQUES

How does your child react when approached by someone unfamiliar? Even preschoolers can learn what *to* do and what *not* to do when confronted by a stranger. Here are some tips:

- Avoid **scare tactics**: Scare tactics can be upsetting for a child to feel that s/he lives in a dangerous world filled with strangers who are out to do them harm. It is far more helpful for them to experience the world as basically a safe place. Children just need to know and follow a few simple rules.
- Talk **about what is OK**: Tell them, "When you are with mom or dad and someone you do not know says *hello*, it is nice to say hello back to the person."

- Talk **about what is not OK**: You can tell your child that most people are nice and friendly and want to help each other. But there are a few bad people who want to harm others. One way you can tell if they are bad is if they want you to go with them and/or do things and NOT tell your mom or dad, teachers, or babysitters. Think of some other instances where a bad person might want to “trick” them.
- Discuss **Strategies**: “What can you do when a stranger tries to get you to come with them? What should you say? Should you even talk to a stranger? Can you ask for help?” Together, make a list of the ideas you come up with, like testing the stranger with a secret password, running away and yelling “Help!” asking a nearby grownup to help you, looking for a police officer, or going to the nearest store, etc. Then choose the ones your child is most comfortable with.
- Role **Play**: Play the part of the stranger who may seem friendly and innocent but really isn’t: “Hi, want to come to my house? I have a big bag of candy for you” or “Your mother is in the hospital, and she told me to come and get you and bring you to her.” By rehearsing the scenario in advance, you will have given you child the **means and the confidence** to protect themselves if they are ever confronted with the real thing.

Parents should be involved in their children’s lives on a constant basis. They are precious and they are our future. Give your children the knowledge and the confidence they need to make decisions when you are not with them.

Teach them that “there is always one person with you: you!”

And this is the one tip they need to trust the most.

Information provided by the:

