

How to Protect Your Child from Abduction

Denver Children's Advocacy Center



Many parents worry about talking with their children of the danger of abduction and how to protect themselves from dangerous people and situations. Parents worry that they will unnecessarily frighten their children. However, consider this...parents teach their children the dangers of crossing a busy street, of cooking on a hot stove, of using sharp scissors. Children learn to accomplish these tasks safely and confidently. They do not become afraid of streets, stoves, and scissors. Similarly, you can teach your children to protect themselves from dangerous people and to help themselves in a bad situation.

- Remember that carnivals, fairs, public restrooms, and malls are the most common places where abductions occur.
- Always go with your child to the restroom when in a public place.
- Never leave your child alone in a car.
- Teach children that they have rights, even the right to say "No!" to adults in certain situations...including adults who want to do something that makes the child feel funny or uncomfortable.
- Admit to your child when you are wrong about something. This shows your child that adults are not always right.
- Be sure your children understand that they are never to get in cars with strangers or accept gifts from them.
- Potential abductors often ask children to do favors for them. Tell your child that no matter what a person says, he or she should never go with anyone unless you have given permission.
- Teach children to stay at least two arms' lengths away from a person, or a person's car, that they are unsure of. Tell them to never lean into a stranger's car window, for any reason.
- Practice with children what they should do if they get separated from you in a store or a crowd. Tell children to go to a sales clerk or checkout counter to get help...they must not wander around the store or go out into the parking lot.
- Be sure that your child's school or day care provider knows who is allowed to pick up your child and that they are not to release the child to anyone else.

- Be sure your child does not wear any clothing item which has his name printed on it, since this makes it easier for a stranger to convince your child he is a friend.
- Instruct children not to answer the door when they are home alone but to go to the phone, be ready to dial "911," and turn on a television or stereo to make noise if someone tries to break in. Teach them not to tell people on the phone that they are home alone.
- Show your child the homes and shops in your neighborhood that are safe places to seek help in case of danger.
- Make sure your children know their full names, phone numbers (including area code), how to dial an operator, and their full addresses (including the state).
- If someone grabs your child from behind and tries to cover their mouth, teach him/her to grab the abductor's little finger and pull it as far back as they can, while yelling for help.
- Teach children that they should try anything possible to keep an abductor from taking them away to a secluded area. Even if the abductor has a weapon, he or she is much less likely to hurt the child in public. Children's chances of serious injury and death are multiplied if the abductor is able to get them to a secluded area.
- Teach children that they can be strong! They should always fight if someone tries to grab them. Teach them to stomp their heel on the abductor's instep, scrape his/her shin with their heel, poke their fingers in the abductor's eyes, use house keys, pencils, or anything else they may have as weapons.
- If someone begins following your child in a car, teach your child to turn and run the opposite direction that the car is facing. The time that it takes the car to turn around could be the few minutes your child needs to reach a safe location.