

SAFETY TIPS

COURTESY OF TORONTO POLICE SERVICES

Teach your child:

- His/her name, age, telephone number including the area code, address, city and province
- How to contact you, the police, fire department, or ambulance service in the event of an emergency
- To keep you informed as to his/her whereabouts at all times
- Never to admit to being alone in the home when answering the telephone
- Never to invite strangers into the house OR even answer the door when home alone
- Never to approach or enter a stranger's car
- That he/she should never hitchhike
- That you are sensitive to their fears and he/she can talk to you about them
- That a police officer is a friend who can be relied upon when he/she is lost or needs help
- Never to play alone - always be with friends

Also, discuss with your child:

- That he/she should trust their feeling and say NO to an adult, especially if that adult wants them to do something that is wrong
- Not to accept gifts from strangers
- That adults rarely ask a child for help
- To tell you if someone has asked them to keep a secret from you
- That no one has the right to touch any part of his/her body that a bathing suit would cover
- That if he/she is being followed, he/she should run home or go to the nearest public place and yell for help
- To report to you, school authorities or a police officer, anyone who acts suspiciously towards him/her
- Not to enter anyone's home without your permission
- Never to play in deserted buildings or isolated areas
- Avoid taking shortcuts through parks or fields
- Carry enough money to make a phone call home
- Never to show his/her money, and if attacked for it, to give it up rather than risk injury

And you should:

- Provide schools or day-care centers with the names of person(s) to whom your child may be released, AND inform them who to notify in the event the child does not arrive
- Avoid clothing or toys with your child's name on them as children are less likely to be fearful of someone who knows and calls them by name
- Never leave your child alone in a public place, stroller or car - even for a minute!
- Always accompany children to the bathroom in a public place and advise them never to loiter in or around these areas
- Measures to prevent and reduce personal risk
- Tell others where you are going and when you are expected to return.
- Don't walk alone, especially after dark.

- Follow the safest route possible. Avoid short cuts and deserted areas; try to keep to well-lit busy streets after dark.
- Walk on the side of the street where you can best see around you.
- Avoid parks and green spaces after dark.
- Walk with a purpose and be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid using personal stereos or radios as you might not hear trouble approaching.
- Don't flash your cash, iPods, mobile phones or other valuables. Keep their use discreet and put them away after use. Don't carry them or show them in an obvious manner.
- If you feel threatened or fearful from strangers while outside, remember that all 911 calls are free of charge and can be dialed from any telephone booth.
- If being followed, cross the street and go directly to the nearest well-lit, populated area. If still being followed, turn and in a loud voice say, "stop following me." Go to an occupied home or stop a taxi and ask the driver to call the police. Never be afraid to draw attention to yourself. Yelling and screaming are appropriate reactions if you feel at risk
- Do not delay in calling the police, hesitate only long enough to ensure your safety, then call immediately.
- If you are robbed, the following information is very important to the police:
 - direction of travel;
 - time of robbery;
 - whether or not the suspect(s) were armed;
 - number of suspects involved; if a vehicle was used, a description of the vehicle and direction of travel if known;
 - write down the licence plate number to give to the police; and description of suspect(s).
 - Ask any witnesses to wait until the police arrive. Get their names and addresses if they are unable to stay.
 - If involved in a street-type robbery, don't argue, don't fight and don't use weapons. Robbers are unpredictable and resistance in any form may escalate the level of violence.
 - Your safety is paramount, never chase or follow a robber.