



STRANGER DANGER

Currently

It is important to educate children on the dangers they may face and to ensure they know it is okay to speak up if something bad happens to them. Friendly strangers can be dangerous strangers. Strangers who offer treats to children may be offering threats instead.

Teach young children what a stranger is:

Anyone they do not know well.

Even if children know how to avoid trouble, sometimes trouble -- in the form of dangerous strangers -- may find them. Children will encounter strangers when you're not around. Most strangers are well meaning and not to be feared, but because children are trusting and vulnerable, they can fall for offers by adults who seem kind, but are not.

The Basic Tips

Make sure your children learn and follow these basic rules when you're not around:

1. Never accept rides, candy, gifts, money or medicine from a stranger.
2. Never get close to a car if a stranger calls out to you for directions or anything else. It is easy for a stranger to pull you into a car.
3. Never give your name or address to a stranger.
4. Never open the door to anyone you do not know.
5. Never tell callers that you are home alone. Say mom or dad cannot come to the phone, and will call them back.
6. Never volunteer family vacation plans or other information about your home.
7. Always avoid strangers who are hanging around restrooms or the playground and who may want to play with you or your friends.

The Persistent Stranger

What about the persistent stranger? Here's what the experts say you should teach your kids:

- If a stranger in a car bothers you, turn and run in the opposite direction. It is not easy for a car to change directions suddenly.
- When frightened, run to the nearest person you can find -- a Sheriff's Deputy or police officer, a person working in a yard, or a neighborhood house or store. While you should always stay away from strangers who approach you, it is okay for you to ask an adult you do not know for help.
- If a stranger tries to follow you on foot or tries to grab you, run away, scream and make lots of noise. The last thing a dangerous stranger wants is a lot of attention.

Play it Safe Rules

It is normal and natural that children will spend time playing or traveling out of the sight of trusted and caring adults. The best way to keep trouble away from kids is to teach them to avoid areas and situations where trouble might lurk. Here are some basic "play it safe" rules for children:

- Never play in deserted areas such as the woods, a parking lot, an alley, deserted buildings or new construction.
- Always stick to the same safe route in traveling to and from school or a friend's house.
- Always try to play or walk with friend. It is safer and more fun.
- Never play or hang around in such public areas as washrooms or elevators.
- Try to wait with a friend for public transportation. Try to sit near the driver on the bus.
- Always keep doors and windows locked when home alone.
- Never show money in public. Carry money only if necessary and keep it in a pocket until needed.
- Never hitchhike. Never!!
- Never walk or play alone outside at night.
- Always tell a family member or other adult in charge where you will be at all times, and what time you will be home.
- Teach your children to walk confidently and stay alert to where they are and what is going on around them.

Teach Children How to Respond

How children respond to trouble will depend upon their age and the particular circumstances they encounter. More importantly however, is whether a child knows what to do and where to go when feeling threatened. While it is important for a child to know how to avoid and spot danger,

it is also critical that a child knows how to respond quickly and wisely when confronted with trouble.

1. Children should understand that there are many people they can depend on and should turn to when they feel unsafe. Teach children that law enforcement officers are their friends, whose job is to protect them. If a law enforcement officer can not be located easily, a child should also know to run and seek out a trusted teacher, neighbor, or a friend's parent, when frightened or feeling endangered.
2. Children should know that they need to report trouble right away. Teach children how to operate the telephone, to call for emergency assistance: They should know how to dial " 9-1-1." They should memorize their area code and phone number, a friend's number, and your work number.
3. Keep a list of emergency phone numbers, and a close relative or friend's number posted near all the phones in your house.
4. Last, but not least, remind children of four basic responses to any stranger danger situation: Say No! Get Away! Tell Someone! Sometimes you may need to yell!

Adapted from: Poudre School District