

Safety Tips for Parents

- Teach children to use the buddy system. There is usually more safety for children in groups. Group play before and after school is best on playgrounds and around the neighborhood.
- Know where your children are at all times. Teach them to come straight home after school. When visiting or playing with friends, children should always adhere to parent-approved schedules. Those students who ride school buses or Suffolk County Transit should always get off at their correct bus stop.
- Role play with children to teach safety measures with strangers. Teach them to take several steps backward when approached by strangers; then stay out of arm's reach and run to a safe area.
- It is better to educate children about safety than to create fear. For example, teaching children to be wary of strangers should be given the same importance as looking both ways at street crossings and not playing with matches.
- Establish good communication with children to ensure they will readily report to you any unusual occurrences.
- Be sure your children memorize parents' full names, addresses, phone numbers, and places of employment.
- Watch for repeated appearances of unfamiliar cars in the neighborhood and take down the license plate numbers.
- Avoid putting your child's name on the outside of clothing. This practice makes it more difficult for strangers to speak to children by using their names in a familiar manner.
- If your child is accosted, the child should be taught to scream "I'm not your child," or "You're not my parent". Many times children forget to scream.
- At home, establish house rules and stick to them. Rules about playtime and visits to other neighborhood homes should be enforced.
- Make sure children learn to identify safe people such as policemen, firemen, teachers, etc.
- Teach children where safe homes or buildings are in case children need to run to them. Identify which neighbors are available to help when you are not at home. In an emergency situation children should be advised to run to the nearest house for assistance. Teach children to avoid alleys and empty lots, unfamiliar houses, or garages.
- Teach children that "strangers" are people we do not know. Criteria for familiarity should include someone whose name is well known, who lives nearby, or who other family members know.
- As parents, keep in touch with schools, neighborhood centers, and law enforcement agencies. Stay up-to-date on child identification programs and safety awareness programs.
- Teach children that certain parts of their bodies are not to be touched by anyone, and that inappropriate conduct on the part of anyone else should be reported immediately. Parents should reinforce this concept regularly.
- Parents and children should establish a password known only to the immediate family. Children should be told not to go with an unfamiliar person without using the password.
- Parents should notify both the school and the police if an incident occurs anywhere or anytime.
- Stay informed about before and after school supervision times, and avoid sending children to school too early or allowing them to linger too long after school.