



STURGIS POLICE & FIRE DEPARTMENT

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PARENT AND CHILD SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ **Always check first** with a parent, guardian, or trusted adult before going anywhere, accepting anything or getting into a car with anyone.
- ✓ **Do not go out alone. Always take a friend** with you when going places or playing outside.
- ✓ **Say NO** if someone tries to touch you, or treats you in a way that makes you feel scared, uncomfortable or confused. Get out of the situation as quickly as possible.
- ✓ **Tell a parent, guardian or trusted adult** if you feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.
- ✓ **Make sure you know where each of your children is at all times.** Know your children's friends and be clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit. Make it a rule for your children to check in with you when they arrive at or depart from a particular location and when there is a change in plans.
- ✓ **Never leave children unattended in a vehicle, whether it is running or not.** Remind children to never hitchhike, approach a vehicle or engage in a conversation with anyone within a vehicle they do not know and trust, or go anywhere with anyone without first getting your permission.
- ✓ **Be involved in your children's activities.** As an active participant you'll have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children. If you are concerned about anyone's behavior, take it up with the sponsoring organization.
- ✓ **Listen to your children.** Pay attention if they tell you they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere.
- ✓ Notice when anyone shows one or all of your children a great deal of attention or begins giving them gifts. **Take the time to talk to your children** about the person and find out why the person is acting in this way.
- ✓ Teach your children they have the right to say **NO** to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others and get out of those situations as quickly as possible. If avoidance is not an option, children should be taught to kick, scream, and resist. When in such a situation, teach them to loudly yell, "This person is not my father/mother/guardian," and then immediately tell you if this happens.
- ✓ **Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers.** Many states now have a public registry allowing parents and guardians to check out individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Check out references with other families who have used the caregiver for a babysitter. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was, and listen carefully to the responses.
- ✓ **Practice basic safety skills with your children.** Make an outing to a mall or park a "teachable" experience in which your children practice checking with you, using pay telephones, going to the restroom with a friend, and locating adults who may be able to help if they need assistance.
- ✓ **Remember there is no substitute for your attention and supervision.** Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.
- ✓ With your parents help, **choose a safe house** where you can go if you need help fast, like if you ran into a bully or an unusual stranger. If you get lost or need help **RIGHT AWAY**, run to the closest store or library and tell an adult.
- ✓ Remember the **rules about strangers:** don't talk to them, don't go anywhere with them, and don't take anything from them. If **ANYTHING** makes you feel uncomfortable, get away and go to your safe house.