

# Know the rules...

## Abduction prevention tips for parents

According to a study conducted by the Washington State Attorney General's Office for the US Department of Justice, 57% of children who are abducted and murdered are victims of opportunity. The tips below will help you lessen the opportunity for abduction and kidnapping and better safeguard your child.

- ▶ Teach your child to run away from danger, never toward it.
- ▶ Never let your child go places alone, and always supervise your young child or make sure a trusted adult is present to supervise her (him). Make sure your older child always takes a friend when she goes somewhere.
- ▶ Know where your child is, and whom she is with, at all times. Remind your child never to take anything from, or respond in any way if approached by, someone they don't know. Teach her to run away as quickly as she can—to you or another trusted adult.
- ▶ Talk openly to your child about safety and encourage her to tell you or a trusted adult if anyone or anything frightens or confuses her or makes her uncomfortable.
- ▶ Practice what you teach: Create “what if” scenarios with your child to make sure she understands the safety message and can use it in a real situation.
- ▶ Consider installing an alarm system in your home with a monitoring feature. Make sure your home is secured with deadbolt locks, and ensure that landscaping around it doesn't provide places for people to hide.
- ▶ Make your child part of securing your home. If you have installed an alarm system, demonstrate it to your child and show her how to make certain that doors and windows are locked.
- ▶ Have a list of family members who could be contacted in case of an emergency.
- ▶ Be alert to and aware of your surroundings. Know the “escape routes” and plan what you would do in different emergencies.
- ▶ Know your employees and coworkers. Do background screening and reference checks on everyone who works at your home.
- ▶ Consider varying your daily routines and habits. Do not take the same routes or go at the same time on your regular errands.
- ▶ Take steps to secure personal information about yourself. Consider getting a post office box and registering everything you can there, including vehicles and driver's licenses.
- ▶ Report any suspicious persons or activities to law enforcement.
- ▶ Remember that you are your best resource for better safeguarding your family. Do not become complacent about personal security issues.

Adapted, with permission, from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, “Know the Rules: Abduction and Kidnapping Prevention Tips for Parents and Guardians.”