

No kidding—preparation the key to preventing abducted, missing children

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By Scott Irwin

Did you know that, according to figures from the RCMP, approximately 186 children are reported

missing each day in Canada? That's one almost every 7.75 minutes; recent US statistics are much more alarming, somewhere in the United States approximately every 40 seconds a child is reported missing. In fact, by the time you have finished reading this article, the odds are that another child has been reported missing or abducted.

The thought that a child could be taken or go missing is a very real fear that all of us, as parents, share. Naturally, we want to keep our children safe, but we can't watch over them 24 hours a day. I am frequently asked by parents for advice on what they can do to protect their children. I'd like to share some advice with you so you can reduce the risk that such a tragic event will ever befall your family.

First, teach your child his or her full name, address, phone number and your full name. That way, if they are ever lost, they can give this information to a police officer. You should also teach them how to dial 0 or 911 in the event of an emergency. After all, the sooner they can make that call for help, the better. Whether going to school, band practice or a friend's house, they should always follow the same route without taking any shortcuts.

A family password is another great idea to help protect your child. It should be something that is easy to learn and remember, and should be unique to your family. It could be tied to a special event— such as a birthday or vacation—or it could be your maiden or middle name.

Because there are bound to be times when your older children are home alone, there are a few simple rules they should follow. Make sure they understand not to let strangers in the house while you are gone. If someone calls, tell your kids to take a message, and that they should never say you are not home.

Safeguarding your kids when home alone is one thing, but how can you protect them when out in public at a mall, movie theatre or grocery store? One-way is to tell them to go to the information booth or checkout counter if you should become separated, and be sure your kids know where they are

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located. You should also tell them to yell and fight if a stranger should try to hurt them, or force them to go somewhere else. Creating a scene can prevent an attempted abduction.

One tip you may have heard from schools is to sew your child's personal information into their clothes or personal items, such as backpack. Unfortunately, a stranger can use this same information to assume the role of a family friend and gain the trust of a child. A better solution is to contact and register with a child identification service that will provide you with coded iron-on identification labels.

If the unthinkable should happen, and your child is missing or abducted, contact your local police force immediately. In this situation, a Child ID kit, in which the child's fingerprints, recent picture, specific identification features as well as a hair sample, is truly the most helpful item parents can possess. In the event that this precaution has been overlooked, provide them with as much detail about your child as possible, including a recent photograph, a hair sample from a pillow or hairbrush and, if there is a search planned, a recently worn piece of clothing.

Finally, make the time to talk to your children regularly on ways to stay safe. It takes repetition and positive reinforcement for them to learn these tips. Activities and coloring books promoting safety are a very good idea for very young children, and the time you take to prepare them now will go a long way toward protecting them from harm in the future.

Scott Irwin is the Marketing Director and Atlantic Regional Director for Child I.D. Labels inc., which has been protecting and providing ID for children and families across North America for more than 10 years. He can be reached at

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to find

out more about Child ID's unique proactive and preventative approach towards child identification and child safety and how Child ID can help you to protect and keep your children safe.

Child Safety And Child Protection: Easy Steps You Can Take Part 1 Of 3

By Thomas Trotts

Did you know there are over 2,000 reports of missing and abducted children to the FBI everyday? That's an incredible number, and that's only the ones that are actually reported.

This is 1 of a 3 part series with some simple child safety steps you can take that will greatly minimize

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the chances of your child becoming missing or abducted. The experts recommend that you teach your child the following child protection techniques:

Here we go...

You should always be sure your child knows his/her name, address, including city, state, zip code; phone number, including area code; parents' names, work addresses (or at least the business names of where they work), and phone numbers.

Your child should feel confident using both push button phones, as well as, the old style rotary—dial telephones.

Always make sure your child knows how to make an emergency call to you or emergency services from a pay phone.

How to make a long distance call (both directly to you using the area code, and by dialing "0" for the operator).

Your child should never tell anyone over the phone that she is home alone, and NEVER open the door to strangers when she is home alone.

Never to answer the door when home alone. Remind your child to talk through a door or window to anyone delivering a package, and to tell the person to leave the package at the door. Teach your child how to call your community's emergency assistance number (often 911). Make sure he knows a neighbor to call if someone tries to get into the house or if there is any kind of emergency.

They need to be aware that it's not safe and should never go into anyone's home without your permission. Children should learn who's homes they are allowed to enter.

These are just a few of the basic child safety lessons you can teach your child to keep them safe and out of harms way. keep an eye out for "Child Safety and Child Protection: Easy Steps You Can Take" – Part 2 of 3. Where we will discuss some child safety and child protection techniques you can take when your in public places, or when he/she might find themselves alone.

Thomas Trotts is a Child Safety expert, owner of

<http://www.AlertChildUSA.com>

, and is dedicated to

providing quality Child Protection Services and resources for parents and families. To learn more about Child Protection and receive your free "Parents Guide To Preventing Child Abduction" go to:

<http://www.AlertChildUSA.com>

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