

Tips for Parents

Teach your child the tricks people sometimes use to interest children, such as: offering a ride in bad weather; offering candy or money; asking for help looking for a lost pet; or saying that "your Mommy or Daddy sent me to pick you up."

Instead of warning your child not to "talk to strangers," explain specific situations that might happen and what your child can do in those situations. Children may not have an understanding of what "stranger" means; for instance, some children think that someone who takes the time to befriend them is not a stranger. This also helps children to understand that certain behaviors are wrong no matter who does them--remember people your child knows are much more likely to harm them than "strangers."

Teach your child never to go anywhere with someone he or she doesn't know. Also teach your child never to go anywhere with someone he or she does know (such as a teacher, bus driver, neighbor, church official or member, etc.), unless your child heard directly from you that it is okay to go. Explain that sometimes people will say that you sent them or that you are hurt as a trick.

Don't put your child's name on any of his or her clothing, school supplies or school bags. A stranger might use your child's name as a way of suggesting that she or he knows your child or you.

Teach your child what to do if he or she gets separated from you at a store or other public place. Don't leave your child alone (for instance, in a car or in the toy department of a store). Never leave your child in the car, even if you are "just running in." In addition to kidnapers, carjackers are a threat to your child in this case.

Keep an eye on your child. Be especially careful at places where you might get distracted, such as at an ATM or with the cashier in a store.

Your child also needs to know which strangers can be helpful, such as a police officer, fire fighter, store clerk or cashier, or a mother with small children.

A Kids Guide to Stranger Danger



Office of Plymouth County District Attorney **Timothy J. Cruz**

**For more public safety tips, please
visit our brochure department on
the web
www.mass.gov/da/plymouth**

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A Message from The District Attorney

In today's society, our children face a number of risks on a daily basis.



As the top law enforcement official in Plymouth County, I not only have the responsibility of protecting our citizens, but I also have the responsibility of educating our citizens on ways that they can reduce victimization.

As parents, one of our top priorities is child safety. We would all like to make sure our children know how to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.

Stranger Danger is a concern for all of us. I encourage you to sit down with your children and read this brochure, the information it contains comes directly from the National Center for Victims of Crime.

These valuable safety tips are designed to assist you in educating your children as to the dangers associated with speaking to strangers, and will enable them to better protect themselves and others.

My best wishes to you and your family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy J. Cruz". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Timothy J. Cruz
District Attorney
Plymouth County

Preventing Abduction

- Don't play in deserted areas -- such as empty playgrounds, parks, construction sites or dumps.
- Stay with your mom or dad in public places or use the buddy system. Play, walk, bike and skate with a friend.
- If you are out somewhere with an adult and you lose them, don't go looking for them. If you are in a store, go to the cashier or security guard and ask for help. If you can't find a cashier or security guard and you are in trouble, look for a woman with small children for help.
- Stay alert and trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, like you think someone is following you, you are probably right. Try to notice if an adult is hanging around your school playground, your park or yard, and then go to where you know you can find other people.
- If you think someone is following you, cross the street and go into a store. Tell a police officer or a mother with a child. Don't try to hide -- go to where you know you can find other people.
- If someone tries to grab you, kick, punch and yell: "NO! I don't know you! You aren't my Mom (or Dad)!"
- If the person is in a car, stay as far away from the car as you can. Go into a store or turn around, and walk or run in the opposite direction the car is going.
- **NEVER**, ever hitchhike or accept a ride from someone. Don't go near a stranger's car.
- **NEVER** get into a car with someone you don't know, for any reason. Sometimes people use tricks -- like saying your mom is hurt, or they lost their dog or kitten -- to try and get you to go with them.
DO NOT GO WITH THEM!
- If someone does manage to get you in their car, do not put on your seatbelt. Jump out when you see people and the car has to make a stop.

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