



Many parents and caregivers feel challenged to keep their children safe in this fast paced world. Frequently, parents often wonder what information is appropriate and at what age to introduce safety rules. In talking with your children, it is important to remember that fear is not the most effective approach to protect your child; confidence is. Parents/caregivers serve as a protective shield to their children throughout the childhood years.

Tips on How to Communicate with Your Child about Personal Safety:

1. Keep in mind the age and developmental level of your child. It is important to model, practice safety skills regularly so that these are incorporated into your family's daily life. Practice 'what if scenarios' in malls and in your home.

For instance, some families hide a spare key outside their home. Make sure you continually change this place and your child knows that you do.

While many families cannot afford home security, adults can make sure routines are randomized: for instance a child is not left alone every afternoon at 4 pm.

2. We suggest that parents don't emphasize 'stranger danger' exclusively. Greatest danger for children is from who they know. Rather, teach children that no one has the right to trick or force them to do anything. Tell your child to say 'no'. And make sure your child knows to share any unusual interactions with a trusted adult.
3. Teach your children basic personal safety rules:
 - Check first with parents when you go places
 - Take a friend
 - Tell people 'no' when they want to cause you harm
 - Tell a trusted adult if any thing happens
4. Always supervise your child; be involved in their lives, friends and families. Children can be left alone for short periods of time when they are good decision makers.
5. Check out adults who have access to your home. Visit website: www.nsopw.gov for information about convicted sexual abusers living in your community.
6. Have a recent, easily available clear photo of your child for identification purposes.
7. Always, report suspicious persons or activities to law enforcement.
8. Call The Family Tree's 24/7 StressLine @800.243.7337 for any questions or concerns you may have about the personal safety of your child.