



Children's Rescue Alliance

*"Until They All Come Home"*

## Prevention & Education Tips

### PREVENTION

#### ***Parents, be prepared.***

Keep an updated list of contact and personal information for each child (it is advisable to keep one for each adult as well).

This information is critical for a variety of emergencies: natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornados, medical emergencies and the recovery of a missing child/person. Keep the list in a place where the whole family has immediate access, such as in a kitchen drawer. A separate sheet should be kept for each child/person. All info should also be stored on a flash/thumb drive for back up, quick access and forwarding if needed. *You can download blank information sheets and other materials from our website.*

### INFORMATION LIST:

#### **FULL LEGAL NAME & DESCRIPTION**

Full legal name of child, including nicknames, clear well-lit snapshots, (full length and head & shoulders), birthday, height, weight, hair color, style and eye color. Indicate whether the child wears glasses or contacts. List all birthmarks, scars, tattoos or any distinguishable markings, e.g. piercings, and include a photo of these.

#### **MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

Any illness or medical conditions, e.g. diabetes, history of seizures, allergies (including negative response to specific medications). List all current medications.

#### **EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Doctor's name, phone number and address. List the doctor's specialty, (general practitioner, dentist, orthodontist, etc). Also list the nearest Emergency Room with phone number, complete address, and fastest route. It is important to record all previous broken bones and markings including scars, birthmarks, blemishes and notable dental history.

#### **SCHEDULE**

Name of school, address and phone number.

Time: what time do they leave for school, what time does school begin and end, and what time the child is expected home.

Mode of transportation, e.g. walks, rides bike (what color/type), bus (number and routes), carpools (list schedule along with drivers' names, phone numbers and

addresses as well as make, model, color, year and license plate number of the vehicles driven). Please be as specific as possible.

If your child has a vehicle, list the make, model, color, year, VIN and license plate number.

Be sure to include after school activities with the days, times and locations. The list of after-school activities (sports, dance), should include the name and phone number of the attending adult (coach, teacher, parent).

### **FRIENDS**

List all children's friends' names (both legal and nicknames) addresses and phone numbers. Also list their parents' names and phone numbers. Additional information would be a description of the friend and activities they do together (crossing-guard, football, dance class, etc). Include photos when possible.

### **DNA SAMPLE**

Purchase a DNA Sample Kit, or make your own. Collect a used toothbrush (dry), baby teeth, hairbrush or a bloody bandage from a scrape or cut (dried). Place these items in a brown envelope. Ideally the envelope would be licked shut by the child. Don't forget to label each envelope with child's name and date collected. Store this envelope at room temperature away from heat.

***NOTE: Remember that all information that you collect now may save the life of your child or another child in the future.***

## EDUCATION

### *Teach don't Preach Parents, educate your children.*

#### OPEN COMMUNICATION PORTAL

Talk *with* your kids...no matter how uncomfortable you are with what they tell you. If a child feels comfortable coming to you with information, you are 90% ahead of the game. Let them know that they are safe sharing personal details with you. Even if disciplinary action needs to be taken, keep your cool. If you over react, they will be reluctant to open up to you again. Count to ten. Listen. Stay cool.

#### COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Know where your children are at all times. Know their routes. Know where their friends live and who their parents are. Keep a schedule of routines, times and locations e.g. after school activities including, dance, sports practice and tutoring. If your child is at a friend's house and plans change or they decide to go with the family somewhere, have them first clear it through you.

If the child is older, request that they update you regarding their whereabouts, and the time and place of outing, e.g. concerts, dining out. Make sure that they keep you updated throughout the evening with a quick call or text. Tell your child to come to you to report any strange behavior from another child, teen or adult. Make sure they feel safe telling you anything. Teens often notice strange behaviors from adults prior to being violated but never report it. *Let them know they can come to you about anything.*

If your child carries a cell phone, sign them up to a free real-time GPS tracking service. Google/Android offers "Latitude." All major cell carriers offer similar or more sophisticated GPS phone tracking apps for free or for a few dollars. This enables you to track the phone within a few meters on a map at any time.

Many parents establish a **SAFETY ZONE**. Then, if a child finds him or herself in an undesirable location, they can call home, ask for assistance and get a ride home without fear of being yelled at or severely punished for making a wrong choice.

If an older child goes out and gets intoxicated, establish a **SAFE PASS** so that they can call home *at any time* to get assistance and a ride *at any time*. A **SAFE PASS NIGHT** will allow the child to recover at home and not be questioned until the following day. Remain calm during this question session. Talk *with* them, not *at* them, about the dangers of drinking and drugs. A **SAFE SESSION** can keep the communication door open between you and your child.

#### CURFEW TIMES

Most kids dislike curfews. Talk *with* your kids about curfew as being a safety factor. Let the child know that if they do not arrive home at the agreed upon time, you will begin a search for them.

### **INTERJECT YOURSELF INTO THEIR LIVES**

Make it a point to introduce yourself to the parents of your children's friends (even if your kids are older). Offer contact information to the parents and ask for the same in return. Make it a priority to attend as many school functions, meetings and afterschool activities as you can. Get to know the teachers, tutors and coaches. Drive the routes your kids take to school, their friend's houses, the park, practice fields and after school classes.

### **SAFETY IN NUMBERS**

Teach your children (all ages) the buddy system: *always* walk or ride in pairs. No exceptions. If your child has to ride or walk a distance alone, know when they left and when to expect them home. Have them call or text when they arrive. Let them know it is for their own safety. Never allow them to go to the park or other places on their own. Teach them to look after other kids, even if they don't like them. Encourage them to be responsible for themselves and for others by "buddying" up.

### **NEVER TALK TO STRANGERS**

The age old saying especially holds especially true today. Children are taught to be polite and respectful to adults with one exception: *Never talk to strangers*. A child should never offer assistance to a stranger who has lost a dog or a child. Perpetrators use these tactics to lure children away from crowds. Teach your children that to be safe they should never go near a vehicle they don't recognize, even if they know the person inside. Teach your child to run in the opposite direction and YELL if a vehicle slows down and someone in the vehicle starts talking with the child. Teach them to start yelling the minute a vehicle slows down. If someone grabs your child, teach them to scream, "*Help! I am being kidnapped! This is not my parent! Call the police! My name is....*"

### **SAFETY AREAS**

Set up safety areas or zones along their routes. Walk, bike or ride the routes with them. Point out landmarks, e.g. neighborhood stores, safety areas, police stations, and friends houses. Get to know your own neighborhood and the people in it.

### **PRACTICE SCENARIOS**

Practice scenarios with your children. The goal is not to frighten, but to *educate* them. Run through "what if" scenarios. For young children you can keep this exercise fun yet educational. Teach them that if an unfamiliar adult approaches them, it is always better to scream and draw attention to themselves than not, even if the approaching adult means no harm. Have the children practice what to scream. Gently take a hold of them from behind and have them practice shouting, "Help, this is not my parent, help me, call the police." While not having the child hurt you, have them go through the motions of what they can do to get away (kick shins, bite, kick knee caps, scratch). Also teach your child to scream if they see another child being approached or grabbed. After any incident, the child should alert an adult, parent and the police. No secrets.

### **PRACTICE SAFETY**

Teach your child to stay away from possible areas that could be dangerous, e.g. alleys, shortcuts through rural areas or woods, dumpsters, or any route that is dark and deserted. Teach young children to stay away from appliances such as refrigerators, freezers and dryers left outside...anything a small child could crawl into. Teach them to stay out of anything that can close on them. Educate your child to look ahead and

around them while they are walking or riding their bikes. Instruct them to be aware of their surroundings and to listen to the sounds around them, e.g. cars, trains and any movement...especially people approaching. Teach them about the danger of listening to music through headphones while they walk. This not only robs the child of any sensory awareness, but also serves as an invitation for perpetrators to approach without being noticed or heard.

**LISTEN TEACH PRACTICE STAY SAFE**