

How to stranger proof your child

Ensure your child understands the concept of "stranger". A child's perception of stranger can change depending on what the person looks like, says, or does.

- Don't hesitate to explain to children the dangers that exist. Awareness can help protect them.
 - Teach your child tools they can use to draw attention and/or escape if someone grabs them. These include screaming, punching, scratching and biting.
 - Educate your child on the danger of abductions in a language they can understand.
 - Never leave your child unattended in a public place and always ensure that you can see them. If they need to go to the bathroom, always go with them.
 - Listen closely when your child talks about their friends and other people with whom they spend time when you are not around. If you feel uncomfortable with what you have heard, ask questions and get more clarity.
 - Teach your child that there can never be any secrets from you and if anyone, including family, asks your child to keep a secret he or she must tell you.
 - Make sure your children memorise their full names and address, including city and phone number with area code.
 - Using a play phone, teach children when and how to dial 10111.
 - Teach your children to go to a shop assistant, security officer or police officer if they ever get lost in a mall or on the street.
 - Have your children check in with you when they arrive home. Set rules for having friends over when you're not there and for your children going to friends' homes when no adults are there.
 - Explain how important it is not to let anyone into the house without your permission.
 - At school, encourage them to stick with their friends rather than walking or playing alone.
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- Monica Laganparsad Sources: <http://friendsoffineandcountry.co.za> and www.the-guardian.co.za