

CHILD ABDUCTION PREVENTION

According to the 2009 report (most recent) compiled by RCMP's National Missing Children Services Agency there were 237 parental abductions in Canada and 50 stranger abductions. In most missing child cases, the danger comes from someone the child and/or the parents know. The agency states that children under the age of 12 are most vulnerable to parental abductions.



- ▶ 41% of children taken in parental abduction cases were under the age of five.
- ▶ 31% of parental abduction cases involved children age 6 to 11.
- ▶ 28% per cent of cases involved children and teens age 12 to 17.

Children are seldom abducted by strangers. Abductions account for less than 1% of all missing children cases and approximately 90% of those are parental abductions.

Child abductions are a growing concern in Canada. To obtain more information including precautions that you can take to help safeguard your children, please click on [National Missing Children Services](#) (NMCS), courtesy of the RCMP.

PRACTICAL STEPS for PARENTS to PREVENT ABDUCTION

- ▶ Know where and how to contact your children are at all times. Even when your children reach an age when they can play without constant adult supervision, you should know where they are at all times.
- ▶ Establish a trustworthy, open, and respectful communication with your children.
- ▶ Take an active role in your children's activities.
- ▶ NEVER leave your children alone in your car or yard, in the store or any other place.
- ▶ Do not put your children's names on their clothing or books. An abductor can use this information to their advantage.
- ▶ Listen intently to your children when they tell you they had a bad dream. Trust your instincts and inquire with appropriately worded questions being mindful not to cause unnecessary fear and trauma.

- ▶ Teach your children never to speak to strangers and never to give out their names. Likewise, teach your children that strangers on the Internet are no different from strangers on the street, on the phone or at the mall.
- ▶ Young children should hold hands with their parents when walking and should be discouraged from wandering away.



- ▶ Teach your children what to do if they are lost; for example, if your child is lost in a mall teach them to ask the closest store clerk for help.
- ▶ Make sure your children always understand where to go when separated from their parents.
- ▶ Make sure your children know how to use a telephone and know their name, address, telephone number, parent's names, and cell numbers. Teach them how to dial "0" to get the Operator or '911' in an emergency. This information should be reviewed on a

regular basis.

- ▶ Invent a code word for each child. Teach them not to go anywhere with anyone who does not know this code word and change the code word frequently.
- ▶ Tell children it's OK to say "NO" and yell loudly and kick really hard if someone tries to take them against their will. It's a good idea to have your children practice their most annoying scream.
- ▶ Check websites for registered offenders in your neighbourhood.
- ▶ Do not allow your children to have internet access in unsupervised areas (their bedroom) by keeping your family computer in a central location where it can be easily monitored.
- ▶ Monitor the time your children spend on the computer and the websites they are visiting. Encourage your children to tell you if they encounter anything online that causes them to feel scared, sad, or confused.
- ▶ Obtain references from family, friends, and neighbours before selecting a babysitter.
- ▶ Join or establish a 'Block Parent' and/or 'Neighbourhood Watch' program. The latter program is designed to help neighbours watch out for each other, their homes, and their children. The 'Block Parent' program is designed to establish a 'safe house' environment operated by a qualified adult for children seeking refuge from gangs and bullies, as well as, a place to get help if there is an accident.
- ▶ Practice 'what if' situations with your children. What if they had an accident on their bicycle – what would they do? What if they get lost? Where should they go?
- ▶ Review all these safety guidelines with your children on a regular basis. Your ultimate goal is to teach your children basic safety skills without instilling unnecessary fear.

RULES for KIDS to PREVENT ABDUCTION

I ALWAYS:

- ▶ I always ask for permission from my parents before going anywhere. If there is a change in plans, I always check with my parents first.
- ▶ I always ask for permission from my parents to go on the Internet.
- ▶ I always say, "NO" to drugs.
- ▶ I always avoid shortcuts when I am walking from one place to another.
- ▶ I always tell my parents if someone asks me to do something that makes me feel uncomfortable. I will trust my inner feelings and say "NO."



IF I:

- ▶ If I go somewhere, I always use the buddy system.
- ▶ If I am scared of someone, I will run to safety.
- ▶ If an adult asks me to keep a secret from my parents, I will tell my parents, teacher or neighbour immediately.
- ▶ If someone touches me that makes me feel uncomfortable, I will tell someone I trust immediately.
- ▶ If I'm scared and need help, I can dial "0" (operator) or 911.
- ▶ If I am scooped up by a stranger, I will fight, kick and **SCREAM** as loud as I can!

I NEVER:

- ▶ Keep secrets that make me feel bad.
- ▶ Accept gifts, candy, or money without first checking with my parents.
- ▶ Accept car rides unless I have permission from my parents.
- ▶ Say that I am alone if I answer the phone; instead, I will take a message or say that my parents will call back.
- ▶ Talk to people online without my parent's permission.
- ▶ Answer the door if I am alone. I will keep all doors locked at all times.
- ▶ Invite anyone into the house without the permission of my parents or babysitter.
- ▶ Go into people's houses without letting my parents know where I am.
- ▶ Play in deserted buildings or isolated areas.



