

A Parents Guide to Keeping Children Safe from Abuse or Abduction



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1. introduction

Keep Children Safe from Abduction and Harm

Keeping children safe while allowing them grow to confident independent adults may well be the single most important role of a parent. In this article we outline some approaches to help you keep your children safe and give you peace of mind.

About the Author

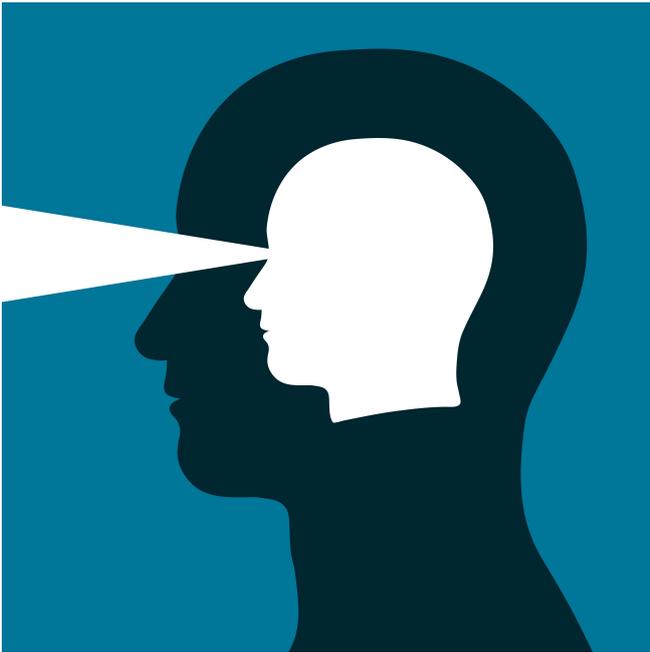


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2. Trust Your Intuition



One of most important elements in keeping children safe is for the parent to trust their intuition. Young children have a limited ability to protect themselves which means nature has imbued parents with a heightened sense of awareness around our children's safety.

Our brain operates on two levels of thinking, 'System 1' and 'System 2'. System 1 is conscious thinking, which focuses on big problems or the task at

hand. This is backed up by 'System 2' thinking which operates in the background monitoring our environment, and thus is the type of thinking that often spots anomalies, behaviours which are out of place or situations that just don't 'feel right'. This shows up as a feeling of unease, intuition or gut feeling.

As a parent you should train yourself to trust your intuition. Situations or people that don't feel right should be taken seriously and fully investigated or avoided, even if you don't know why.

If you feel something is wrong with your child or about the behaviour of someone around your child, take every step to find out more. Beware of disregarding this feeling, minimisation and and excuse making are the enemies of intuition.

If you remain in any way in doubt, change something. If it's a babysitter, change them, if it's your child visiting another home, stop. Your child's safety is too important for you to wait for proof that something is wrong. Remember, final proof may be harm to your child.

3. Understand and Recognise Predator Behaviour



Research has shown that predators who seek to abuse or harm children demonstrate a common set of behaviours designed to manipulate their target to dropping the guard.

These behaviours include:

Over-friendliness

Beware if someone you have never met is too friendly too fast, 'oversharing', inappropriate friendliness, too much detail can be an attempt to bypass your guard and build misplaced trust.

This type of behaviour can be difficult to deal with as we are placed in situations where it feels awkward or even rude if we do not engage and that is exactly what the predator wants to achieve. Again, you must trust your intuition. If someone is behaving too familiar, too fast, you should discontinue the conversation and create distance. If your attempt to disentangle yourself from an 'over familiar' conversation is met by attempts at persuasion, rudeness or aggression this should only confirm your reading of the situation.

Forced Teaming

A classic predatory strategy is 'forced teaming', where the predator will attempt to manufacture a common problem or challenge where none really exists. This can be as simple as offering to help carry shopping or share a lift. The predator's goal is to engage in a joint activity, creating a false sense of trust and to build rapport. The key to dealing with this recognize is too recognise it for the manipulation it is and firmly decline to take part.

Ignoring "No"

One of the most important indicators of potential aggression is ignoring the word 'no'. This is the last word a predator wants to hear as they attempt to manipulate the situation to their own end. Someone who fails to respect a 'no' is ignoring the no because it does not serve them. This may lead to promises, attempts at negotiation or even anger. The most important thing to understand is that someone ignoring your 'no' is attempting to control you and this should make you firmer in your resolve to leave the situation.

If you did find yourself in the presence of Predatory behaviour, forceful and clear communication that you recognise the situation, as well as moving to safety, should be your priority. This behaviour shows that you are fully aware of what is happening and may, in itself, deter the predator who may fear exposure and possible capture.

4. Beware of the Access,Cover and Escape Rule



When you are out with your children always consider the ACE concept.

In order to abduct a child the predator must have Access to the child, the Cover to engage and the ability to Escape the scene. Always control access to your children, especially *where this can happen outside of your observation.*

Be sure you are aware of and can monitor all exits. By controlling their 'ACE' factor you can ensure your child cannot be removed without your consent.

5. Restrict Privacy and Control

Privacy and control are required to harm a child. You should absolutely assure yourself that anyone who has this type of access to your children will not harm them.



Verify Everyone who has access to your Children

Get to know everyone who has access to your children, be it neighbours, schools or activity leaders. Fully check all references and claimed credentials. *Don't assume someone else has !*

Communicate in detail with anyone who has responsibility for your child's safety. Make sure they understand your expectations in how your child is cared for, ensure you understand and are satisfied with the vetting procedures and communication procedures in the event of an incident.

Pay particular attention to where situations where strangers could interact with your children while the carer is responsible , e.g. A

Baby sitters boyfriend arriving after you have left or family who have access to your child at a home based nurse.

Put it in Writing

Putting your willingness to communicate and help in ensuring your child's safety as well your expectations of the carer in writing-is a powerful way to get your message across and ensure you are taken seriously.

6. Train your children to be safe and listen to them



Teach your child the behaviours of predators. Make sure they know it's OK to defy an adult if they feel the situation is wrong.

An important point is to make sure they understand that Adults do not ask children for help or to go somewhere else with them.

Practice “what if “ scenarios and what to do if lost e.g. train them to go to a woman if lost, the simple fact is a woman is much more likely to stop everything and take care for the child and less likely to harm them.

Listen to your children and monitor their behaviour. Make sure to pay attention to any unusual or changes in behaviour around specific individuals, places or events. Talk to them about always telling you if they feel something is strange or wrong and that they should tell you immediately.

Train your child to resist and shout 'this is not my Mam/Dad' if they are being carried away, otherwise onlookers may assume it's just a child throwing a tantrum.

7. Take total responsibility

Your child needs you to ensure their safety, whether they like it or not. Episodes of violence or other abuse can have deep and lasting effects and impact the quality of your child's life.

Ensure that you fully take control, never allow someone you don't know to have unsupervised access to your child and never allow yourself to be manipulated into uncomfortable situations.

As children grow older they will seek more independence and new experiences, this is natural and normal. They will resist your instructions and perhaps be unhappy with some of your instructions and behaviours, but that is part of the job of being a parent.

You have more life experience and are more aware of the risks, as well as the evolutionary programming to be obsessed with your children's safety, that's your job. Your children don't have to like it, they just have to be safe.

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