

Child Safety & Strangers

What to Teach a Child About Strangers

Children need a sense of who they can trust. It is quite common for children to wander off and if a child happens to get lost they may need to call upon a stranger for help, which means they must develop the ability to judge what kind of people to approach.

The 'never talk to strangers' rule does not protect children in the situations they are most likely to face. It can also be confusing for children when they see adults talking to strangers. A child may not know how to define who is a stranger, and who is not.

The Canada Safety Council encourages parents to give their children age-appropriate positive messages about safety, bearing in mind how young people may perceive their world.

What You Can Do

For a young child, nothing replaces close supervision. It may be helpful to teach children the following information.

If they are lost or in danger, they should stay put or if in hazardous conditions, find the nearest safe spot. Try to attract attention and wait for a rescuer.

Once children are in school, have them memorize their name, address and phone number in case they become separated from the family.

When children encounter someone that makes them feel uncomfortable, whether it's someone they know or not, children should be taught to trust their instincts and to seek out an adult in whom they can confide.

Children need to know who they can trust. It is important for them to know who to ask for help if they get lost. Teach children to find a uniformed officer, store, restaurant or information booth staff, or a parent with children, if they need help.