

## **Parent Information: Taking the steps to ensure your children are capable of responding in a dangerous situation**

### **1) Awareness needs to be taught**

Children need to know to be aware of suspicious activity, teach your children how to identify

- Being followed on foot
- Being followed by a vehicle
- Parked vehicles (teach children to walk on the inside of sidewalks farthest away from parked vehicles)
- Avoiding alleys', shortcuts that may be isolated, paths and walkways that are isolated when alone
- Avoid distractions when walking alone, put phones and games away, be aware of your surroundings

Most of the time, removing what makes you vulnerable to a predator can protect you. Predators typically look for individuals who are unaware of their presence, as well as individuals who are isolated and hidden. Making a predator aware that you are aware is a good deterrent.

### **2) Walk common routes with your children**

- Walk with your child to the store, to the school, to their friend's house and to the park. Any place that your child is likely to walk unattended.
- Explain to your child along the way which routes they should and should not take and why (the why is important, without a why it's just a rule and rules are meant to be broken)
- Point out safe places for your child to go if they feel like they are in danger (store and/ or neighbor, another parent with their children is another good option to make your child aware of if they need help)
- Make a plan with your children and teach them the plan, let them help you make it (or think they are) the more involved the more they will remember.

After you show your children the safe places and places they should avoid within your community, you then need to teach your child how to demand attention from an adult (other than yourself) should they ever be in trouble.

Most children when running into a store for help will wait in line, because children are taught that you wait in line at the store. Parents need to teach children when they are scared they do not wait in line, ever. Teach your child to run to the front of the line and demand help, not ask for help. Manors do not apply in an emergency, and if your child is scared, they need to understand that is an emergency.

Teach your child to demand attention when they get to the front of the line, do not wait your turn, do not let staff finish what they are doing first, teach your child to scream "help me" Any child who runs into a public store screaming "help me" is going to get instant attention, but children need to be taught to do this by their parents.

### **3) Teach your child to scream HELP ME, DON'T TOUCH ME, STOP FOLLOWING ME, STAY AWAY FROM ME**

- A child being uncooperative and having a fit is easily dismissed by most of society. Your child needs to know that in an emergency they need to scream as loud as they can, and what they scream can be the difference between getting assistance and getting ignored. Teach them the difference.

Most predators will not stick around when a child gets loud or fights back, they require compliance. Teach your children to be loud and run, if they cannot run then they should struggle and fight. If a stranger whose an adult is requesting your child comply with any wish, regardless of how innocent that wish may be, your children need to

know that they do not comply with strangers, ever, and a stranger whose asking them to go anywhere with them, even if they seem nice, your child needs to scream and run to their closest safe place, they need to be aware that this is a threat, and parents need to teach their children how to identify these threats.

#### **4) Create a family password**

- Let your child create a family password that is 100% unique to your family that no one else would ever know. If your child chooses the password they are more likely to remember it.

There are several cases where children are kidnapped by adults that are acquaintances, friends, or relatives of the parents. Children view these people as safe, and we all hope that they are. But having a family password for your children will allow them to confirm if an adult claims there's an emergency and were instructed to take them somewhere. If the child asks the adult the password and they do not know it, instruct your child to scream, and run to their closest safe place for help.

#### **5) Do not make it easy for Predators to identify your child**

Avoid putting your children's names on their apparel, including knapsacks, jackets, binders, or other items easily seen by strangers. When a stranger can identify the child, this gives the child a sense of trust, as they feel this stranger must clearly know them, or their family or friends or someone associated with them. Your child likely will not consider that their name is printed on their jacket which is identifying them to strangers. Predators use this information to gain trust and manipulate children.

#### **6) Identifying Your Predator**

Teach your children that it's important to remember things about the person who scared them. Height and eye colour may not be the things children can identify easily, but tattoos, hair colour and style, clothing, scars, or any other things that may look weird to them they should know to pay attention to and remember. Same with vehicle colour and emblems on the vehicle, something hanging from the rear view mirror, these things a child can pick up easily if they know it is important to.

#### **7) Resources are unlimited**

There are tons of great, free resources available to parents online, between Google search, and YouTube. There is so much more information that can be helpful that I have not included above so please take the time to do some family research of your own.

#### **8) Talk to your Children**

Majority of children do not know what abuse is, a lot of children who are abused do not know that they're being abused until they become adults. Majority of child abuse is reported when the child becomes an adult, and most of reported incidents by children are at least one year after the incident. Child abuse and sexual assaults on children are the least reported crime in Canada and the US statistics show. Ensure your children know what is considered abuse, what is OK and what is not OK, and understand that over 80% of reported child sexual assaults involve someone that the child knows and trusts.

#### **Books that every child should read, recommended by a trauma therapist**

My Body! What I Say Goes! – Jayneen Sanders

Let's Talk About Body Boundaries, Consent and Respect – Jayneen Sanders

**Thank you for your support,**

**People Vs Predators Association (PVP)™**