

Kid Safety

P A R E N T I N G T I P S



Emergencies: Who to Call

Some parents make the mistake of thinking they will be always be around in emergency situations, but that is not always the case.

Children need to be equipped with the knowledge of who to call should they ever find themselves in a dangerous environment at school or at a friend's house.

Talking about 911 with children is a great place to start when discussing safety measures with children.

WHAT IS 911

Before your child can fully understand the importance of 911, they must first realize what constitutes a real emergency.

Talk with them about the various situations that would warrant a 911 call, including fire, an intruder or a family member seriously hurting him or herself.

Role playing is a great way to introduce your child to the feel of a potentially dangerous situation without them having to really experience one. Place a toy phone nearby and act out an emergency situation that requires them to run to the phone and pretend to dial 911.

Add a little fun to the situation by timing your child's reaction time and challenging them to better it during the next scenario.

WHEN TO CALL 911

The National Emergency Number Association estimates that 75 percent of calls to 911 are actually non-emergency situations.

A large portion of this statistic is made up of children calling 911 in predicaments that may seem serious to them, but do not constitute an emergency phone call. Teach your children that an unnecessary phone call to 911 can delay help getting to people who really need it at that time.

It is also important for them to understand the severity of punishment related to placing prank calls to 911.

EMERGENCY CARD

Every home should have a detailed listing of phone numbers for not only the local police and fire departments, but also the numbers of

family members to contact in emergency situations.

Also write down any critical medicines or allergies for you and your family members. A list with all of this vital information can help first responders and doctors determine the best course of action to take.



Kids Safety Apps

Don't let the threat of online and phone dangers turn you away from the power of technology. There are a hoard of helpful applications for your smartphone or tablet that can help keep your children safe.

Allowing your child an electronic device may actually lead to more ways to protect them. Apps are designed with location-monitoring capabilities or quick-chat options.

The following free apps were downloaded from the iPhone App Store and reviewed for your information. Check them and others out to find the one that best fits your family's needs.

LIFE360 FAMILY LOCATOR

This app can be fun for everyone in the family. It allows you to send and receive check-in and check-out alerts to let you know when your children have left specific functions.

It also features a map-like tool that helps you determine nearby safety points and potential threats. Its interface is smooth and easy to navigate for users young and old.

MAMA BEAR

Much like Life 360 Family Locator, Mama Bear lets you track your children as long as they have a smartphone equipped with GPS monitoring.

The main add-on that Mama Bear includes allows you to check in on your child's Facebook feed. This will alert you to any foul language or disruptive behavior that may lead to dangerous situations for your children.

FBI CHILD ID

Developed as a safety measure by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI Child ID provides a convenient, electronic storage spot for your child's critical information.

You can upload photos, child height, weight, eye color and hair color that can all be emailed to authorities in the case of your child going missing.



Put a Stop to Bullying

Six out of 10 American teenagers witness bullying at least once every day.

That alarming statistic, uncovered by a recent Family and Work Institute study, sheds some light on a situation that affects children of all appearances, personalities, races and religious affiliations.

Bullying can leave lasting physical, emotional and psychological damage that takes years for children to get over. It is also an uncomfortable subject for victims to bring up because they feel a fear or embarrassment about being picked on.

The job of parents, educators and mentors is to encourage youth to speak up when they see bullying occur – even if they are not the victim. Having someone else report the problem can take some pressure off of the bullied, while also landing the bully in trouble.

WHO GETS BULLIED

Bullies do not discriminate. Especially in school settings, bullies set their sights on random students to intimidate.



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According to stopbullying.gov, there are some groups of children who may face an increased risk of being bullied, including those who are perceived to be different from their peers, depressed, anxious or do not get along well with others.

Even identifying certain children as having these risk factors still may not mean they will be bullied.

HOW TO PREVENT IT

Unfortunately, bullying is extremely difficult to prevent. From the parents' perspective, it all starts with communication.

Children need to know what bullying is, why it happens and how to stand up to it safely. Parents can encourage their children to speak to

a trusted adult if they are ever bullied, even if that adult is a teacher, coach or mentor.

Adults in respected positions are able to give advice and support from the perspective different than a parent.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Organizations focused on

preventing bullying are all around us, and they're usually looking for volunteers in advancing their efforts.

Many of these groups speak at schools on the subject of bullying. They share stories about bullying they experience, witnessed or heard about. If public speaking isn't in your comfort zone, the organizations can also use event coordinators or funds.

Preparing for a Fire

Most children can identify flames as a dangerous part of a fire, but they may not know that the heat and smoke created during a fire can actually be more life-threatening.

Before creating a fire escape plan, it is important to teach children what you are escaping from. Teach them about the risk for asphyxiation, which exceeds burns by a three-to-one ratio in causing death, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Talk about fires with your children and teach them how you have certain tools in place to keep them safe, such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

Fires burn quickly and without warning, so every second counts. Create your fire safety plan and practice it often to help you and your children escape quickly should a fire ever affect your home.

FEMA offers the following tips, which the agency urges you to teach your children and practice twice a year:

- Find two ways to get out of each room.

- Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly, and that security bars can be properly opened.

- Practice feeling your way out of the house in the dark or with your eyes closed.

- Teach children not to hide from firefighters.

DURING A FIRE

If a fire does occur in your home, prompt action could make the difference between escaping and being seriously

injured. FEMA shares these tips during a fire:

- Crawl low under any smoke to your exit because heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling.

- When the smoke alarm sounds, get out fast.

- If there is smoke blocking your door or first way out, use your second way out.

- Before opening a door, feel the doorknob and door. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out.



Tips for Online Safety

We live in a digital world. Can you imagine what it will look like in 20 years?

What adults see as a rapidly changing time, kids consider a part of regular life. Children are quick to learn new technology as it launches and are adept at integrating it into their daily lives.

There are now more ways than ever to connect with loved ones and friends across the country. Unfortunately, parents must also consider that there are more ways than ever also for children to connect with the wrong type of people who may be looking to cause harm.

IDENTIFY THEFT

The internet is full of scammers and con artists looking to take advantage of unsuspecting people.

Children have become big targets for identify thieves, who set up online contests or games requiring social security numbers to participate.

If your child knows his or hers, this can be a trap that opens your entire family up to identify theft. Teach your children the importance of keeping their personal information safe from others, especially online.

OVERSHARING

As social media continues to explode in popularity, children are finding numerous venues through which to show off their creativity, opinions and personal lives. But sometimes children share too much online.

Posting phone numbers, addresses or schedules is like children handing strangers an invitation to enter their lives.

Criminals have taken to social media for this exact reason, as they have found

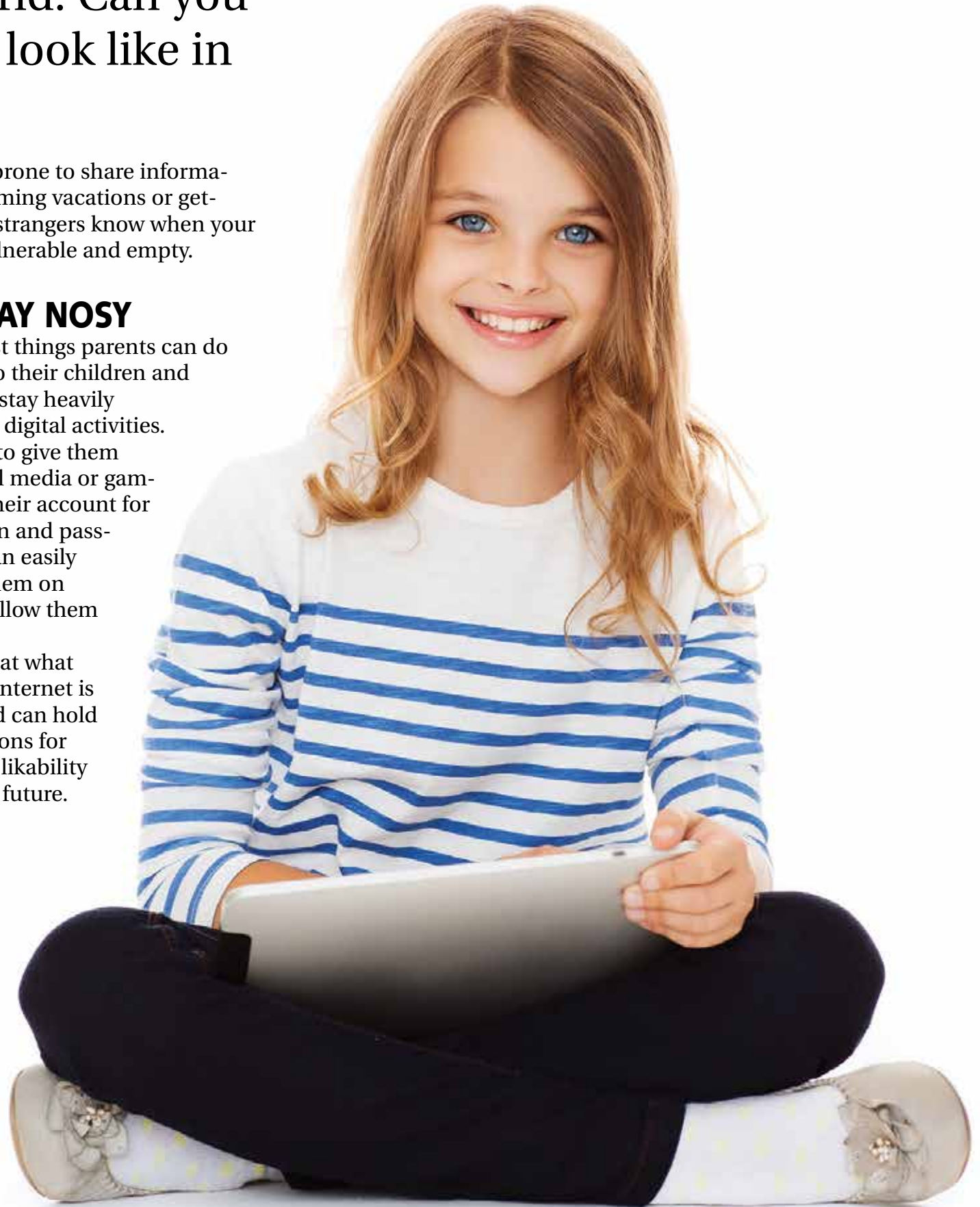
that people are prone to share information about upcoming vacations or get-aways. This lets strangers know when your house will be vulnerable and empty.

STAY NOSY

One of the best things parents can do when it comes to their children and technology is to stay heavily involved in their digital activities.

If you choose to give them access to a social media or gaming site, create their account for them with a login and password that you can easily access. Friend them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter.

Teach them that what they put on the internet is there forever and can hold future ramifications for their popularity, likability and educational future.



Cell Phone Safety

Phone or no phone? That is the question facing so many parents with adolescent children.

You like the idea of them being able to call you in case of an emergency, but you feel uncomfortable placing the power of a phone literally in their hands.

It is important to remember who the parent of the relationship is. If you feel uneasy about equipping your youngster with a phone, then don't do it.

There is also a happy medium if you are willing to compromise. Purchase a simple phone that requires the use of prepaid minutes. No internet. No texting.

Your child can have the ability to call his or her friends, and you can enjoy the reassurance associated with a cell phone.

If you do decide to purchase an internet-able phone, talk with your provider about blocking certain sites and even obtaining histories of sites visited, numbers called and texts sent.

You as the primary phone customer will have access to this information, and it could help guide your strategies in keeping your children safe.

SAFETY TIPS

The National Crime Prevention Society cites cell phone safety as one of the major issues facing young peo-



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ple today. It recommends that parents share some of the following tips to keep their children out of trouble and danger. Text them often to your child for constant reminders.

Personal Info No-No:

Never give out your address or names of family members through a phone call, text or email to people you don't know or if others can hear you speaking.

Don't Know Them?

Don't Answer Them: Never respond to a call, email, text, or voice message from someone you don't know.

Pics and Postings: Know the difference between an appropriate and inappropriate

photo.

Tell a Parent: If your child receives any type of call, text message, email or voicemail that makes them feel uncomfortable, teach them to tell you or a trusted adult.

Danger of (Some) Strangers

The word “stranger” comes attached with a stigma of danger and fear. But not every stranger looks villainous, and not every stranger is dangerous.

Still, experts urge parents to educate their children from an early age on why, how and when to avoid strangers.

It can be a confusing concept for young people, as they are taught to trust some strangers and not others. Parents can protect their children from dangerous strangers by teaching them about suspicious behavior and what to do in the face of danger.

SAFE STRANGERS

We all find ourselves in situations that require the help of a perfect stranger. Children are no exception to this rule.

Police officers, firefighters and teachers are safe strangers that our youth should be able to trust. Establish from a young age with your children the difference between dangerous and safe strangers. This will help them know where to turn in the face of danger or an emergency situation.

DANGEROUS STRANGERS

When educating your children on safe strangers, spend just as much time, if not more, discussing dangerous strangers.

These strangers are the people who your family doesn't know well. They will not always be easily identifiable like they are in the movies. It is important to tell children that not all strangers look scary or dangerous.

On their surface, strangers can appear quite unassuming and normal. Teaching children that strangers come in all shapes, sizes and appearances will help them remain vigilant around people they do not know, ultimately keeping them safe in all situations.

PARENT TIPS

You can educate your children until you think they've got the grasp on the subject of strangers, but they are still children, after all. The responsibility of keeping them safe comes down to parents, even if they are not around their children all day long.

Create a simple plan for your children to execute in dangerous situations. They should yell and run away to a safe place, causing a scene and making it an uncomfortable one for the stranger.

