

CHILD SAFETY TIPS

25 Minutes: The Time It Takes To Teach Children About Safety

(NAPSA)—Did you know there are 525,000 minutes in a year? The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children wants you to take 25 of them to talk to your child about safety—the same amount of time it takes to watch a favorite TV show. It could save a child's life.

In the seven years since it began, NCMEC's "Take 25" campaign has spread to thousands of communities across the United States, 150 countries and the Internet through social media. The campaign was created to coincide with National Missing Children's Day, which is May 25.

That was the day, in 1979, when 6-year-old Etan Patz was abducted from a New York street on his way to school, the first time he was allowed to walk to the bus stop alone. A suspect was recently charged with kidnapping and murdering him—more than three decades later.

At the time Etan vanished, there was no coordinated national system for addressing missing children cases. His case, and that of 6-year-old Adam Walsh, who was abducted from a Florida mall and murdered in 1981, helped launch a national movement that led to the Missing Children's Act in 1982 and the creation of NCMEC in 1984.

Today, up to 2,000 children go missing every day. Most are recovered quickly, but there are many who never return home. As the nation's leading nonprofit working with law enforcement, families and the professionals who serve them on issues of missing and exploited children, NCMEC has learned a lot about how to keep children safer in the real world and on the Internet.

Since 2005 to January 2013, for example, NCMEC employees have analyzed 8,000 confirmed attempted abductions, showing that many children escaped harm by taking some kind of action. Most suspects were driving a vehicle. Nearly a third targeted children going to and from school or school-related activities between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Nearly half of the children escaped by walking or running away without any contact. One third were proactive: yelling, kicking, screaming or pulling away.

This month, NCMEC is honoring a 10-year-old Philadelphia girl



Talk to your children about safety.

who fought off a man who tried to abduct her last July as she walked down a street near her home, holding her 2-year-old brother's hand. A surveillance videotape showed how fast it can happen: The man grabbed her from behind, put his hand on her mouth and lifted her in the air. She struggled mightily and her little brother screamed as loud as he could. The man dropped her and ran. He was later arrested.

As part of the Take 25 campaign, NCMEC provides families and communities with free tools and resources, in multiple languages, to host events and initiate an ongoing dialogue with children, including conversation starters and important safety tips. Because of its popularity, NCMEC has expanded the May campaign from April 1 to June 15.

Events to raise awareness about the importance of talking to children about safety are held in a variety of venues, including community centers, military installations, sport complexes, retail locations, houses of worship, schools and libraries. Last year alone, Masonichip International hosted 269 "Take 25" events. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 206. Miss Black USA, 36.

Every year, organizers find creative new ways to spread the message—on highway billboard signs, at community safety fairs, even a flash mob.

NCMEC's free resources, including the "Take 25 Organizer's Kit," can be downloaded at www.take25.org or ordered after your Take 25 event is registered and approved by NCMEC staff.

You can also find important safety information at NCMEC's websites, www.missingkids.com and www.netsmartz.org.