

Pointers For Parents & Guardians

Tips To Keep Your Children Safer

(NAPSA)—Nearly 800,000 children are reported missing each year in the United States. If you're a parent or guardian, the realization that your child could go missing may be your biggest fear. With summer vacation in full swing, and thousands of children out enjoying the weather, families need to take extra precautions to keep their children safer.

Here are some quick and easy tips from Knowing the Rules... Summer Safety Tips for Parents and Guardians by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) to help increase the safety of children in your community:

- Be sure to go over the rules with your children about whose homes they can visit when you're not there and discuss the boundaries of where they can and can't go in the neighborhood.

- Make sure children know their full names, address, and telephone numbers and how to use the telephone. Be sure they know what to do in case of an emergency and how to reach you using cellular or pager numbers. Children should have a neighbor or trusted adult they can call if they're scared or there's an emergency.

- Teach your children in whose car they may ride. Children should be cautioned never to approach any vehicle, occupied or not, unless accompanied by a parent, guardian or other trusted adult.

- Make sure your children know to stay away from pools, canals or other bodies of water without adult supervision.

- Since daylight lasts longer during the summer months, be sure your children know their curfew and to check in with you if they are going to be late. If you



Use StreetSenz to help keep children safer from abduction, violence and exploitation.

allow your children to play outside after dark, make sure they have reflective clothing on and stay close to home.

- Choose babysitters with care. Obtain references from family, friends and neighbors. Many states now have registries for public access to check criminal history or sex-offender status. Observe the babysitter's interaction with your children and ask your children how they feel about the babysitter.

- Check out camps and other summer programs before enrolling your children. See if a background screening check is completed on the individuals working with the children. Make sure there will be adult supervision of your children at all times, and make sure you are made aware of all activities and field trips offered by the camp or program.

- Always listen to your children and keep the lines of communication open. Your children are your best source for determining if everything is okay. Teach your children to get out of dangerous or uncomfortable situations right away and practice basic safety skills with them. Make sure they know they can tell you about anything that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable or confused.

Following these tips can help ensure your children enjoy a safer summer. However, the most important step you can take to help prevent abduction is to make safety a priority for the entire family. A great resource to help parents and guardians talk openly with their children about staying safer is StreetSenz.

StreetSenz (www.StreetSenz.com) is an online resource for child safety information and education. On this site you will find tips, news, articles and community resources to help keep children safer from abduction, violence and exploitation. Families can request a free Child ID Kit. In the event that your child goes missing, it is important to provide law enforcement with an up-to-date photo and other pertinent information about your child right away.

Additionally, families can sign up for Wireless AMBER Alerts on their mobile phone. The Wireless Foundation introduced this industrywide public service program in May 2005, enabling nearly all of the more than 200 million wireless phone users in the United States to opt in to receive free geographically specific AMBER Alerts as text messages on their wireless phones when an AMBER Alert has been issued for an abducted child in their area. To learn how to sign up, visit www.wirelessamberalerts.org or stop by your neighborhood RadioShack.

Created in partnership with RadioShack and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, StreetSenz provides families with tools to help educate and empower their children on ways to respond to real-life situations to help prevent child abduction and sexual exploitation.