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SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS

Every parent should know and follow the following safety tips. Please take the time to read and share this information with your children.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY: Know where your children are at all times. Be familiar with their friends and daily activities.

BUILD SELF-ESTEEM: A child who has low self-esteem cannot protect himself/herself. Listen carefully to your children's fears, and be supportive in all your discussions with them, replacing fear with knowledge.

TEACH DECISION-MAKING: Children at all ages can make decisions. Practice early with little decisions so big decisions later are easier. Teach them to trust their own feelings, and assure them they have the right to say NO to what they sense is wrong.

BUILD SUPPORT SYSTEMS: Children need positive adult role models and need to know where to go for help.

CHOOSE SUBSTITUTE CARE GIVERS CAREFULLY: Interview and monitor babysitters, group leaders, youth pastors, etc. Be alert to a teenager or adult who is paying unusual amounts of attention to your children or giving them inappropriate or expensive gifts.

PROTECT KIDS WHO ARE HOME ALONE: Set ground rules, emergency contacts, and responsibilities for latchkey kids.

TALK WITH CHILDREN: Teach your children that no one should approach them or touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. If someone does, they should tell their parents immediately.

BE SENSITIVE: Watch for changes in a child's behavior. They are signals that you should sit down and talk to your children about what caused the changes.

USE ROLE-PLAYING: Rehearse safety situations with your child. Give them power through knowledge. Play the WHAT IF? game.

LET KIDS BE KIDS: Teach them what they need to know to be safe and let them know you will do your best to protect them. Don't scare the fun out of children. This and other safety information is available from the following organizations. Please share these tips with your family and friends.

- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children www.missingkids.com
- Stop It Now! www.stopitnow.com