



HALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



CRIME PREVENTION TIP

DATE: November 6, 2009

SUBJECT: CHILD SAFETY

With the recent attempted child abduction in North Hall, now is a good time to refresh our minds on matters involving the safety of our children. While true innocence is a rare thing in this world, I believe children are the closest thing to it we'll ever know. And probably like most of you, I can imagine few things worse than crimes that victimize children. Let's do everything within our power to make sure that doesn't happen.

While there are many methods and names for the various child safety programs out there, the main points are usually similar and all have some level of validity. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has some excellent information on their website at:

<http://www.missingkids.com/>

Below is just a sample of their information:

1. **Teach your children to run away from danger**, never toward it. Danger is anyone or anything invading their personal space. If anyone should try to grab them, tell them to make a scene; loudly yell this person is not my father/mother/guardian; and make every effort to get away by kicking, screaming, and resisting. Their safety is more important than being polite. Teach your children if they are ever followed in a vehicle to turn around and run in the other direction to you or another trusted adult.
2. **Never let your children go places alone**, and always supervise your young children or make sure there is another trusted adult present to supervise them if you cannot. Make sure your older children always take a friend when they go anywhere.
3. **Know where your children are and whom they are with at all times**. Remind children to never take anything or respond in any way if approached by anyone they don't know asking for help or directions, and also remind them to never approach a vehicle without your permission. Teach them to run away as quickly as possible to you or another trusted adult.
4. **Talk openly to your children about safety** and encourage them to tell you or a trusted adult if anyone or anything makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused. Discuss safety issues with your children so they will understand the need for precautions. Advise your older children about steps they may take to help safeguard themselves. Know your children's friends and their families. Pay attention to your children and listen to them. If you don't, someone else may. And others may have ulterior motives for befriending your children.
5. **Practice what you teach** by creating "what if" scenarios with your children to make sure they understand the safety message and are able to use it in a real situation.
6. **Make your children part of securing your home**. If you have installed an alarm system, demonstrate it to your children and show them how to make sure doors and windows are locked. This will not only help calm their fears but will also help make them part of your "safety plan" at home.



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7. **Have a list of family members who could be contacted in case of an emergency.** Designate a family member or close associate who would be able to fill the role of advisor in case of an emergency.
8. **Be alert to and aware of your surroundings.** Know the "escape routes" and plan what you would do in different emergencies. Practice "what if" scenarios, so you will be well prepared. Know the location of local hospitals and best routes to take to reach them. Know how to reach the nearest local law enforcement agency or sub-station.
9. **Know your employees and coworkers.** Do background screening and reference checks on everyone who works at your home, particularly those individuals who care for your children. Their knowledge of your family is extensive so make sure you have an equivalent understanding of them. National access to sex-offender registries is available at www.nsopw.gov.
10. **Consider varying your daily routines and habits.** Do not take the same routes or go at the same time on your regular errands. If you take your children to school, change that route from time to time as well.
11. **Take steps to secure personal information about yourself.** Consider getting a post office box and use it for all of your mail. Be discreet about your possessions and family's personal habits and information. Take steps to protect your identity by not revealing too much information and notifying authorities of any irregularities. Often your personal information reveals just as much about your children as yourself.
12. **Report any suspicious persons or activities to law enforcement.** If you feel anyone in your family has been targeted or is being stalked, immediately report this information to law-enforcement authorities. Do not wait.
13. **Remember that you are your best resource** for safeguarding your children and your family. Stay alert, informed, and vigilant about personal-security issues.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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