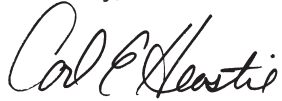


Dear Parent,

We would do anything and everything to protect our children from harm. But we can't always be present, making it that much more important to teach them how to stay safe. That's why I encourage you to share these safety tips with your child.

If I can be of further assistance in this or any other matter, please contact my office.

Sincerely,



Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly

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Playing it safe

Safety tips
for you and
your children



Courtesy of
**Speaker of the Assembly
Carl E. Heastie**

Children should:

- ✓ Know their full name, address and phone number.
- ✓ Know how, when and why to dial 911.
- ✓ Know that a stranger is someone they and you don't know very well.
- ✓ Never go into anyone's home without your permission. Children should know whose homes they're allowed to enter.
- ✓ Go to the nearest checkout counter and ask the clerk for assistance if they become separated from you while shopping rather than look for you. They should never go to the parking lot.
- ✓ Walk and play with others. Children are most vulnerable when alone. If your child walks to school, have them walk with other children.

- ✓ Never get into a car without your permission. Warn your children that someone might try to lure them into a car by claiming you said to pick them up; tell them never to obey such instructions. Have a code word that only you and your child know.
- ✓ Know that adults don't usually ask children for directions. If someone stops a car asking for directions, the child shouldn't go near it.
- ✓ Know that if someone is following them, they should go to a public place where there are other people, to a neighbor's home or into a store and ask for help. They should not try to hide.
- ✓ Know that no one has the right to touch them or make them feel uncomfortable. They have the right to say no.
- ✓ Never tell anyone over the phone they are home alone. Let voicemail screen calls.
- ✓ Never answer the door when they're home alone. If a person won't leave the door, children should call 911 or another emergency contact person, such as a neighbor.
- ✓ Know to tell you if any adult asks them to keep a "secret."
- ✓ Tell you if someone offers them gifts or money or wants to take their picture.
- ✓ Yell "HELP" and not just scream if they're in danger. It's OK to fight back and do anything to get an attacker to let go.
- ✓ Go to a neighbor's home and call 911 if they arrive home and a door or window is unlocked or broken.
- ✓ Always walk against traffic to be aware if someone stops a car near them, and never take shortcuts through deserted areas like an empty lot, an alley or the woods.



Learn more about preventing child abduction and online safety:

missingkids.org/education/kidsmartz

missingkids.org/netsmartz

criminaljustice.ny.gov/missing/aware/prevent.htm

Sources: National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services



Parents should:

- ▶ Know your child's friends.
- ▶ Never leave a child unattended, and never leave a child alone in a car.
- ▶ Be involved in your child's activities.
- ▶ Listen if your child tells you they don't want to be with someone. There may be a reason.
- ▶ Have your child's fingerprints taken.
- ▶ Take a photograph of your child each year (four times yearly for children under 2).
- ▶ Be sensitive to changes in your child's behavior or attitude. Encourage open communication.
- ▶ Have a plan with your child outlining what they should do if you become separated while out.
- ▶ Make reading license plate numbers and remembering their colors a game. This helps children recognize the numbers and letters on license plates and their state of origin.
- ▶ Ensure your child's day care center or school won't release them to anyone but you or the people you designate. Ask the school to call you if your child is absent.
- ▶ Become familiar with online safety guidelines. Visit missingkids.org/netsmartz to learn more.