

SPECIAL BONUS
The Street Smart Child:
Your Checklist to Prevent Violence to Your Children

Use the following checklist to be sure that your children are prepared. Of course, some items are appropriate for younger or older children, so use your own judgment. Also, note that this checklist covers only safety issues related to violent crime, and not the myriad other safety issues (i.e., baby-proofing a home, choking, allergens, natural disasters, swimming pool safety) that are relevant to children.

My children:

1. Know to trust their instincts. If something feels uncomfortable or wrong, they know to get away.
2. Know that it is okay to yell and make a scene when in a strange situation.
3. Know how to yell, make a scene, and do what it takes to run away – especially in cases where someone is grabbing or touching them.
4. Know that they should not keep secrets with anybody, or keep any information away from their parents.
5. Sees you, the parent, as someone they can come to anytime for help or to discuss difficult situations.
6. Know what inappropriate touching is.
7. Know what inappropriate questions and conversations are (i.e., questions about the body, things that get into body-related issues, and any question that feels uncomfortable).
8. Are comfortable leaving any situation involving inappropriate questions, conversations or touching and saying, “No!” This applies to ANYONE, including relatives (and of course neighbors and babysitters).
9. Know to NEVER get in a car with anyone other than the parents, unless the parent has specifically given permission on that day at that time and directly to the child. Set a password or secret word to use for people who have permission to pick up the child, so that the child can ask for the password.
10. Know to stay distant from any strangers, in a car or walking, out of grabbing range. They should feel free to say “no” to any requests from strangers, and then to tell a parent or other well-known adult.

11. Understand to be careful of adults who the child doesn't know, but who try to become friendly.
12. Know how to avoid common scenarios for luring a child into a car: candy, looking for a pet, claiming that the parents have asked them to pick up the child, asking for directions, offering money, or asking for help of any kind.
13. Have been taught to be careful EVEN in familiar places, like parks and schools, where they might let their guard down. They are always alert for strangers, anyone that the parents don't know, and anyone who doesn't have permission from the parents to be with the child.
14. Are regulated in terms of how much time they spend with strangers and relatives.
15. Have frequent conversations with their parents to ensure that they are not encountering any inappropriate situations, even if we have to ask leading questions.
16. Are kept away from people when we get a "bad vibe" from them – be it a friend, relative, caregiver/sitter, or another child.
17. Are especially monitored during holidays. This is when alcohol sometimes comes into play, and when family members (with the help of alcohol and increased time together) may try to do inappropriate things.
18. Know where to go to get help when at various places without parental supervision. They know where they can go for help – at the mall, the park, the beach, and the schoolyard. For instance, if they get lost at a store, they know to go to the nearest mom with children, cashier, or security guard.
19. They know how to scan the environment, as discussed in this manual.
20. Stay away from deserted places, including construction sites, dumps, and empty parks.
21. Stay with their parents whenever they are in a public place – or at least in a group of people. They do not stray alone.
22. Know how to go to the vulnerable points to bite, spit, scratch, and do whatever is needed to get away in case of abduction.
23. Know to never stop fighting if forced into a car. They can find weapons to use, such as the seatbelt buckle, which can break a window or get the attention of passersby. Try to get out, or open a window and scream. They also know that if they can, they should try to grab the steering wheel or step on the accelerator to cause an accident and stop the car – which is better than letting the abduction continue. They can also try to beep the horn.

24. Understand that their parents must know where they are at all times, who they hang out with, and the routes they travel. We approve of their schedule, friends, and routes.
25. Come home at a decent hour and are under a curfew.
26. Only go out in groups with friends we like and know. We know our children's friends and their parents and approve of them.
27. Provide us with clear contact information whenever they go out.
28. Check in at regular times.
29. Have phones with GPS so that they can be tracked if needed.
30. Know how to walk to avoid looking like a target. For instance, they don't look down when they walk. They walk with their head, chin, and shoulders up, and scan their environment. They look out for suspicious characters.
31. Know that anything can be a weapon, and have practiced turning ordinary objects (along with the hands, feet, elbows, knees, teeth, nails, and saliva). Your children know that if they are in a dangerous situation, it is okay to do what is needed, to do what is normally inappropriate behavior.
32. Feel comfortable saying no on a date, and will end a date if they start to feel uncomfortable.
33. Have strict rules dating. We tell our children's dates what our rules are, including the fact that the child should feel free to end the date.
34. Know that we are ALWAYS available to pick up our child if he or she calls.
35. Date people that we know. We even invite dates over for dinner to get to know them better. We also get to know their parents.
36. Start out with group dates, or at least double dates. That way, the odds of something going wrong are decreased and your child can ask for help if needed.
37. Always tells us exactly where they are going on a date (as well as any social situation). We drive to places we don't know to be sure we are comfortable with our children going there.
38. Ensure that dating progresses gradually, starting with short and safe interactions.
39. Recognize that even if a first or second date goes well, future dates may not. We make sure our children never let their guard down.

40. Know that dating problems can happen to BOTH boys and girls.
41. Have a complete understanding about manipulation and peer pressure. My kids know that if they feel manipulated they can say, "I'm aware of what you are trying to do, and don't want any part of it. Take me home."
42. Know that sometimes kids can use drugs or alcohol to manipulate. If drugs or alcohol come into play, the child should end the date.
43. Are watched closely during idle time, especially holidays, vacations, and summer. During idle time, kids can come up with all sorts of schemes, many involving peer pressure, alcohol, drugs, and situations that can get out of control. Also, kids tend to want to roam away from the home, which can put them in danger. Finally, during idle time some people may become more familiar with our children than normal, such as neighbors and family members.
44. Know how to answer the door safely when no adults are home, for instance by not opening the door for unannounced visitors. Alternatively, if someone comes to the door unannounced, they tell the visitor that mommy and daddy are upstairs napping and don't want to be disturbed. Ask them to come back later. If the visitor refuses to go away, the child should know to call 911 right away and hide.
45. ALWAYS have someone they can call who can come over quickly (or to whom the child can run) in case a situation comes up at home.
46. Know not to give out any information by phone. If the parent isn't home, they ask for the person's name and number so that the parent can call back. "They are busy right now. Let me have your name and number and I'll have them call you right back." They know how to give the impression that adults are in the house.
47. Know to never tell someone who calls when a parent will be home.
48. Get suspicious immediately if a caller won't give their name or phone number.
49. Are limited in which Internet sites they can visit. We can view a child's usage logs to find out where they are going on the Internet.
50. Have child-safe software that prevents children from visiting questionable sites.
51. Always uses an alias and never give their real name, address (even the city where you live), school name, team name, or phone when on the Internet.
52. Know that on online chats they may not be chatting with the person they think they are. They could be talking to an adult pretending to be their age.

53. Frequently hear news stories related to Internet predation, so that they know that these situations are very real. Internet predators are willing to drive long distances to reach someone and manipulate or hurt them.
54. Know that hitchhiking is never acceptable, under any conditions.
55. Know not to go inside the house if a window is open or broken, or if a door is open. This could mean that someone is robbing the house. The child should call 911 or go to a neighbor for help.
56. Know how to call 911.
57. Know how to make a collect phone call.
58. Know their full name, our full names, telephone number, address, city, and state. (Consider composing a simple song to help small children remember this information).
59. Tells us anytime they will be late or not follow their normal routine (e.g., if they want to stay late after school or go to a friend's house).
60. Won't leave home unless they inform and get permission from a parent first.
61. Keep the doors and windows locked when they are home alone.
62. Know that if someone tries to break in to the house while they are home they should call 911 immediately to tell them that they are at home and someone is breaking in. They should give their full address (and apartment number). Then they should try to call a neighbor and either get out of the house (if possible) or hide.
63. Have safe, mapped out routes for travel. They know not to take short cuts in strange areas.
64. Know the rules for crossing streets, obeying traffic signals, and knowing what different road signs mean.
65. Role play frequently with their parents about a variety of "What if..." situations.
66. Learn about how to resolve conflicts peacefully.
67. Never go out with a key hung around their neck (which tells strangers that the parents are not home).
68. Know to call us if they arrive home before we do.

69. Are comfortable speaking to us about ANYTHING that happens – at school, with friends, at hobbies – and especially things that have upset them.
70. Know to tell us immediately if they are confronted with a bully, especially if that bully brings weapons to school.
71. Know that even teachers and school personnel can molest children.
72. Know that if they find a weapon on the ground, they should NEVER touch it. Instead, they should call 911 and tell you or another trusted adult.
73. Know that if a friend shows them a gun or knife, they should walk away immediately and not touch it. They know that many children have been killed thinking guns were toys, not loaded, or easy to use. They know to tell an adult, as they can help the friend from getting hurt by doing so.
74. Know to come to you if they are the victim of a crime, and that you will always take them seriously.
75. Know to cool off if they feel angry while with another child, for instance by taking a break or walking away.
76. Know to stand by our side when we are engaged in a task, such as withdrawing money from an ATM (and we are careful to pay attention to our children at these times, too).