

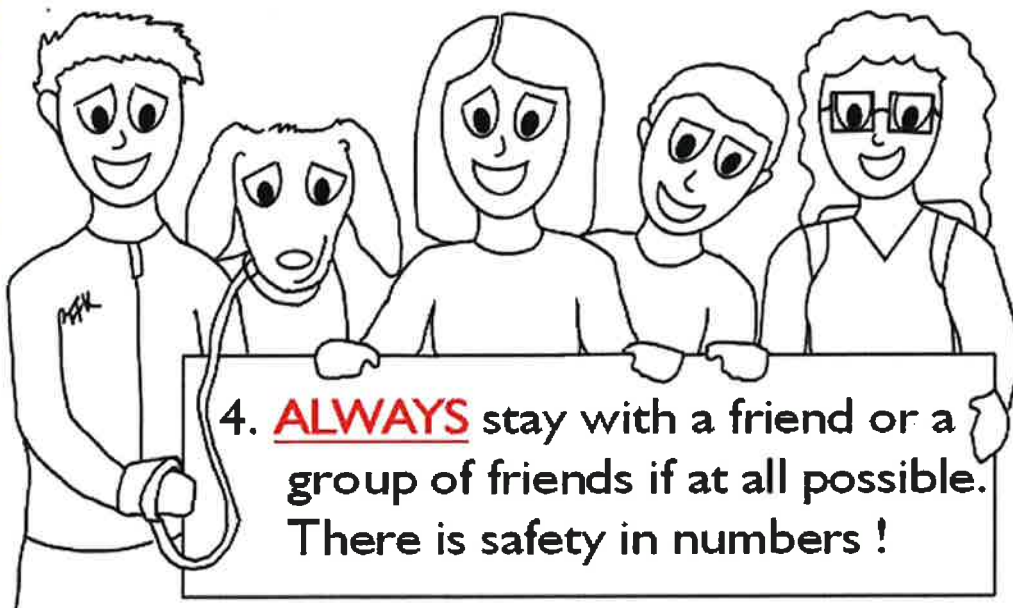
Stranger Danger - Sheet 7

Simple Rules To Stay Safe

There are some very simple rules that you can follow to help you stay safe when you are not with a trusted adult

1. **NEVER** go anywhere with somebody that you don't know or don't trust. Stay well away from strangers' cars.
2. **NEVER** take anything from a stranger even if it is something personal that belongs to you.
3. **NEVER** talk to strangers even if they know your name. If they try to start a conversation with you it's OK to just ignore them and not look at them. Keep walking or run away if you feel scared.

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4. **ALWAYS** stay with a friend or a group of friends if at all possible. There is safety in numbers !

5. **ALWAYS** follow rules about places that you are not allowed to go. Make sure somebody knows where you are going and when you will be back.



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How Can I Teach Kids to Be Smart About Strangers?

When I'm out with my young children, friendly strangers often approach us to smile and say hello. Although I'd like my kids to be polite, I also want to teach them not to talk to strangers. How can I avoid sending mixed messages?
– Suzanne

"Don't talk to strangers" has been the rule for many parents for generations. But sometimes it's a good idea for kids to talk to strangers. Who else will they turn to if they're lost and need help?

So, instead of making a rule, it's better to teach kids when it's appropriate to talk to strangers and when it is not. When your kids are out with you, it's fine to let them say hello and talk to new people. You are watching the situation and will protect them.

But if your child is alone and approached by a stranger, that's a different story. Tell your kids that if a stranger ever approaches and offers a ride or treats (like candy or toys) or asks for help with a task (like helping find a lost dog), they should step away, yell "No!" and leave the area immediately. Your child should tell you or another trusted adult (like a teacher or childcare worker) what happened. The same goes if anyone — whether a stranger, family member, or friend — asks your child to keep a secret, tries to touch your child's private area, or asks your child to touch theirs.

Most kids are likely to be wary of strangers who are mean-looking or appear scary in some way. But most child molesters and abductors are regular-looking people, and many go out of their way to look friendly, safe, and appealing to children. So, instead of judging a person by appearance, teach kids to judge people by their actions.

It's also important to encourage kids to trust their own instincts. Teach them that if someone makes them feel uncomfortable or if they feel like something's just not right — even if they can't explain why — they need to walk away immediately.

So, what happens if your kids are alone and need to approach a stranger for help? First, they should try to find a person in uniform, like a police officer, security guard, or store employee. If there are no uniformed people, look for grandparents, women, and people with children who may be able to help. And again, remind them about instincts: If they don't have a good feeling about a certain person, they should approach someone else.

It's not possible to protect kids from strangers at all times. But it is possible to teach them about appropriate behaviors and what to do if somebody crosses the line. Keeping these tips in mind can help your kids stay safe while they're out and about.

Reviewed by: Elana Pearl Ben-Joseph, MD
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