

## TEN WAYS TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFER

### **1. Prepare Your Child**

Teach children basic safety rules so that they are confident and prepared, rather than fearful.

### **2. Role-Play**

Act out or discuss potentially dangerous situations so that children can practice how to respond.

\*Resource: *What Would You Do? A Kid's Guide to Tricky and Sticky Situations* by Linda Schwartz is an excellent resource guide for parents and their preteens and young adolescents.

### **3. Review and Practice**

Children learn from repetition. Research shows that safety lessons need to be reviewed 5-10 times per year.

### **4. Set Body Boundaries**

Make children aware of the private areas of their body (“the areas covered by your bathing suit”) and explain that they should say no and then tell a trusted adult if anyone tries to touch them.

### **5. Discuss Good and Bad Secrets**

Teach children that some secrets are okay to keep, but help them to understand that some secrets are not okay. Tell them that if anyone wants them to keep a secret about touching, they should not keep the secret and should tell a trusted adult right away.

### **6. Teach the Buddy System**

Children and teens are safer when they stay with a friend or adult. This applies to walks, trips to the bathroom, outings, etc.

### **7. Use a Code Word**

Choose a special code word that only you and your child know. Explain that if you ever send anyone unexpected to pick up your child, that person will use the code word.

### **8. Help Children Identify Trusted Adults**

Talk with your child about trusted adults. Specifically identify who a child should go to in an emergency, such as a person using a cash register, a mother with children, a teacher, etc.

### **9. Teach Telephone Skills**

Teach your child your home or cell phone number and how to dial “911” for help.

### **10. Insist on Background Checks**

Insist that all adults who work with your children have had background checks.