

## Compliments of DeKalb County Sheriff Patrick Ray

### Child Safety Tips

Every parent who tells their child, "Don't talk to strangers," is performing a disservice that probably causes more harm than good. A confining and negative declaration based on bad information, it is a holdover from a time of limited awareness. Only 14% of sexual offenders are strangers to their victims, and for male victims under age twelve, 40% of offenders were family members compared with 47% of the offenders of females under age twelve. "Don't talk to strangers" sends a mixed message to children who watch us consistently converse with strangers, and it eliminates viable safety options such as women, police officers in uniform or other children, to name but a few, for endangered children.

#### **Children:**

I will always tell my parents where I am going and when I'll be home and return home before dark.

I will always play or go places with at least one other person - NOT alone.

I know my body belongs to me. I will trust my feelings. I will say NO and run away from a situation that doesn't feel right.

There are certain kinds of strangers that can assist me when I need help. For instance: mothers with children, other children, police in uniform or store clerks in the mall.

I will walk and play at places my parents said were OK. I will avoid shortcuts or alleys.

I will not allow adults to trick or force me into going places or doing things like; help find pets, carry packages, take pictures, play games, or take drugs with them. I will always check with my parents first.

I will not accept candy, money, gifts or rides from any adult without my parent's permission.

I will always lock my home and car doors. I will not tell anyone that I am home alone.

I will learn to dial 911. I will learn to use the pay phone without money. I will learn my address and phone number.

I will always walk against traffic on the sidewalk.

#### **Parents:**

Maintain current ID, including photograph, video and fingerprints.

Maintain current addresses and phone numbers of your children's friends.

It is important to keep all doors and windows locked.

Do not advertise your child's name on clothing, school supplies or backpacks.

#### **School Safety Tips:**

##### **Riding the Bus:**

Have a safe place to wait for your bus, away from the street and traffic.

Stay clear of the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to board.

When exiting the bus, take ten big steps straight out from the bus to gain some distance.

Use hand rails when boarding and unloading.

Be aware of the street traffic around you at all times.

##### **Walking and Biking to School:**

Pay attention to the crossing guard at all times and never cross against a green light.

Walk your bike through intersections.

Walk with a buddy.

Never assume traffic sees you.

##### **Riding in a Car:**

Yes, most accidents really do happen close to home.

Safety belts are the best protection for passengers in a crash.

Safety belts and car seats need to be secured properly to work.

Tell your parents if you feel uncomfortable about someone's driving ability.

## **Child Fire Safety:**

The U.S. has one of the highest fire death rates in the industrialized world. For 1998, the U.S. fire death rate was 14.9 deaths per million population. Between 1994 and 1998, an average of 4,400 Americans lost their lives and another 25,100 were injured annually as the result of fire. About 100 firefighters are killed each year in duty-related incidents. Each year, fire kills more Americans than all natural disasters combined. Fire is the third leading cause of accidental death in the home; at least 80 percent of all fire deaths occur in residences. About 2 million fires are reported each year. Many others go unreported, causing additional injuries and property loss. Direct property loss due to fires is estimated at \$8.6 billion annually.

Teach children not to play with matches, lighters, flares, fireworks and gasoline cans. Keep matches, lighters, gasoline and other flammable materials out of the sight and reach of children.

Keep a fire extinguisher (“ABC” symbol) in the kitchen and garage. Be sure it is “UL” or “FM” rated.

Install smoke detectors in your home in every bedroom and on every level. Test them monthly. Replace the batteries at least once each year.

Plan and practice fire escape routes from the house. Choose a meeting place, a safe distance outside the house.

Never leave small children alone in the kitchen or bathroom – for even a few seconds.

In the kitchen, use back burners and turn pot handles to the back of the stove so that pots do not get knocked over.

If grease catches fire, smother the flames with a pan lid – never throw water on a grease fire.

Never carry children and hot foods or liquids at the same time.

Lower your water heater to 120 degrees or buy an anti-scald device.

In the bathroom, always test the water temperature before placing a child in the bathtub. Place one hand in the water with fingers wide, and move it back and forth for several seconds checking for hot spots.

Never touch connected electrical appliances or cords with wet hands or feet. Do not reach for radios, telephones, or hair dryers while in the bath or shower.

Unplug appliances when they are not being used. Unplug any appliances that smokes or smells as if it is burning, then have it repaired or replace it.

Do not overload extension cords or run them under rugs.

Keep furnaces and wood-burning stoves working well. Make sure they are not near combustible walls, ceilings, furniture or drapes.

## **Child Gun Safety:**

In 1976, 59% of juvenile homicide offenders killed with a gun. By 1991, this figure had grown to 78%. Despite federal regulations, 34% of students reported easy access to handguns and 6.4% reported owning a handgun.

According to a recent report issued by the Department of Education, over 6,000 students were expelled in 1996-97 for bringing guns to school. As of 1993, fatal gunshot wounds replaced vehicular accidents as the most common cause of death for children – every day in America guns kill 16 kids aged 19 and under.

Guns killed twice as many Americans in the three years between 1992-94 as were killed in battle during the eight and a half years of the Vietnam War.

According to the FBI, there were 10,744 firearm murders in the U.S. in 1996, over 700 of them perpetrated by offenders under the age of 18.

If you keep a gun in your house, lock it out of the reach of children. Store it unloaded with the safety on.

Keep ammunition locked away in another location.

Teach children that guns are not toys.

Stress that guns used on television are not real. The players are actors. If real people get shot they die or are badly injured.

Teach your children what to do if they see a gun: stop; don't touch; leave the area; tell an adult.

### **Child Home Safety:**

In the United States, nearly 3,000 children die each year at home from unintentional injuries. More than three million children are treated annually in emergency rooms from falls. More than one million children are accidentally poisoned each year. Accidents can be avoided. Here are some simple KlaasKids Foundation Guidelines for safety around the home:

Install gates with childproof latches at the tops and bottoms of stairways.

Use window guards or open windows from the top, as screens are not sufficient to prevent children from falling out of a window.

Arrange furniture away from second story windows.

Place baby's crib away from draperies or blinds with cords.

Put safety covers over all electrical outlets. Hide electrical cords.

Use childproof devices on cabinet doors, drawers and door knobs. Remove sharp utensils and glassware from lower drawers and shelves.

Make sure that your children's toys do not have sharp edges or points that may hurt them. Toys that produce loud noises can damage hearing. Do not allow them to play with electrical toys until they are old enough to do so safely.

Playground equipment should be inspected frequently for safety and stability. Playgrounds should have cushioned surfaces such as shredded mulch.

House numbers should be carefully marked and visible from the street at night. Address numbers should be clearly posted on a high-contrasting background measuring at least five inches high.

Keep all poisonous, flammable, and other dangerous products, plastic bags, medicines, alcohol, glues and spray cans out of sight and reach of small children.

Keep a bottle of syrup of ipecac on the medicine cabinet. If your child consumes anything poisonous, immediately call your local poison control center or your physician. You may be instructed to administer syrup of ipecac, to induce vomiting after some poisonings. Do not administer syrup of ipecac unless instructed to do so by a physician.

### **Child Internet Safety:**

The Internet is the most advanced and accessible resource tool ever developed. With the Internet, a simple keystroke can deliver the world's great museums and libraries into your living room. However, there are also inherent risks, concerns and dangers associated with Internet use, so we are providing you with some common sense steps that you can apply to reduce the risk of exploitation or even criminal activity.

I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address or telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.

I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.

I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.

I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.

I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the online service.

I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

#### Child Internet Safety for Parents

Education and awareness are your greatest tools in promoting and ensuring safe and positive online activity. Learn about and discuss the boundaries of Internet use with your children. Establish reasonable rules and guidelines and post them near the computer as a reminder.

Placing the computer in a common area of your home promotes the Internet as a family activity and allows you to regularly monitor your children's online use.

Remember, the Internet is not an electronic babysitter so limit the amount of time your children can surf the Internet daily to about one hour.

Although blocking software provides a reasonable means of limiting your children's online accessibility, it should not be considered foolproof.

You can always monitor online activity by checking up on your children's bookmarks, cache or history.

Remember, you cannot assume that everybody online is who he or she says they are. Twelve-year-old Sally might very well be sixty-year-old Chester the molester.

Remember, everything you read online is not true. Any offer that's "Too good to be true" probably is.

If you believe that someone online is trying to lure or harm your child, contact local law enforcement and the FBI. It is a crime to lure children on the Internet.

If you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, immediately report this to local law enforcement and the FBI.

#### **Child Water Safety:**

##### Drowning

is the second leading cause of injury-related death for children (aged 1 through 14 years), accounting for 940 deaths in 1998. You can greatly reduce the chances of you or your children becoming drowning or near-drowning victims by following a few simple safety tips:

Whenever young children are swimming, playing, or bathing in water, make sure an adult is constantly watching them. By definition this means that the supervising adult should not read, play cards, talk on the phone, mow the lawn, or do any other distracting activity while watching children.

Never swim alone or in unsupervised places. Teach children to always swim with a buddy.

Keep small children away from buckets containing liquid: 5-gallon industrial containers are a particular danger. Be sure to empty buckets when household chores are done.

Never drink alcohol during or just before swimming, boating, or water skiing. Never drink alcohol while supervising children. Teach teenagers about the danger of drinking alcohol and swimming, boating, or water skiing.

To prevent choking, never chew gum or eat while swimming, diving, or playing in water.

Learn to swim. Enroll yourself and/or your children aged 4 and older in swimming classes. Swimming classes are not

recommended for children under age 4.

Learn CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation). This is particularly important for pool owners and individuals who regularly participate in water recreation.

Do NOT use air-filled swimming aids (such as “water wings”) in place of life jackets or life preservers with children. These can give parents and children a false sense of security and increase the risk of drowning.

Check the water depth before entering. The American Red Cross recommends 9 feet as a minimum depth for diving or jumping.

**If you have a swimming pool at your home:**

Install a four-sided, isolation pool-fence with self-closing and self-latching gates around the pool. The fence should be at least 4 feet tall and completely separate the pool from the house and play area of the yard.

Prevent children from having direct access to a swimming pool.

Install a telephone near the pool. Know how to contact local emergency medical services. Post the emergency number, 911, in an easy-to-see place.

Learn CPR.

**Additional Tips for Open Water:**

Know the local weather conditions and forecast before swimming or boating. Thunderstorms and strong winds can be extremely dangerous to swimmers and boaters.

Restrict activities to designated swimming areas, which are usually marked by buoys.

Be cautious, even with lifeguards present.

Use U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices (life jackets) when boating, regardless of distance to be traveled, size of boat, or swimming ability of boaters.