



# KEEP YOUR KIDS SAFE! SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS.

Keeping your child safe is a lot of work. Whether they're young, pre-teen or just about to head off to college, it's important to help your children understand safety rules and how to adapt them to their age and situation. The concept of safety doesn't change but the way they stay safe will evolve as they grow up. These tips will help you teach your child safety at any stage of their life.



## YOUNG CHILD (4-10 YEARS OLD)

**Young children can be very gullible and trusting.** It's important to develop a sense of caution in them to help them build a solid foundation for safety and appropriate interactions with people as they grow older. Don't frighten them unnecessarily about the "evils of the world" but do foster a wary alertness as they begin to interact outside the home in school and in play.

**Be sure that they know their full name as well as yours and your spouse or partner's.** It may seem obvious that your child would know your name but they know you as "Mom" or "Dad." If your child is learning to read and write, help them spell

out their name and be able to write yours as well as their own. Have them practice reciting and writing your home address and phone number. That way, if anything were to happen, they'll be able to give enough information to law enforcement or another adult to get word to you.



**Teach them about strangers and "good" and "bad" secrets.** Help them to understand that strangers aren't anything to be afraid of but they should use caution when around them. You want to develop confidence as well as caution to prevent unnecessary shyness. The differentiation between good and bad secrets will help your child to know when they need to tell you something to keep themselves safe. Keeping secrets can be a large part of childhood so channel their young fascination with secrets towards learning good habits of communication.

## TWEENS (10-14 YEARS OLD)

**The "tween" years can be some of the most tumultuous times in a child's life.** Hormones ramp up, body changes manifest and the child begins to disappear in the transition towards adulthood. The tricky thing with tweens is that every tween is different. This 11 year-old girl may already have a fully developed body and the independent mind of an older person and the 13 year-



old over there might still look like a child and be content to play in the backyard with her toys in the sandbox.

**The key is to adapt your safety teachings to your child's development.** A child that matures quickly both mentally and physically with greater independence will need more guidance than a child content to still be at home and with his or her family. Everyone is different.

**Be sure to monitor how your child reacts to different situations and accepts your direction and rules.** Better to channel a potentially rebellious nature towards understanding why certain rules and guidelines are in place than fight that energy. Continue to emphasize caution and encourage your child to begin developing sound judgement when it comes to situations and people.

**This is also a good time to invest in a cell phone for your tween.** Teach them good communication habits and how to care for a cell phone now so that once they learn how to drive and are on their way to independence, they'll have the habits in place to help them stay safe and connected with friends and family.



## TEENS (14-19 YEARS OLD)

**Teens are infamous for being "stubborn, rebellious and independent."** But what is seen as rebelliousness and a stubborn streak is often the product of frustration or lack of education about safety. Teenagers are eager to be independent adults. However, they lack the experience and street smarts of a grownup.

**As a parent with teenagers, it's important to maintain the balance of letting them learn and experience life on their own while keeping them from venturing too far too**



**early.** Now is when you let them develop their own judgement about situations and people and check tendencies for being too suspicious or too trusting. Don't protect them from everything but help them learn the fine-tuned skills of adulthood safety that free them from the need to be protected.

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