

June - Child Safety

For most families, the school year is over, and summer activities are well underway. Because children are not attending classes throughout the week during the summer months, many children will have a great deal of free time, and we know that for several families, some of that time may be unsupervised. Over the typical summer break, there will be numerous opportunities for those children to grow and mature. We encourage parents and caregivers to take some extra time now to speak with children about matters that will deal specifically with a child's physical and emotional safety.

At Home

Here is a list of things to consider for issues which might present themselves at your residence. Every family needs to weigh these factors carefully and know how these factors might relate to the unique circumstances of your family. Some things that might influence your decision will be your child's age, maturity level, ability to rationalize choices, and their opportunities for recreational activities.

- Does your child know if or when they are allowed to answer the door for a stranger if a parent is not home? It is probably best if children do not answer the door without a parent home.
- Do kids have free access to the internet or gaming systems in the home? Are parental controls in place on the computer when applicable?
- Are weapons and other dangerous items properly stored so children will not be tempted to play with such items? Have you discussed rules specific to these dangerous items?
- Are the children allowed outside when adults are not home? Is the yard a safe place to play? Is the family pool secure? Is pool access limited by a cover, locked gate, or fence?
- Do children know who they are to call if there is an emergency? Are they able to quickly reach you at work if there is a problem?
- Discuss the rules about what kind of cooking or food preparation is allowed at the residence.
- Have the child use a phone answering machine to screen calls. If they are allowed to answer the telephone make sure they do not tell a stranger that they are home alone.
- Make sure smoke detectors are working and that children know what to do if a smoke detector is activated.

Away from Home

- If children are allowed to leave the neighborhood to visit a friend or go to the park, have you discussed rules about the child's limits on where they can go? Must they communicate their destination and times for arrival or departure?
- If children are allowed to leave the home, can they secure the residence when they leave, and then safely return and enter the home when needed? Carrying a house key is a big responsibility.
- If your children come home and discover a broken or damaged window or door, make sure they know not enter. Have them contact the police or a trusted neighbor.
- Have you discussed general safety guideline when it comes to riding a bicycle? Are your kids wearing a helmet, and do they know basic rules of the road when it comes to crossing an intersection or riding along side other vehicles?

- Do your children know what to do if they are approached by a stranger? Would they accept a gift from a stranger, or help the stranger look for something they claim they lost? Would they accept a ride from someone in a vehicle if they were walking?
- Have you taken the time to discuss these things with your child? Do not assume they know the answer to all these questions. Do not assume that just because they heard it once, that it will be followed exactly every time. Many of these lessons must be repeated to reinforce the behavior.

General Considerations

- Take the time to discuss general first aid with your children. Do not allow them to take medication without consulting with a parent or guardian first! Make sure they know how and when to call 911 for an emergency.
- Post a list of phone numbers for emergency personnel, family members, and trusted neighbors.
- As soon as possible, begin to teach children their full name, address, and phone number. They should also know your name as well. If a child is lost at the mall for example, knowing that information will allow you to be reunited with your child much sooner.
- If you are picking up your child at a certain time or predetermined location, and you cannot get there as planned, have you discussed contingency plans?

Communication with our children is the most important link in helping ensure their safety. Remember that they will emulate your behavior, so practice the desired safe behaviors in front of your children to help reinforce the expected performance. Parents are a child's primary role model.

Contact Us

If you have any additional questions, please contact the Glendale Police Department Crime Prevention Officer at 414-228-1753.