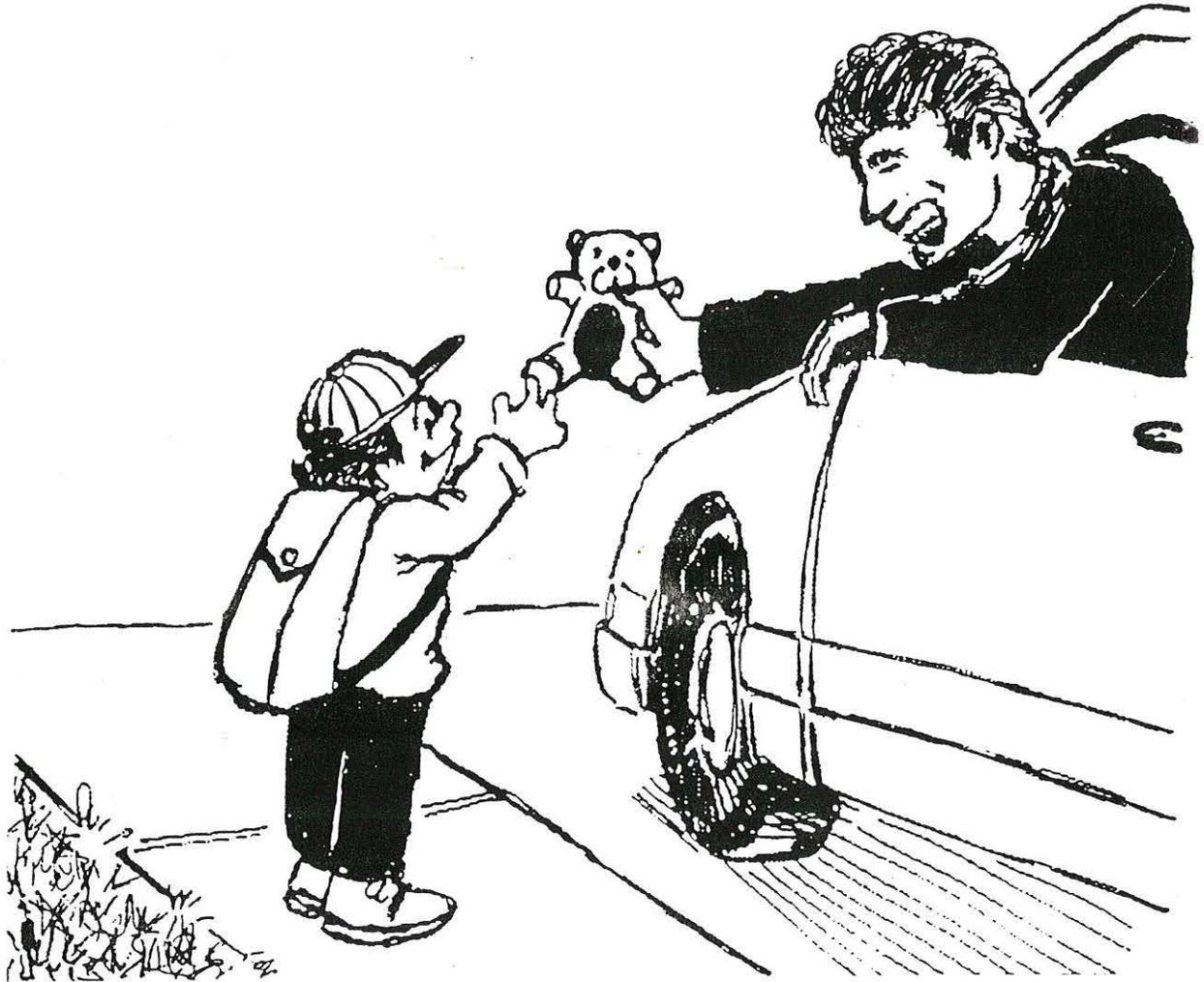


STREET SAFE KIDS

Protecting children from sexual predators – a street-proofing manual



“Street Safe Kids is one of the most comprehensive self-defense and street-proofing courses available. We strongly recommend that parents enroll their children in this ‘hands-on’ program.”

Mabyn Armstrong, director of prevention
The Missing Children’s Network Canada

George J. Manoli

5. BE AWARE OF CRIME TRENDS

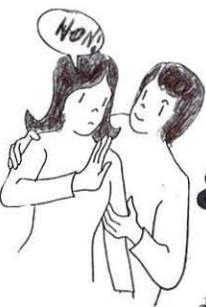
You cannot learn about street-proofing without understanding the dangers in our society. By increasing your awareness of crimes occurring locally and regionally, you can take many precautions that will greatly reduce your chance of being victimized. Together, read and discuss community newspaper articles on prevention or listen to local news. Stop a police patrol car or visit your local police station and talk with the officers about local crime. Find out how you and your family can help start a neighborhood watch program in your community or become Block Parents.

6. BE PRO-ACTIVE IN YOUR TEACHING APPROACH

Teach by example. The more safety conscious you are as a parent the more those safety patterns will rub off on your children's lives. Try introducing role models to your child who will capture and inspire their imagination. When discussing a child abuse or abduction news story with your child make sure you follow it up with some information, personal experiences, and suggestions on how the victim could have attracted attention (screaming, knocking things over, throwing things at assailant, etc.) or protected themselves (physically, verbally or passively) and gotten out of the particular situation. Point out such things as: what you would have done differently from the victim; how you would have used a different approach and how the victim neglected to eliminate, recognize and avoid the danger. Be proactive in your approach. Turn the tragedy into an opportunity to instill empowerment in your child. Often, after such headlines, children are overloaded with frightening warnings from parents and teachers. Install awareness, not fear. When teaching your child to function under emergency conditions, make sure to start with a simple first step in order for them to gain the needed confidence (like placing training wheels on a bike), then proceed to harder tasks.

7. KNOWLEDGE EMPOWERS YOUR CHILD

Ignorance terrifies everyone. Knowledge and training are the key elements to personal confidence, wise decision-making, and practical, effective crime prevention strategies. With the right knowledge, most questionable situations that children might face can either be avoided or properly handled. The safety information you pass on to your child must be age appropriate so they can easily absorb the information, then slowly build on that knowledge as they grow up. A child cannot learn to be street safe without understanding the possible dangers they might face. Children should know what an assailant looks for in a victim and the variety of age-related tricks and lures offenders may use to attract or approach them. Work on the positive, stress the realistic aspects of safety and make your child feel competent as early as possible. Point out what your child can do to protect themselves rather than what scares them. Essentially, parents should treat the threat of street dangers as something to be mastered - a challenge rather than a problem.



8. DISTINGUISH BETWEEN 'GOOD' & 'BAD' TOUCHES

"The first component in abuse-prevention education is helping children distinguish between acceptable touching and touching which is hurtful or exploitive." Your child should understand that their body is theirs and no one has the right to touch them or ask them to touch their private parts (area covered by their bathing suit or underwear - encourage the proper vocabulary of these parts). Together, discuss how you can stop or set limits to unwanted physical affection, touching and teasing, that can sometimes make them feel uncomfortable. Point out various examples where an adult or care-giver may have to touch their private parts for hygienic purposes (bathing or cleaning child), or for health purposes. Make the discussion age-appropriate.

As you are discussing with your child, nourish the idea in your child's mind that they can come to you with any question (stupid, bright, hard or easy). Stress the fact that they can tell you anything - from little secrets to very big secrets. No matter what the problem, you will work it out together - you will protect them.

Your child should realize that their safety and comfort is more important than their feeling of embarrassment. In order for a child to keep their own body safe, they need to tell others how they feel about the way they touch them. Your child should be aware of the various types of touches ('good' and 'bad' touches) and the different personal feelings and emotions they would get from these different touches. Your child should understand that a 'good' touch will make them feel comfortable, happy, safe (i.e., a handshake, a greeting hug, etc.). A 'bad' touch on the other hand will make them feel uncomfortable, sad, all mixed up, troubled at times, even afraid or angry (i.e., a push, a hit, kissing or rubbing, etc.).

If they don't like the way they are being touched by someone, your child should be able to say 'No, stop touching me like that,' 'No, leave me alone,' 'No, stop or I'll tell' simultaneously moving away from the person if able too, telling you or someone they trust as soon as possible. Other viable options if the person does not stop the unwanted touching is to call 9-1-1 or '0.'

Parent / child activity - Touching: In order to help your child get used to telling people how they feel about the way they touch them, have a family member or trusted friend touch your child in various ways (pat on the bum, kisses or pinching of the cheeks, etc). Note your child's reaction in stopping the unwanted touching. Discuss various alternatives available in saying 'No!,' moving away and telling someone. **Reminder** : Once your child confides in someone, they should expect the trusted adult to give them the proper verbal and emotional response ("I believe you, it's not your fault." "I'm sorry it happened to you." "I'm glad you told me. I'm going to help you").



9. DISTINGUISH BETWEEN 'OKAY' & 'TELL' SECRETS

Child sexual abuse has been taking place for generations and generations because of secrecy. Without secrecy and intimacy any form of sexual abuse cannot take place. Secrecy and intimacy do irreparable damage to the child victim. They strengthen the offender's power and control over the child, they culpabilise and isolate the child from other children and adults, and they help continue the physical, mental and sexual abuse of the child.

Children should be able to distinguish between a harmless 'swell or okay' secret and a 'bad or tell' secret which could hurt them or someone else if they don't tell. 'Swell or okay' secrets are secrets which hurt no one and are at times fun. 'Tell' secrets are secrets which cover up pain, shame, or embarrassment and if that is the case, telling someone and seeking help is a must. Emphasize the fact that touching secrets should never remain a secret. Your child should understand that sometimes children are tricked by the offender in subtle ways into keeping not okay or bad touches a secret from others. They should realize that any secret which might hurt their feelings or their body must be told, even if they promised not to tell when it happened. Stress the fact that it's never too late to tell a trusting adult if we are being touched in ways we shouldn't or we know someone who is suffering from a 'touching secret.'

Reassure and reinforce the following ideas : (a) This horrible crime is committed in silence and secrecy. (b) Touching secrets should never remain a secret. (c) You will always love them and you won't be mad at them for what happened. (d) They are not alone to face the problem at hand. There are grownups who care for them, who will listen and do something about the incident(s). (e) The adult who harmed them will be dealt with promptly. Their involvement will be minimal and optional.



Mr. Manoli offers specialized 'hands-on' courses and workshops

☎ (514) 328 - 4683 - We welcome all inquiries

A. Looking for a great speaker on personal safety or child kidnap prevention?

Mr. Manoli is available for groups, clubs, schools, corporate & staff-development seminars, etc.

B. Is your child being bullied or picked on continuously by others?

Mr. Manoli offers 'hands-on' anti-bullying & assertiveness training for children & teens.

C. Looking for an exciting 1-3 hour workshop or seminar?

Mr. Manoli offers at your workplace 'hands-on' street safe workshops for adults, teens & children.

D. One-on-one assertiveness & self-defense training is available for:

Rape & assault survivors; Blind & handicapped individuals; People lacking in personal confidence.





10. BE ALERT, SUSPICIOUS; RECOGNIZE DANGER EARLY

Children don't necessarily perceive danger in the same way that adults do. If an adult approaches your child for assistance, the important point to stress to your child is that a frantic child will approach an adult for assistance and help and it is not the adult who approaches the unattended, non-distressed child. Your child must *recognize the danger* before it occurs or in its early stages of development. Have some kind of *prearranged simple plan of action* in order to combat or flee the danger they are facing. *Take action* as quickly as possible. Remind your child that you can't tell by peoples faces if they are good or bad and that bad guys don't always look mean, wear black hats and smell bad.

While walking, the earlier your child recognizes the danger, the earlier they can take corrective action to avoid that danger. Is your child aware of changes around them as they make their daily trek to and from school? New residences or construction sites, new cars, store closure or openings, unfamiliar people, etc. They should look for the unusual, pay attention to what's going on around them. The better trained your child becomes in such observation of unusual patterns, the earlier and easier it will become for them to recognize, avoid or react to dangerous and potentially confrontational situations.

When walking, your child should convey the impression that they know where they are going and are in a hurry to get there. It is important for youngsters to act as if they are on guard and alert to what is happening around them. The child who is not paying attention to their surroundings, who is daydreaming, wandering around aimlessly, looks tired, easy to scare or upset, is more vulnerable to manipulation or attack than one who is alert and seems at home in the environment.

Show your child how to walk tall with assertiveness, direction and purpose. Walk heel to toe, instead of a shuffle, eyes on the move, intently darting left to right observing your destination.

Parent/child activity - School route : Walk the school route with your child, at their pace and speed. Occasionally ask your child if they saw anything unusual along their route. Ask if they saw the new house being built, the new car bought, or if they caught a glimpse of the new neighbors, etc. This will encourage your child to be alert to changes around them as they make their daily journey to and from school.



Does your child know....

- ➔ *That their rights count ? Do you respect your child's rights ?*
- ➔ *That no caring adult ever asks a child to keep a secret.*

