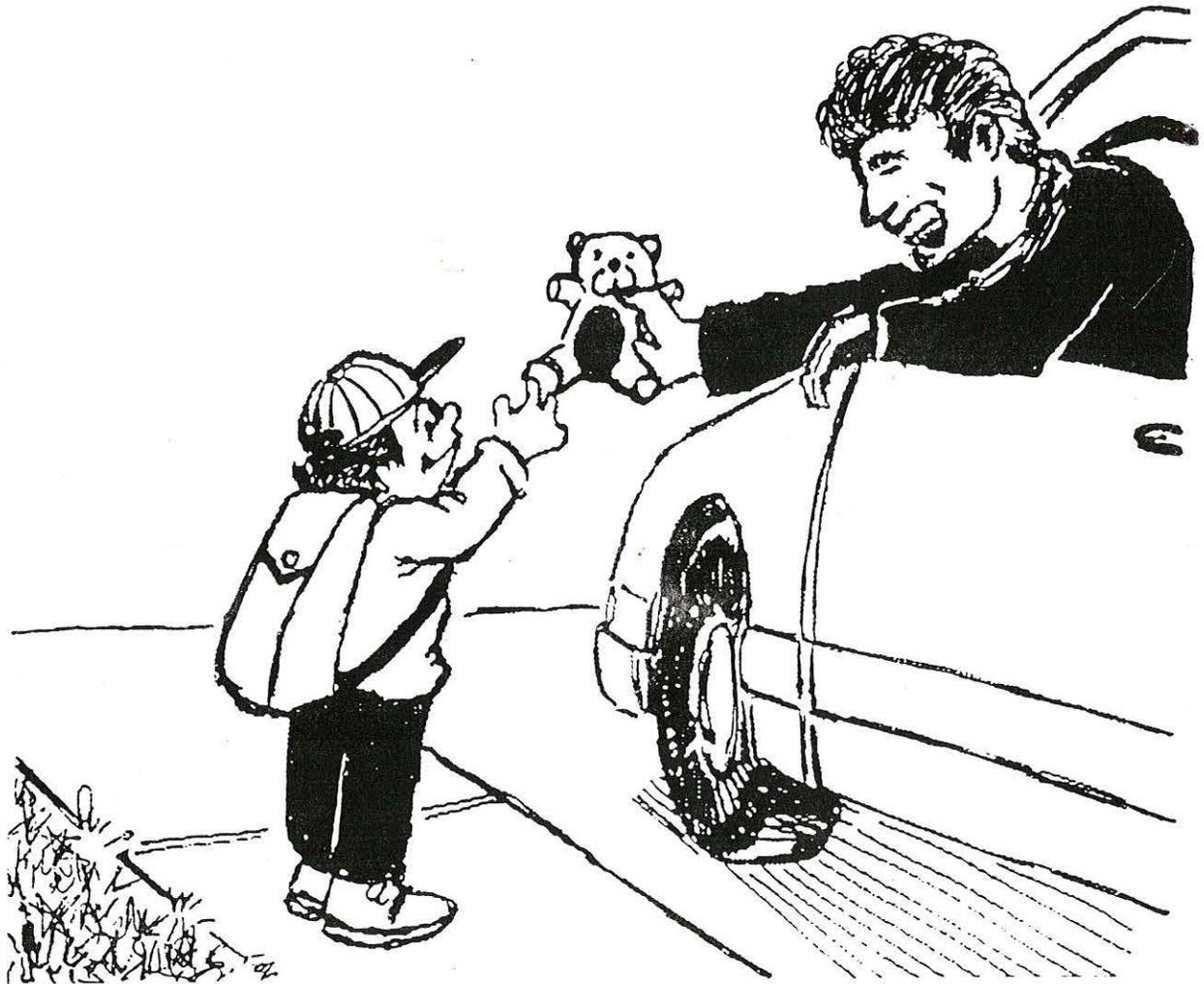


# ***STREET SAFE KIDS***

*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**

## 20. WHEN CONFRONTED, OVERCOME YOUR FEAR

A victim's initial and sometimes greatest hurdle, is to avoid panicking and overcoming their fear of the situation. Regardless of how the would-be abductor operates, if confronted, your child must remember to resist immediately either: verbally, passively and physically, in order to deter the attack at any cost.

"Fear is not to be viewed negatively simply because it doesn't feel good. It is to be recognized as a friend that warns us in times of danger...Fear is normal and useful if it arouses action, helps adaptation, or is related to normal development." (Protecting Children Bishop & Thomas, 93).

**Ways to deal with the initial fear prior to an attack :** (a) Realizing it can happen to you and being familiar with the effects that fear can have on you. (b) Being vigilant, accepting and facing the present moment. (c) Understanding fully what is truly happening. (d) Taking instant, direct and appropriate action.

**Ways to overcome the initial fear during the attack :** (a) Stay calm, breathe slowly, deeply in and out; (b) Utilize the plan of action you had prepared in order to outsmart the assailant (seeking assistance, throwing things, screaming, etc.); (c) Reacting rather than panicking, etc.

**Activities you can do to help your child control their fear :** (a) Have a plan of action. (b) Mental imaging or visualizing; (c) The 'What if...?' role-playing games; (d) Hands-on simulations; (e) Breathing exercises; (f) Open communication and discussion between child and parents.

## 21. NEVER LEAVE THE PUBLIC AREA

Instruct your child, that under NO circumstances should they leave the public area with the offender, get into a vehicle or allow themselves to be taken anywhere. Going with the abductor is not a valid option. Even if the person threatens your child with a weapon, they should never go. If people are around: screaming, running, fainting, acting sick and dropping to the floor are your child's best strategies. If no one is around, run screaming, don't wait for request number two by the assailant. Your child's survival chances are much higher if they resist and try to get away right from the very start.

"Common sense tells me that if an abductor would take the chance of shooting you on a mall parking lot or at a child in a front yard, then what would he do if he gets you to a deserted area? If the assailant is crazy enough to shoot a victim in clear view of others, then be assured that your chances of surviving by complying with his demands are limited. You are much less likely to be injured or sexually assaulted by staying in the public eye than by accompanying the abductor. Even the sadistic assailant, who are the most dangerous and unpredictable, prefer to isolate their victims, so they can torture them before fatally injuring them." (Defensive Living, Bo Hardy, 1993).



## **22. RESIST, USE A VARIETY OF RESISTANCE MEASURES**

There are three things a potential assailant doesn't want when they select an unknown victim: (1) They don't want to be physically defeated by the targeted victim, therefore they choose someone they can physically and mentally dominate. (2) They don't want to be identified as the perpetrator. The attack has to be quick, no witnesses, no noise, no commotion. (3) They don't want to get caught by the police for the crime they committed.

The targeted victim must assess the situation as quickly as possible (3-5 seconds, is the effective reaction time) and respond with safety uppermost on his/her mind. When confronted with a questionable situation, or abduction we generally have three responsive avenues to choose from: (1) Verbally responding to the offender and trying to talk or scream our way out of the confrontation. (2) Passively reacting to the challenge by acting ill, fainting, etc., in order to throw off the offender's plan of action. (3) Physically defending ourselves.

**1. *Talking when confronted by other children:*** For most children involved in a confrontation with other children, talking and negotiating may be a better option than physical defense. Some children can talk a tree down, while others, being shy and reserved, would have trouble talking their way out of the confrontational situation. If possible, your child should keep the would-be attacker in view and try to move away while talking rather than standing there glued to their spot. Keep the conversation brief and direct (using short sentences with only about five words and each word should be no more than five or six letters). Here are some basic confrontational talking rules which your child should keep in mind:

- a. If asked for money, your child should not try to answer with a flat "No!," which can sound confrontational or even hostile. They should try adding something in their own words such as "But I wish I did," or "I'm sorry I don't have any," or "I didn't get my allowance yet;" it sounds more conversational, which is the way your child should want to sound. Your child should have planned ahead by placing their money in several different pockets.
- b. If possible, your child should try their best to avoid pointing out what is really going on, such as saying: "Don't try and 'Tax' me, I have no money." Above all, your child should keep their cool, avoid saying things that will make the mugger more nervous or make the situation more dangerous for them by mistakenly enticing him or them to live up to their fearful expectations.
- c. Advise your child to avoid making threats or talking tough to the would-be attacker. You never know, the mugger may respond to these threats as a challenge.

## 22. Resist - Verbal resistance

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"It is generally better to ignore insults, personal and racial slurs and threats as well as verbal challenges or dares. They may make a child angry - quite appropriately - but it is safer not to over react and get sucked into a verbal altercation that is likely to turn physical." (How To Raise A Street Smart Child, Hechinger, 1986)

- d. Your child should avoid acting weak or pleading with the would-be attacker(s). By giving the attacker(s) the feeling that you are inferior and undesirable he may think he can get whatever he wants from an easy target. At times this strategy of inviting contempt may prove to be effective (but don't count on it) - do whatever it takes to get out of the situation.
- e. Talking and screaming may work, but once you decide to get physical there is no turning back. Stay calm, wait for the right opportunity and try your best in preserving the element of surprise.

**2. Screaming:** You should never underestimate the power of a scream, a yell, or an attention-getting shout. Screaming startles the assailant, ignites the child's breathing process, and alerts others within earshot to the fact that your child is in trouble and in need of help. Remember, (a) The assailant is evaluating whether your child qualifies as an easy victim or not. (b) Sexual assault, child molestation, muggings, abductions and other related crimes are committed in silence. By screaming, the victim breaks the silence which the attacker thrives for.



**How to scream:** A piercing powerful scream from the diaphragm (gut) rather than your throat, can distract, intimidate and surprise an assailant. This is the human equivalent of a growl. Your facial expressions are important when screaming. Look like you mean business. Scream like a lion, not a mouse. The more ferocious you can look, the better. Wrinkle your nose, squint your eyes, open your mouth, and show your teeth while screaming.

**What to scream:** Any targeted victim should scream an assertive, powerful, piercing, "No!," "Fire!," or "Police! 9-1-1." This screaming should be done as the child is running away, striking through their target, or dropping to the ground, rolling, biting, kicking, and yelling.

By screaming "Fire!" you invoke a general warning call from people around you. By screaming "Police, 9-1-1," you remind people to call the police and 9-1-1 for assistance. By screaming "No!," your child: (a) Cuts the dialogue, (b) Makes the interaction extremely brief by clearly refusing what had been requested, and (c) At the same time roaring 'No!' empowers your child into the fight or flight mode.

If a child is being dragged away by their assailant, they should yell specific descriptive statements such as: 'This isn't my dad,' while dropping to the ground, kicking, biting, log rolling, grabbing onto something if possible, and screaming frantically trying to get away.

Screaming "Help!," puts the child on the defensive, rather than in control. It tells the assailant that the targeted victim is panicking and in desperate need of help. "Help," invokes a personal problem, which most people within earshot try to avoid. Bystanders hearing someone scream "Help!," only implicate themselves if their own lives are at risk and if there is a personal financial cost attached to the warning signal. Screaming "Help!," should be avoided if at all possible.

**Screaming - Remind your child:** (a) They might feel foolish, embarrassed or silly about yelling, causing a commotion and dropping to the ground, but their personal safety is what counts. Their voice is over 70% of their defense, and if they don't use that precious tool, they might as well blindfold themselves while trying to run away. (b) Keep the interaction (talking) as brief as possible - cut the dialogue (refer to p. 68 for details). (c) It is a distressed child who seeks help from an adult and not the other way around.

**Parent/child activity #1 - Screaming :** (a) Practice with your child yelling in various ways and locations (indoors and outdoors), using different attention grabbing words and statements. (b) Entice your child with a variety of luring lines which might bait them to respond (refer to p.25 for details). Have them show you how they would stop the dialogue or seek attention from others in order to end the confrontational situation.



**Parent/child activity #2 - Learning to say 'No' :** We must teach our children to exercise their own authority, to know which adults to question and who to say 'No!' to. In the book 'Protecting Children From Danger,' the following exercise is suggested : Start with two children (or adult and child) facing each other in pairs. Have one say 'Yes!' while the other says 'No!' Go back and forth (yes/no) with increasing volume and energy. After about half a minute, have children switch roles. Alternate the 'Yes!' players, encouraging them to be verbally forceful with the 'No!' child. The child continues to say 'No!' or other assertive responses they feel comfortable with. Reminder: Try to develop an assertive body language that goes with the forceful 'No.'

**Parent / child activity #3 - Learning different ways to say 'No!' :** Teach your child a variety of expressions they can use instead of 'No!' in order to help them disconnect and assert themselves from an engaging stranger. The variety of expressions you select must be age appropriate and match your child's character and personality. Some examples : "Leave me alone!", "Stop it!", "Don't do that!", "Go away!," "I want you to stop." "You should stop right now." "Stop doing that." "Don't come any closer." Reminder : Develop an assertive body language that goes with the forceful 'No!'.



## 22. Resist - Physical resistance

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**3. *Physical resistance:*** If a child decides to physically resist their assailant, they must do so to avoid personal injury, abduction and death.



"Children cannot match the physical strength of an adult intent upon harming or abducting them. They must learn to flow around the adult's strength and find a weakness just as water flows around obstacles." (Protecting Children From Danger, Bishop & Thomas, '93).

Your child must fight smarter not harder. It is during the initial stages of the attempted abduction that the offender, unsure of himself, is most vulnerable and subject to surprise. The four factors that greatly determine someone's course of action when confronted with a potentially violent situation are: (a) The victim's personality; (b) The assailant's personality; (c) The location of the attack, and (d) If the assailant is armed or not.

The principles of physics demonstrate that "the force of a blow is dependent on the speed with which it is delivered." Therefore a small child delivering a swift blow can cause more pain and injury than a strong child delivering a moderate blow. The more simple and direct your child's attack, the more effective it will be. The specific target area your child chooses to strike will depend on several factors: (a) What body weapons are available? (b) What vulnerable areas does the assailant have exposed? (c) The type of injury your child wishes to inflict on their attacker? (d) The effectiveness of such an attack to the assailant's exposed area; (e) The ease in attacking the exposed area by someone with little training; (f) The difficulty the assailant will have in defending their vulnerable areas.

If a child is abducted, they must first have a guaranteed plan of escape, prior to using physical violence against their molester. Once they physically resist, there is no turning back. Your child must react with anger and rage, mixed with their bodies natural fearful reaction. They should believe in themselves, fight scared and through their fear, determined to deter the attack at any cost. They should strike repeatedly vulnerable areas inflicting enough pain to divert their assailant's attention away from them, giving your child the precious moments they need to get away, seek help or hide.

The plan of action should include screaming, throwing things, striking, biting, gouging, dropping to the ground, and kicking exposed vital areas such as: the eyes, nose, groin, throat, etc., then running away screaming. Your child must hurt the molester and run as far away as possible while the offender is recovering from the injury. The child's escape must be swift. Surprise and speed are essential in their defense.

"If the child hurts the adult molester but fails to get away as planned, the abductor may get very angry and retaliate by seriously injuring or even killing the child victim. The child must weigh the odds and consider the risks prior to physically retaliating and disabling their assailant...Keep in mind that during the molestation the molester may be naked and preoccupied with the act itself which adds to his or her vulnerability. Both of these factors would work in favor of the child. Be sure to instruct your child that if they are naked when their chance of escape comes, don't get dressed. Just go!" (Missing, Stranger Abduction, R. Stuber, 1996).

The following are the physical tools everyone has available in order to defend themselves and get away from a possible abduction, confrontational situation, etc.

### **Your teeth**

Biting anywhere, anytime, any place. Biting the molester is an effective, practical defensive strategy which has its own inherent risks. Your child should be instructed to bite hard (the lips, nose, tongue, hand, ear, jugular, etc.) until the offender lets go. They should bite till both upper and lower teeth meet. Once they sink their teeth into the targeted area, they should shake their head violently back and forth, just like a dog does.

### **Your head**

The head butt technique has been used in street fights for centuries. Children can also apply this successful technique by striking the attacker's groin, solar plexus, or nose (if lifted), with the hairline of their forehead (like a soccer player heading a ball). In a snapping motion forward, the child should thrust their head towards the desired target. If grabbed from behind and lifted, the child can snap the head backwards into the attacker's face, striking with the top or side of skull. A head butt should be followed by a strike to the testicles or a gouge to the eyes if possible.



### **Your fingers and thumbs**

The fingers and thumbs can be used to poke, eye-gouge and claw the offender's eyes. If the child is fighting to save his or her own life, poking the attacker's eyes with a pointy object or with extended or bent fingers or thumbs will rob the assailant of their vision. A child should know how to grab the assailant's hair on either side of the head and drive their thumbs into the molester's eyes as hard as possible.

An attacker's eyes are the most vulnerable part of their body. Eye-gouging with either the fingernails or the thumbs are two self-defense techniques that are incapacitating and life-saving. I repeat, your child must hurt the assailant and run as far away as possible seeking help or a place to hide. The eyes are extremely sensitive to pain and an injury to them will terrify the attacker and help your child escape. Eye-gouging should be performed with a loud piercing yell and followed up with other techniques if possible. Fingers may also be used to scratch and claw the attacker's face as well as pulling their hair or yanking off their earrings.



### **Your hands**

The hands are used when executing several techniques like the heel of the palm strike to the attacker's nose, the testicle crush or squeeze, shoving or pushing an assailant away, picking up things (like rocks, sand, dirt, backpack, etc.) and throwing them at the assailant. It is best to throw the first object at the offender's facial area (using any hand), followed by throwing the second object to the body while holding onto the third object as a potential threat.

**Striking the nose :** Instruct your child to forcefully smash the fleshy tip of the attacker's nose using the heel of their palm or a head butt. Striking quickly the nose area can cause blurriness, tearing of the eyes and breaking or bleeding of the nose. It is important to mention that an upward strike to an assailant's nose could push the bone into the brain causing death or at the very least, irreparable brain damage. Hitting straight on the bridge of the nose can also be an effective means of self-defense. Follow up the nose strike with a testicle crush or eye-gouge if possible.

**A groin attack :** An excellent area to strike, not first, but second. Attackers expect victims to go for the family jewels and therefore do their utmost to protect it. If possible blind your assailant or strike his nose first, then repeatedly go for his genitals. The pain that a man or child receives from being struck in the groin can take their breath away, make it impossible to stand up straight, and can occasionally totally immobilize a tower of power. Depending on the child's size, it is best to go for the groin area using either the knee kick, a repeated open-hand strike to the targeted area (testicle crush), or a head butt.

**The testicle crush or squeeze** is a simple technique to execute either from a frontal or rear attack. Using an open or closed hand, the child repeatedly executes a snapping upward bowling motion into the attacker's groin area. After the initial impact of several well-placed shots, the child can either grab, squeeze, twist, and pull the assailant's testicles or just run for safety or hide.



The testicle crush is an effective and efficient technique because with only one free hand a child can easily grab an attacker's testicles from a variety of positions. If done right, the pain is so deep and intense that men and children will double over, may vomit, and even become unconscious for several minutes.

There are circumstances that prevent the squeezing part of the testicle crush from being effective: i.e., if the offender is wearing tight pants, or the crotch area has thick stitching or material, then the child will have a harder time grabbing the testicles. It is for this reason we recommend repetitive strikes to this area with an open or closed hand, prior to squeezing. A testicle crush should be followed up with a gouge to the eyes or a strike to the nose if possible.

**Remind your child** that if they are naked when they have a chance to escape they should not get dressed first. The idea is to get away, attract attention, hide or seek a safe haven no matter what they are wearing. If they can grab some of their clothing as they are getting away, fine, but don't give the assailant a second chance to apprehend you because you stopped to get dressed.

### **Your elbows**

By using their elbows, your child can strike the offender's groin area, solar plexus, throat (if lifted), etc. Snapping elbows are used in close-range combat and are also extremely effective when attacked from behind. The striking muscle surface to use is above or below the elbow.

### **Your knees**



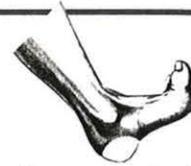
Delivering a knee kick to an attacker's groin is a very effective way to immobilize an assailant if possible. Blind your assailant first, or strike his nose then go for his genitals. It's much better to knee an attacker's groin than to kick it. The striking surface of the knee is larger, you don't run the risk of losing your balance, breaking your toes or getting your leg caught.



## 22. Resist - Physical resistance



### Your legs



Our legs should not only be used for kicking, but also for running away as quickly as possible. The average adult can outrun the average child especially if both are running in a straight line. If the child is trying to run away from a potential abductor and manages to get a small lead, the child should continuously scream 'This is not my dad!' while running in a zig-zagging fashion, changing direction frequently (children can shift direction and body weight faster than most adults). As the child is running, they can also try placing obstacles between themselves and the assailant (garbage cans, parked cars, etc.).

A child's legs are the strongest part of their bodies. They are longer, and offer more leverage; their muscle mass is greater and they can deliver more forceful blows than any other part of their bodies. The ultimate force delivered by your child's kick will depend greatly on the speed with which it is delivered and not so much the strength behind it.

The ball or heel of the foot should be used when delivering a snapping kick from a standing position to the attacker's knees or shins. If the child manages to get up while the assailant is lying down, the child's legs can be used to deliver devastating blows to the assailant's face, throat or side of head.

If attacked from behind, stomp the attacker's instep or toes by using the powerful heel of the foot. Children are surprised to discover that they can deliver a lot more thrusting leg power from a ground or sitting down position, than from a standing position.

**Remind your child** to either drop what they are holding to the floor, or throw these items at the person prior to running. Holding on to these items (backpack, school books, etc.), will hinder them or slow down their escape. Make sure your child is not embarrassed and will not hesitate to run and scream if they feel scared.



### Your whole body

The whole body can be used to squirm, bend, twist, wiggle, move, log roll, etc., as soon as you are out of reach, run like the wind.

**Parent/child activity - Physical resistance :** (a) Practice letting your child break away from you in a standing position. Grab your child in various ways, encouraging them to struggle, bite and fight to get away. (b) Practice letting your child break away from you when being dragged, dropping to the floor, etc. (c) Initiate your child to the self-defense home program in this manual (refer to p. 113).

**4. *Passive resistance*** : Passive resistance can be used to defeat the assailant's plan of action without directly challenging the assailant - verbally or physically. One of the easiest and most effective ways for a man, woman or child to avoid being abducted when there are several people around is to simply pretend to faint when confronted.

"Before you scoff at this solution, take a moment and put yourself in the place of an assailant attempting an abduction. If your intended victim has just fainted and is lying on the ground, and people are staring and approaching, what would you do? How long are you going to hang around?" (*Defensive Living*, Bo Hardy, 1992).



Most assailants expect the targeted victim to do as they are told or fight back. They are totally shocked with disbelief and bewildered when the intended victim faints when confronted. The result is complete and utter surprise and frustration for the assailant.

***Why passive resistance*** : Our main objective is to never leave the public area we are in when confronted. Passive resistance makes life difficult for the assailant. (a) Rather than bringing you along, he now has to pick you up and get you inside the car or van, which looks odd, takes time and energy (the longer the abduction takes, the better your chances of survival). (b) Fainting attracts attention, and the last thing an abductor wants to see is many people rushing towards someone who just lost consciousness and offering their help. (c) Fainting is easy to perform and doesn't need to be regularly practiced. (d) By fainting, the intended victim has not challenged the assailant or forced them to use any type of violence against them. (e) Fainting gives the victim a chance to remove themselves immediately from direct contact with the weapon, therefore reducing their chance of being injured. (f) You can always change your scenario if you don't get the appropriate results (fainting, epileptic seizure, stomach cramps, to fighting).

***How to properly faint to avoid abduction*** : (a) Cooperate with the assailant. (b) Inform the assailant that you are not well (ill, recovering from a serious illness, etc.). (c) As you are telling him you are not well, your voice should fade as you speak your last words before losing consciousness and going off to never-never land. (d) Roll your eyes up to the back of your head, grab your chest and collapse to the floor.

***Parent/child activity - Passive resistance*** : (a) Practice fainting with your child. The intended victim should crumble to the floor, like someone sitting on an imaginary chair behind them. (b) Rehearse with your child the section above entitled 'How to properly faint to avoid abduction.' (c) The parent should play the assailant's part, trying to forcefully abduct the child. Keep the procedure simple and quick. Fainting must be done prior to getting into the kidnapper's car (refer to p.118).