

**Southern Pines Police Department**  
**Safety Tips**  
***Child Safety***

***General***

A primary concern to parents is the safety of their children. While we would like to think we can always protect our kids from danger, the reality is that we cannot. What we can do, however, is arm them with information and teach them ways to help protect themselves in an age-appropriate manner. Remind your children to “check first” with you before they go anywhere with anyone, even other family members. While you may be comfortable with a grandparent or other relative spontaneously stopping by to pick up your child for a surprise outing, the child needs to have a structured process of ALWAYS checking with a parent first to make sure it is OK. That way they will know what you expect in all situations, especially those where you might have concern or want to set some ground rules first before they leave. We call this safety rule "Check First", and it works to help keep children safe. You will also save yourself from the panic of realizing your child is not home when you expect them to be. Kids should also “check first” for permission before getting into a car or leaving with anyone else, even someone they know. Remind them to use the “buddy system” by having a trusted friend or family member with them. As kids get older they may demonstrate enough responsibility for you to allow more freedom. But even your teenagers should let you know where they will be, whom they will be with, what they will be doing and when they will be home. Don’t expect them to volunteer this information; make it a point to ask each and every time and ensure they know your expectations. Get to know their friends and the parents/family of their friends and don’t be afraid to check on them to make sure they are going where they said they were going. Talk about safety issues often to raise awareness, ensure your expectations are known and kids are reminded of how they can take an active part to ensure their own safety.

During the school year, additional opportunities might arise for your children to visit other people and places or take field trips as part of class or some other organizational activity. Parents, remind your children about school bus safety and safety issues related to school or after school activities. Tell them that, when playing at the playground, to always have a friend with them instead of playing alone. Better yet, have them go with two other friends. That way, if something occurs or one is injured, one friend can go for help while the other stays to help the child who was hurt. Children are always safer when using the "buddy system" than when solo. Check children's clothing and be sure not to have their name printed or embossed on the outside of their clothing. This will prevent a child from being confused by someone they do not know calling them by name. Remind your children about safety and tell them it is "OK" to say "NO" to get away from any situation which makes them feel uncomfortable. Explain to your children they need to trust their feelings, which will help keep them safe. Establish the understanding that you will pick them up at any time from a situation that makes them uncomfortable. These simple steps are important for personal safety. Also important is a continual dialog between parents and children about situations they face, problems they encounter and methods to deal with issues while keeping personal safety in the forefront.

***Eight Safety Rules for Children***

1. I always check first with my parents or the person in charge before I go anywhere or get into a car, even with someone I know.
2. I always check first with my parents or a trusted adult before I accept anything from anyone, even from someone I know.
3. I always take a friend with me when I go places or play outside.
4. I know my name, address, telephone number, and my parent’s names.
5. I say no if someone tries to touch me or treat me in a way that makes me feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused.
6. I know that I can tell my parents or a trusted adult if I feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused.
7. It’s OK to say no, and I know that there will always be somebody who can help me.
8. I am strong, smart, and have the right to be safe.

(SOURCE: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)

Go to the website of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for additional information on this topic. <http://www.missingkids.com>

### ***Prescriptions***

Take a few minutes to be sure that all prescription and non-prescription medicines have child resistant caps, are secured in locked cabinets and out of reach of children. However, if a child ingests poisons or inappropriate types/amounts of medicine, we all need to remember what to do. The first step is to check with your personal physician or call the poison control center. The national phone number for the Poison Control Center is 1-800-222-1222, which will ring to the closest poison center anywhere in the United States. Make a note of the number, put it on or near every phone in your home and carry the number with you in an accessible place when you travel.

### ***Travelling***

When traveling with a child in your vehicle, make sure they are secured in the proper child safety seat or seatbelt, depending on their age. Refer to the instructions provided with your child safety seat and ensure it is installed properly. Proper use of a seatbelt or child safety seat is the responsibility of the vehicle operator. Take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the operation of all vehicle safety devices and use them properly!

**For more information or a presentation on this topic, contact the Community Services Coordinator at (910) 692-2732.**