

# Safety Strategies for Parents and Community

As a community, it is our responsibility to safeguard children and teach them the skills to be safe. Children often lack the skills and maturity necessary to protect themselves from sexual exploitation. Parents and the community at large are responsible for teaching children about their own personal safety. We often shy away from teaching children about exploitation and abduction, feeling they will be unnecessarily frightened. Children must be provided with information, skills and support to increase their safety awareness; without making them feel frightened.

Children nearly always feel safer after learning prevention strategies. Safety education turns kids into confident, critical thinkers, prepared for dangerous situations should they arise. The following are a list of strategies to address personal safety issues and are geared to assist parents educating children about how to reduce their chances of being victimized. Together we can protect Manitoba's children by teaching them to be smart, strong and safe.

## What Parents Need to Know

- Know where your children are at all times. Be familiar with their friends and daily activities.
- Ensure that your children are always using the "buddy system" and don't drop your children off alone in places such as malls, movie theatres, video arcades or parks.
- Be sensitive to changes in your children's behaviour: they are a signal that you should sit down and talk to your children about what caused the changes.
- Be alert to a teenager or adult who is paying an unusual amount of attention to your children or giving them inappropriate or expensive gifts.
- Practise safety skills with your child and rehearse regularly so that they become second nature.
- Teach your children that no one should be touching their private parts (or area covered by a bathing suit).
- Teach your children about the common lures used by child predators. Visit [www.childfind.mb.ca](http://www.childfind.mb.ca) for more information.
- Encourage open communication with your children. Let your children know they can talk to you about any situation.

## What Children Need to Know

- Use the "buddy system" and never go places alone.
- Always "check first" with your parents before going anywhere with anyone or accepting gifts.
- Trust your instincts which are feelings inside that warn you of danger. You can be assertive and you have the right to say NO to someone who tries to take you somewhere, touches you, or makes you feel uncomfortable in any way.
- No one should ask you to keep a 'special' secret. If he or she does, tell your parents or teacher immediately.
- No adult should be asking you (a child) for assistance or directions. If someone tries to take you somewhere, shout "No", run away and tell someone immediately.
- No one should touch you in the parts of the body covered by your bathing suit, nor should you touch anyone else in those areas. Your body is special and private.
- Remember you are strong, smart and have the right to be safe.

To report the online sexual exploitation of children, visit [www.cybertip.ca](http://www.cybertip.ca)

Prepared by

**Child Find**  
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