

## Tips for keeping KIDS aware & safe



Allegheny County's SAFE START program uses the Safety Kids, Inc. curriculum about Charlie Check-First to teach children how to protect themselves and be safe in a variety of situations. The following tips will help your child be prepared if s/he is approached by someone who tries to lure them into a car or encourages him/her to go with them somewhere.



Parents are now encouraged to avoid using the term “**stranger danger.**” It tends to induce fear. In addition, statistics show that it is more often someone the child knows, rather than a stranger, who inflicts harm. Besides, there are many ways an adult can convince a child s/he is not a stranger.

For more tips and helpful safety information, contact **Safe Start** at [safestart@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:safestart@alleghenycounty.us); or visit [www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/safestart.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/safestart.aspx) and [www.safetykids.org](http://www.safetykids.org).

- Teach your child to always “CHECK FIRST” before s/he goes anywhere with anyone at any time for any reason. This includes going with relatives and people the child knows. They should always check first with the person who is caring for them at that time. If it is impossible to check with the caregiver, then the answer is “NO! You may not go.”
- Teach your child, when s/he is outside, to always walk with at least one other person. Groups of more than two are better.
- When your child is outside the house, do not allow him or her to wear clothing or a backpack or other articles with his/her name visible on it. Children are more likely to trust someone who calls them by name.
- Teach your child to stay more than an adult arm's length away from any car that is occupied by a person trying to talk to him/her, so that they cannot be reached by the person inside the car.
- Teach your child if someone encourages him or her to get into a car, to help find a lost pet, or to leave with them for any reason, s/he should yell “NO” as loudly as possible and run to the closest adult whom they know and trust. Yelling “No,” also called the POWER NO, indicates your child has been prepared for the situation.
- Teach your child to run in the opposite direction from the one the car is facing. It is harder to drive in reverse than straight ahead.
- Teach your child their full name, address and if, there is one, the “best” phone number (including area code) to call in case of an emergency. If you make it into a song, younger children may be more likely to remember it. If no phone number is reliable, teach your child to call 911 for help.
- Teach your older child to pay attention to the color and make of the vehicle and/or its license information (state and number), the physical characteristics of the person(s), and where s/he was when approached. Suggest that this information be written down as soon as it can be done safely.
- Remind your child to call 911 to report any attempted luring.
- Make a daily note of the clothing your child is wearing just in case you need to provide that information later. Keep your child's ID kit with a current school picture, or other recent photograph, handy.