Police Dept. 5480 Grant Ave. Cuyahoga Hts. OH 44125 (216) 640-2045 chpd@cuyahogaheights.com

A MESSAGE FROM POLICE CHIEF, BRIAN STURGILL

STRANGER DANGER

Schools out and so are the kids. Learn how you can teach your child to be alert and stay safe this summer.

While still one of the core lessons of childhood safety, the "Stranger Danger" lesson can use some updates.

Unfortunately (and all too often) it's not strangers that pose the risk – and kids don't always know they are in danger.

Some Basic Facts:

Stranger abductions are rare. Your children are much more likely to be abducted or abused by someone they know.

That's why teaching stranger danger simply doesn't cut it. Tell your children that no one should hurt them or touch their private parts – even people they know.

Your children are much more likely to be sexually abused than abducted and more often than not – by someone you have deemed safe. Teach your child to notice the warning signs of sexual abuse.
Learn how to spot when someone is grooming your child for abuse.

Tips For Parents

THROW OUT YOUR CHILD'S PERSONALIZED CLOTHING BACKPACKS AND LUNCH BOXES.

When strangers know your child's name – your child is much more likely to trust them.
Don't make it easy for a stranger by plastering your children's names all over their bodies.

HAVING A CODE WORD IS USEFUL IN MANY SCENARIOS

Make up a family code word. Try not to use a common word – but don't pick something that is so bizarre it is hard to use naturally. You can use the code word in the following ways:

- If you send someone to pick up your child – they should know the code word. As I talked about earlier, our kids are more likely to be sexually abused by someone they know. If the person doesn't know the code word – your children shouldn't go with them. **No matter what.**
- If your children are at a friend's house and something is making them feel unsafe, they can call you and use the code word.
- If you are in public and there is a safety threat – you can use the word to warn your children to exit quickly or get down.

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Tips for Kids

DEFINE AND EXPLAIN WHAT A "STANGER" IS

- Teach your child that anyone your child doesn't know – is a stranger. Ask them what they think a stranger looks like and then correct any misperceptions. Children often think a person is only unsafe if they have a rough appearance. Telling kids simply to not talk to strangers doesn't help.
- It is more important to highlight that no matter what a stranger says (candy, puppy, etc.) they should never **leave** or get into a car with them. Role-play these ideas with your kids. Use various scenarios to test them.
- Teach your kids to trust their gut instincts.

IF FOLLOWED, RUN IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION OF THE CAR

- Tell your children that if they are being followed or chased start running in the opposite direction of the car. This can buy them some time as the car turns around.

WHEN IN TROUBLE – LOOK FOR A MOM WITH KIDS

- Desperate times call for desperate measures. Tell your children that if they are lost or are feeling unsafe – find a mom with kids. Helping them delineate who might be safe beforehand can save critical seconds when they are in danger. Please keep in mind that just because a "mom is with kids" doesn't necessarily make them safe. But in an emergency beggars can't always be choosers!

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO SCREAM, "WHO ARE YOU?"

- How many times have you seen kids struggling in an adult's arms and walked past them? Kids have tantrums all the time and we are immune to them. Teach your children to scream out things that would alarm others, like:

TEACH YOUR KIDS TO BE DESTRUCTIVE IN ORDER TO DRAW ATTENTION

- Tell your children that if a stranger tries to take them – all manners are out the window. Tell them that they are allowed to hit, scream and make a scene.
- Give them some suggestions. If they are in a store, tell them to knock things off the shelf. Knocking things over will get the attention of more people who will then take a closer look at what is going on.

You might think all this talk about doom and gloom is unnecessary. You might think that the chances are so small it isn't even worth talking about. You are correct the chances are small, but what you teach may be the difference between the life and death of a child…

It is indeed worth it!!!

2024 Village of Cuyahoga Heights 2025

DIRECTORY

ALL EMERGENCY CALLS
FIRE OR POLICE 911

For other calls to the Fire Department ..... (216) 641-6799
5480 Grant Ave ..... Fire Chief Michael Suhy
Police Department ..... (216) 883-6800
For *non-emergency* calls to the Police Department..... (216) 640-2045
5480 Grant Ave ..... Police Chief Brian Sturgill

VILLAGE HALL ..... (216) 641-7020
4863 East 71st Street ..... Fax: (216) 641-8485

SERVICE DEPARTMENT.....(216) 641-3505
Fax: (216) 641-0315
5181 Canal Road ..... Service Director Dave Sammons
SWIMMING POOL (Summer months) ..... (216) 341-7684

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Donald Bohning & Associates Valley View, OH 44125 Fax: (216) 642-1132

BUILDING COMMISSIONER
NORM CASINI ..... (216) 641-7020

SCHOOL NUMBERS
CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL .....(216) 429-5707
CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL ..... (216) 429-5757
CUYAHOGA HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL .....(216) 429-5880