

ORANGE KARATE CENTER'S Street-wise Safety Seminar for Kids A Guide for Parents

Dear Moms and Dads,

Since 1994, the safety of our children has been among the Orange Karate Center's primary concerns. Working to ensure the safety of the kids in our community is the number one reason why we host our OKC Street-wise Safety Seminars. We are happy to offer this program to organizations that work with children wherever that may be. We are very glad that your child(ren) was able to attend our class today.

Below, we have put together some suggestions that we believe will be helpful to you in your efforts to keep your kids safer. If we can be of further assistance to you, or if you would like information about our on-going OKC Martial Arts Programs for Children, Teens, and Adults, please do not hesitate to contact us at your convenience.

Here's to a healthy, happy, and safe future for all of our children!

Stats: 2000 children are reported missing every day in the United States. 74% of those abducted, are teenage girls. (Source: Court TV, 2002)

Research and interviews with those convicted of child molestation and/or child abduction or murder has demonstrated some things held in common among the children they sought to victimize. For example:

1. **CHILDREN ARE "TARGETED":** Often, the child victim has been selected by the offender **before** the attack occurs. Some of the characteristics seen in common among these children are:
 - a. An "un-kept" or neglected personal appearance.
 - b. The child has a slight build.
 - c. The child is often alone or out late at night.
 - d. The child "walks like a victim" – head down, unobservant of his/her surroundings, shoulders are slouched, etc.
 - e. The child may frequent video arcades, game stores, etc. without the supervision of a responsible adult and interestingly,
 - f. Of those children targeted, who appeared to be between 8 and 10 years of age, it was common for the children to be smoking cigarettes.

2. As a parent, **YOU SHOULD BE CONCERNED** if your child suddenly:
 - a. Becomes withdrawn.
 - b. Begins having trouble in school. For example, grades drop suddenly, he/she engages in more fighting or acting-out type of behaviors, or other signs of behavior that are out of the ordinary for your child.
 - c. Is suddenly afraid or suddenly unwilling to attend certain classes, church meetings, other organization-type of activities OR is reluctant to be in the company of a particular person.

3. **ROLE-PLAYING WITH YOUR CHILD** is one of the most effective means you can use to review the Street-wise Safety information with them. Play the "What Would You Do If..." Game with your child often. Base your situations for role-playing, when possible, on actual events that occur in the news. (Unfortunately, you will have a wealth of situations to choose from!) And, following role-playing, check up on your child. If, for example, you have devised a method for handling telephone calls when you are away from home, and they are home alone, call when you are out and check up on them, to make sure they are following your procedures.

4. **KEEP INFORMED ABOUT THE CRIME INCIDENTS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.** Many of our local newspapers include information about home break-ins, possible molestations/abductions, etc. Read them.

5. **CREATE THE HABIT OF HAVING YOUR CHILD CHECK IN WITH YOU** whenever their play location changes. This becomes very important as your child approaches adolescent/teenage years. If, during this time, you explain that your needing to know where they are is based out of mutual consideration for the family and does not come from a lack of trust in them on your part, you will have more success with helping them put this habit into practice. With an older child, (high school thru college), it is a good habit for them to get used to checking in with you periodically by telephone, as well. This is especially true whenever they are going to be away from home for extended hours or longer periods of time.
6. **YOUR CHILD SHOULD NOT ENTER ANYONE'S HOME WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION.** Enough said.
7. **QUESTION THE MOTIVE** behind any adult or older child who seems overly interested in your child and who wants to spend time alone with them. Be an active participant with your child in their youth groups, summer camps, scouting activities, etc. Keep in mind, if the person seems too good to be true, they may be!
8. Review frequently with your child the concept that **ADULTS DO NOT SEEK THE HELP OF CHILDREN TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS.** Whether it's asking for directions to some location, offering your child a gift, candy or money in exchange for their assisting the adult with some chore/task, etc. , advise your child – repeatedly – that your child needs to stay out of reach of the adult doing the asking. Remind them to maintain **AT LEAST A 2-ADULT ARM LENGTH DISTANCE** between themselves and the adult AND , they need to ask your permission before accepting anything from a stranger. Reinforce with your child, that they must tell you of any incident involving an adult requesting their assistance, as soon as possible.
9. **BE ON THE WATCH FOR ANY NEW TOYS, INSTANT CASH,** or other types of gifts that your child suddenly has in their possession that you know has not come through family channels. Instruct your child not to accept gifts from strangers without your expressed permission and clue them in that it is a general rule of life that no one gives gifts on a regular basis without expecting something in return.
10. **PRE-ARRANGE AN ACTION PLAN** for your child in the event of a real emergency. Assure your child that you would never send anyone **THEY DON'T KNOW AND WHO THEY ARE NOT COMPLETELY COMFORTABLE WITH** to pick them up from school, etc. if you were unable to get them. Some families make use of a "code word" that can be exchanged between the adult and the child at the time of the pick-up.
11. As your child approaches adolescence, jobs and money become very attractive to them. Discuss the importance of you being kept informed by them any time they are asked to work for someone or when they are asked to be interviewed by someone.
12. Some offenders use blackmail, threats of violence, or may even flash a weapon to frighten your child into cooperation. Teach your child to counter these threats by running and yelling. Interviews with actual offenders have revealed that most molester/child murderers say they will flee from the area if their intended victim creates a scene.

Please Note: We greatly appreciate that the scenario involving a weapon possibly being used again your child is perhaps the thing that is most feared by parents. But, please keep this in mind...a child who has followed an offender into a car, building, or some other isolated place out of fear, or the belief that if they cooperate with the offender this may save their own life, is a child who has lost control of the situation. Children who have fought through their fear and have not been paralyzed by it, have made excellent witnesses, leading to the arrest and conviction of child molesters/murderers.

13. It is important that your child understands the concept of "good" v "bad" touching. They must be instructed that you want them to tell you anytime the actions of another against them has made them uncomfortable.

14. PLEASE REVIEW THESE COMMON MYTHS WITH YOUR CHILD OFTEN:

- A. You cannot believe what an offender is telling you – they are LIARS who will say anything to you that they believe you want to hear – their words may take the form of threats OR they may be very kind.
- B. You cannot negotiate with a LIAR because you cannot trust what they say. It is not a time for “let’s make a deal!”
- C. Never enter the car with a stranger – you are better off fighting it out in a parking lot by using distraction techniques, yelling LOUDLY and creating a scene, than if you are dragged off to a second crime scene. This second location will almost always be more isolated and you will have much less of a chance to get help from someone.
- D. There is no mythical “right time” to make your escape. You have to create your own “right time.”

15. Remind your child often that if they are ever grabbed, to be yelling loudly, “This is not my Dad (Mom)!”, “NO!”, “Call 911!” repeatedly. This same concept works for adults, too, with respect to indicating that you have been grabbed by a stranger. Studies have demonstrated that the general public is very reticent to get involved in situations that they perceive to be between a parent and child OR between spouses.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS...

We believe that our children should know that the vast majority of adults in our community genuinely care about them and their welfare. Sadly, but realistically, it is due to the actions of a few, that we must be on guard with all strangers.

We are strong supporters of the “buddy system” because there is some truth to the idea of safety in numbers. If your child is one that must walk to or from school alone, try to connect with other children in your area. You may be able to set up a system through your local parent/teacher association and work to create a safer traveling situation for all children.

Most importantly, keep the lines of communication open between you and your child so that they will not be afraid to come to you with any problem or circumstance that may arise. Remember, too, knowledge IS power! Talk to your kids and keep talking to them. Keep your kids informed about the happenings in your community. It could save their life!

SEVEN MORE WAYS TO RAISE A STREET SMART CHILD

taken from Safer Smarter Kids by Michael Storms / National Director, Safer Smarter Kids Foundation

1. **Give Your Children Power** – give your children the permission to say “no” to adults. Let kids know that it is sometimes OK to be rude.
2. **No Short-Cuts** – let children know NOT TO take shortcuts home. You need to know the route they follow and they need to follow it.
3. **Important Information** – children should have memorized their complete name, address, and phone number (including area code). They should also know how to place a telephone call from a phone booth, etc.
4. **When Lost** – let children know where to go if they become lost. If they are lost in a store, instruct them to look for someone who works there; if you become separated on an outing, pick a pre-arranged meeting place to return to, should this occur.
5. **Trust Your Instincts** – let children know if they feel uncomfortable in a situation or feel they are being followed, to react by going to a safe, crowded place.
6. **Check It Out** – you can never know enough about your child’s teachers, baby-sitters, coaches, etc. Ask relevant questions of them and about them.
7. **No Personalized Clothing** – children who wear personalized clothing give potential abductors an immediate way to start a conversation. Don’t buy or let them wear such clothing.

STRANGER/DANGER STRATEGIES

OKC, Inc. would like to give special thanks and recognition to Gary Harris, Associate Director, for his permission to use the information from the Handbook for Child Assault Prevention Training.

Those of us who are certified Black Belt Instructors who have been in training for many years, will tell you that the more you know about preventing an assault, the less likely it will be that you will ever have to physically defend yourself.

If you are in danger, that is something that is very real! You need to know what to do and what it takes to effectively defend yourself. Remember, your primary goal ALWAYS is to escape – not to stick around to try to hurt someone who has tried or intended to hurt you.

STRANGER/DANGER STRATEGY requires you to:

1. **LEARN TO DISCERN!** This means that you must learn to recognize things as they really are. Learn to recognize if you are in a dangerous situation and always be aware of your surroundings.
2. **YOUR BEST BLOCK IS TO NOT BE THERE!** Go, Get Going, and Keep Going until you reach safety! Always maintain at least a two adult arm length as your safety distance from anyone you are unsure of, or who makes you feel uncomfortable.
3. **DISTRACT, ATTACK, AND MAKE TRACKS!** Think back on your Street-Wise Safety Seminar and remember all of the distraction techniques you were taught – strikes to the eyes, ears, nose, throat, pinching, biting, yelling from your stomach (not your throat), etc. All of these target areas make good distractions. You may also remember to kick to the shins, knees, and groin. Remember, you are going to kick as hard as you can, and continue to yell – the whole time! You might also choose to use your elbows to their ribs or heel stomp on the top of the attacker's foot. Whatever you decide to use, remember to keep your target areas at your own eye level and below. Use that moment of shock and surprise and **GET AWAY FAST!**

A Special Note from Sensei Becky Davis:

To All of You Who Participated in Our Child Safety Awareness Classes,

All kids are very special to us at OKC, Inc. and that means YOU, too! Please remember that you deserve a happy childhood, a childhood where you can be SAFE, STRONG, and FREE! Stay Safe!

On behalf of my entire Staff at the Orange Karate Center, thank you for coming to class!

Here's to YOU!

Sensei Becky Davis