

what to do if you get lost:

- If you go camping, hiking, or walking through trails in the woods, give your children a whistle on a string to hang around their necks for safety.
- If they become lost, teach them to "hug a tree" and start whistling. Sound carries a long way, and this can help you locate them.
- The National Safety Council's safety tips include parents carrying photos of their children, selecting a meeting place ahead of time in case someone gets lost, and instructing children to go to a park employee if they are in trouble.
- Some parents tell their young children that if they are lost they should try to find other families with young children to help them.
 - Teach your children about stranger safety and review with them periodically. For example, children should not talk to unfamiliar adults when they are alone at a park, mall, or other public place. To keep your kids safe from strangers, teach your children to yell or go to a safe spot such as a friend's house or a nearby store if they feel they're in danger.
 - Parents should also caution their children never to approach a car, especially when someone they don't know is inside, regardless of what the person is saying to them. Predators have been known to use a number of tricks to try to entice children to go with them, including asking children to help them find a lost puppy and asking for directions. Since children tend to be helpful and seek adult approval, it is easy for them to forget the rules and respond to the request. The buddy system is another summer safety tip that can help in situations when an adult is not present.

To protect your kids when you do decide to leave your child at home, consider the following safety tips:

- Talk to your parents about expectations for any time that you are home alone.
- Establish a regular schedule of check-in calls in which you call a parent to let them know how and what you are doing.
- For older children, establish rules about friends coming over to visit. Do you approve of your child having friends over at the house without any supervision
- Create a first aid kit and teach your child how to use it.
- Establish a list of emergency phone contacts and keep it by the phone or program it in a cell phone.
- Store alcohol and medication in a location that is completely inaccessible.
 - If the child is going to go home after school, it's a good idea to have them call to check in when they get home. For an older child, set ground rules about whether other kids can come over when the parents are absent, whether cooking is an option, whether they can leave the home. Other steps parents can take include:
 - Post an emergency phone list where the children can see it. Include 9-1-1, the parents work and cell numbers, numbers for neighbors, and the numbers for anyone else who is close and trusted.
 - Practice an emergency plan with the child so they know what to do in case of fire, injury, or other emergencies. Write the plan down and make sure the child knows where it is.

- • If children have approved access to smart phones or tablets, download the free [Red Cross First Aid App](#) so they'll have instant access to expert advice for everyday emergencies.
- • Download the [Red Cross Emergency App](#) on smart phones or tablets for adults and children. This app gives real-time weather alerts and safety information, including steps on what to do if the alert goes off. The "Family Safe" feature allows parents to check in with their children via text message to see if they are safe or need help.
- • Let children know where the flashlights are. Make sure that the batteries are fresh, and that the child knows how to use them.
- • Remove or safely store in locked areas dangerous items like guns, knives, hand tools, power tools, razor blades, scissors, ammunition and other objects that can cause injury.
- • Make sure potential poisons like detergents, polishes, pesticides, care-care fluids, lighter fluid and lamp oils are stored in locked cabinets or out of the reach of children.
- • Make sure medicine is kept in a locked storage place or out of the reach of children.
- • Limit any cooking a young child can do. Make sure at least one approved smoke alarm is installed and operating on each level of the home.
- • Limit the time the child spends in front of the television or computer. Caution them to not talk about being home alone on public web sites. Kids should be cautious about sharing information about their location when using chat rooms or posting on social networks.
- • Consider enrolling older children in an online [Red Cross babysitting course](#) so they can learn first aid skills and how to care for younger family members. Babysitting Basics is geared towards children aged 11-15 while Advanced Child Care Training is well-suited for those aged 16 and up.
- • Lock the doors and if the home has an electronic security system, children should learn how to turn it on and have it on when home alone.
- • Never open the door to strangers. Always check before opening the door to anyone, looking out through a peephole or window first.
- • Never open the door to delivery people or service representatives. Ask delivery people to leave the package at the door or tell them to come back at another time. Service representatives, such as a TV cable installer, should have an appointment when an adult is home.
- • Never tell someone on the telephone that the parents are not at home. Say something like "He or she is busy right now. Can I take a message?"
- • Do not talk about being home alone on social media web sites. Kids should be cautious about sharing information about their location when using chat rooms or posting on social networks.
- • Never leave the house without permission. If it's okay to go outside, children should tell their parents where they are going, when they are leaving, and when they will return. If mom and dad are still at work, children should call them when they return home.
- • Do not go outside to check out an unusual noise. If the noise worries the child, they should call their parents, an adult, or the police.
- • Don't talk to strangers.

- • Do not have friends over to visit when your parents aren't at home unless you have permission to do so. Do not let anyone inside who is using drugs or alcohol, even if you know them.
- • If the child smells smoke or hears a fire or smoke alarm, they should get outside and ask a neighbor to call the fire department.
- **Make the phone (almost) off-limits.** Your child shouldn't answer the phone for just anyone, so set up guidelines. If you have caller ID, tell her not to answer the phone if she doesn't recognize the name or number. If you don't have caller ID, tell him that she should let every call go to voice mail.
- **Keep a list of numbers close to the telephone including those for you, other trusted adults, 911 and other emergency services.** •
- **Don't leave the house.** Your child should not leave the house unattended unless he's cleared it with you first or there is an emergency such as a fire. Make sure that he is aware of the risks of leaving home.
- **Take the same way home.** Have her take the same route to and from school every day. If your child walks, review each street that she uses. If she takes a school bus, make sure that she takes it every day, even if she is offered a ride from a friend. Knowing her route allows you to predict how long it will take her to arrive home, and to trace her steps if there is ever a problem.
- **Keep him busy.** Although he needs some downtime to rest and rejuvenate, your child will be less likely to get into trouble if he's occupied with homework, **music practice**, and chores.
- **Practice first aid.** Keep a first aid kit handy and review it with your child. Help her distinguish between a true emergency and a minor one that she can handle herself.
 His or her full name, address and telephone number along with your full name and how to reach you. • He or she should never open the door for someone unless that person is on a preapproved list of trusted adults you have provided.
 Contact 911 in case of an emergency. • Carry his or her key so it is hidden and secure. • Lock the door after entering and make sure the home is secure. • Tell callers you're unavailable instead of saying he or she is home alone. • Check with you immediately upon returning home to let you know he or she has safely arrived.