Even young children should know these basic safety precautions

- Help your child learn their full name, phone number (including area code), and address (including city and state).

- Teach children how to call 911 (and when it’s appropriate) and how to use cell phones and pay phones.

- Teach your kids how to identify “safe” adults, like a police officer or security guard or teacher.

- Explain to your kids that they should never accept a ride, food, or gifts from someone they don’t know.

- Take logical safety precautions in public, like accompanying younger children to the bathroom.

- Teach your child the power of “no.” No one has a right to touch them if it makes them uncomfortable, and you will never, ever get angry if they tell you that someone has touched them, despite what that person might threaten.

- Designate a safe spot in your neighborhood, like a trusted friend’s house, to go to in case of emergency.

- Evaluate your neighborhood for areas of safety concern – wooded areas, poorly lit areas, etc. – and then teach your children to be safe or avoid the area altogether. (Be realistic about this one; for example, you probably can’t prevent young adventurers from checking out the woods, but you can teach them forest safety.)

Children’s Independence

- All kids step out on their own at some point, whether it’s to walk to the bus stop or run to a friend’s house. Part of our parental responsibility is teaching kids how to stay safe when
Encourage your children to use the buddy system – walk and play with friends or classmates.

Teach your kids to avoid solitary areas, like alleys and vacant buildings.

With your kids, map out the safest routes to the bus stop, stores, and friends’ houses. Explain that they shouldn’t take shortcuts and should always stick to this route.

Explain the importance of alertness – even if they’re listening to music or chatting with a friend, your kids should be aware of their surroundings.

Never talk to strangers (unless they’re designated “safe,” like police).

Teach your child that if they sense danger, it’s okay to yell “help!” and find a safe adult. They don’t need to feel embarrassed.

Ask your children to check in when they get home from school, if they’re planning to stay late, if they go to a friend’s house, etc.

Listen up. Let your kids know that they can always talk to you without shame or embarrassment. Take their concerns and complaints seriously.

Emphasize words and mediation over violence. Tell your children to always speak with an adult if they see children or adults with knives, guns or other weapons.