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Stranger Danger

Stranger Danger has passed into popular usage as the shorthand for the rules and safety tips children which can be taught to protect themselves from adult strangers. Adages such as, 'Never accept sweets from a stranger' form a central part of the concept of Stranger Danger. Crucially children need to understand that a person they do not know can be dangerous even if they are female or look 'nice'.

At what age do children need to know about stranger danger?

Children as young as 3 or 4 may begin to have an awareness of what it means for someone to be a stranger and to understand why they should not trust them. Some nurseries and pre-schools may provide preliminary training on this subject. Primary and secondary schools follow a Personal and Social Education Programme, where personal safety and the rights of the child are just some of the issues raised. School Community Police Officers

visit the schools on a regular basis delivering lessons on personal safety amongst others.

Parents may be concerned about frightening their children by discussing this topic at too early an age. However, most children are now bombarded with media images of missing children and may be reassured by a calm, rational approach to a potentially terrifying subject.

Teaching children about stranger danger

Basic Stranger Danger rules include:

- * never go anywhere with a stranger
- * never accept gifts or sweets from a stranger
- * never get in a car with a stranger
- * never go off on your own without telling your parents or a trusted adult

Safe people and places

Stranger Danger is not just about teaching children who or what to avoid, but also includes positive rules so that children know how to keep themselves safe.

For example:

- * Knowing who they can trust if they need help - such as a uniformed Police Officer or a teacher.
- * Having the confidence to trust their instincts if they have a bad feeling about a place or person.
- * Being aware of their surroundings.
- * Learning to be assertive.
- * Knowing that they should tell a trusted adult if they have been approached by a stranger.

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I don't go with strangers

- * tell your child it is okay to break the rules if they are in danger
- * encourage your child to YELL, KICK, SCREAM, LIE or RUN AWAY, if they feel they are in danger
- * give your child a code word or sign that only you and your child (and another parent/ carer) know. They can use it when they feel they are in danger but don't want other people to know
- * tell your child to stay with their friends and not to go e.g. to the park on their own.

As well as understanding that some strangers are dangerous, it's important for children to know about adults they can turn to if they are on their own and in trouble. Below are some safer strangers

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Safer strangers

As well as understanding that some strangers are dangerous, it's important for children to know about adults they can turn to if they are on their own and in trouble.

Safer strangers will usually be wearing a uniform.

Safer strangers could be Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers, traffic wardens, shopkeepers, check-out assistants, paramedics and others. Say we can all recognise them quickly because of their uniforms.

Safer buildings could be banks, post offices, libraries, medical centres, shops, supermarkets, leisure centres and others. If your child can't see a **safer stranger** outside they should look for a **safer building** to go into to ask for help from the people who work there.

Tell the **safer stranger** their name and where possible the parent / carer's phone number.

Help your child to learn the **safer strangers, safer buildings** code gradually, so that it eventually becomes 'second nature'. Talk about it in a low-key, matter-of-fact way, whenever the opportunity arises naturally. The phrase **safer strangers, safer buildings**, is a positive alternative, giving children an immediate strategy to use, as part of their growing understanding of stranger awareness.



Seaside Safety

Everyone loves a day at the seaside, but it's important to follow safety advice. Here are some beach safety tips to help you keep your family safe by the sea.

1. Don't forget the sunscreen

Put sun cream on children before heading to the beach, and reapply during the day. Sunscreen will offer some protection, but covering your little one with loose clothing and a wide-brimmed hat as well is even better.

2. Stay together

Keep children close, especially if you're going swimming or paddling. Remember that even shallow water can quickly knock little ones off their feet – stay within arm's reach of little ones whenever you're in or near the water.

3. Look out for the flags

Always obey instructions from lifeguards, and encourage your children to look for the coloured flags that show when and where it's safe to swim or paddle.

4. Tide checks

Check the information boards when you arrive at the beach to be aware of any local hazards, and remember that the tide can come in very quickly and change the environment. Make sure you know the tide times for the day to avoid getting caught out.

5. Keep drinking

Make sure your little one has access to drinks all day – remember that sun and wind can dehydrate you quickly at the beach, even on colder days.

6. Stick to the shade

It can be hard to find much shade at the beach, so bring something you can use to create your own, such as tents or sunshades. Encourage little ones to play in the shade between 11am-3pm when the sun is at its strongest.

How to keep kids safe in the sun!

1. Stay in the shade when possible

It's a good idea to keep children in the shade in the middle of the day when the sun is at its strongest - try and get into the habit of heading indoors between 11am and 3pm, or use a parasol or a play tent to provide some shade.

2. Use a good sunscreen

Make sure your little one wears sunscreen that covers any exposed skin - use plenty, and don't forget their shoulders, the back of their neck, the tops of their ears, nose and cheeks and the tops of their feet. Choose a sunscreen that has an SPF of at least 15, and at least 4 stars for UVA protection.

3. Keep topping up the sunscreen

Try and put sun cream on your child at least half an hour before heading out to play - remember that you'll need to put more on throughout the day, especially if they've been swimming or paddling.

4. Always pack a sunhat

It's a good idea for children to wear a floppy sunhat that protects their face and neck whenever they're out in the sun. Wearing a hat yourself can really encourage your reluctant toddler to follow suit - and hats with chinstraps can be very useful if your child likes removing their hat!

5. Drink lots of water

Give little ones access to water throughout the day, especially in warm weather. Encourage them to drink regularly - particularly when they've been running around.



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Beach Flag Safety

