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## Safety Tips For Parents

*Research has shown that children with a healthy sense of self are less vulnerable to abuse and abduction. Read these suggestions to enhance the ability of your child to protect him or her.*

- **BUILD SUPPORT SYSTEMS** – Both for you and your child. Children benefit from having positive role models and other trusted adults to whom they can turn for help or advice.
- **TALK WITH YOUR CHILD** – Encourage open communication on all topics and listen between the lines to discover his concerns or fears. Be aware of the normal fluctuations and behaviors for the stages of development. Replace fear with knowledge and support.
- **TEACH DECISION MAKING** – Children of all ages can make decisions. Walk them through the process and include a discussion of consequences. Teach them to trust their own feelings and assure them they can say “no” to something they feel is wrong and that you will support them.
- **BUILD SELF-ESTEEM** – A child who doesn’t value himself or herself has a harder time resisting pressure and taking care of himself or herself. Help him or her discover personal assets and strong points and build on success. Reinforce the positive and discipline carefully, focusing on the behavior, not the child.
- **USE ROLE PLAYING** – Rehearse different scenarios at a shopping mall, the park, on the Internet, answering the phone, etc. Teach your child how to react in safe ways and where and how to get help. Practice these at different stages as your child grows.
- **BE ALERT** – Watch for subtle changes in behavior, especially withdrawal, acting out or changes in sleeping or eating patterns. Remember that most child abuse is committed by someone who is known to the child.
- **LET KIDS BE KIDS** – Teach your children what they need to know at age-appropriate levels and let them know you will always do your best to protect them, but don’t scare the fun out of childhood.

For more information about children protection, contact the Jacob Wetterling Foundation, 1-800-325-HOPE, or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1-800-THE-LOST.

For mo information in general, contact the Edina Police Department, 952-826-1610.

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## EDINA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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