

One of the most exciting things about starting the new school year is the fun children have being reunited with their friends and playing outdoors. Before children head outside to enjoy the fall weather, it is important that they are equipped with the necessary skills to spot and avoid danger.

At Fort Erie Elementary School, we have many measures in place to ensure that your child can learn in a safe environment. These include a School Safety Plan, staff trained as first responders, and special risk assessment training.

While it is difficult to think that someone would ever intend to harm a child, sadly, we all know that it does happen. We also know that one of the best things we can do as parents, friends, and community partners is to take time to reinforce these important skills.

Included with this letter, you will find Stranger Danger information written in a child-friendly way. We will be reviewing this information with our students, and are hopeful that you and your family will reinforce it at home.

Stranger Danger

Strangers can hurt you. Be aware and be safe.

What should I do if a stranger tries to talk to me?

Ignore them. Do not look at them or acknowledge that they have spoken to you. Walk quickly or run away from them. Go in the opposite direction as fast as you can. Go to a home of someone you know or to an area that has a lot of people. You can dart into a store or school if you have too. Tell an adult you can trust about what happened, like a parent, a teacher, a police officer or some other grownup your parents said you can talk to.

What about when I am at home alone?

Keep all the doors and windows locked and don't let anyone know you are home alone. If someone rings your doorbell, look through a peephole or window to see who it is. If you do not recognize them, don't open the door! Even if they are saying it is an emergency and they need to use the phone or come inside, do not open the door. They can go to another house where an adult is home to assist them. If someone calls and asks for your parents, do not tell them you are home alone. Tell the person your mom or dad can't come to the phone right now but you will take a message and they will call them back in a few minutes. Tell them this even if your parent is gone for an hour or more. If you have call display and do not recognize the name or phone number on the phone, don't answer it. Just let the machine pick up the message or let them call back.

How do strangers trick you?

Strangers who are bad people and want to hurt you have developed some pretty tricky things to do to confuse you and get you alone with them. First there is the

"Help Trick"

This is when a stranger asks you to help them find a lost pet or maybe asks you for directions to get somewhere. Seems harmless enough right? That is what they want you to think. There are adults all over the place that a stranger can ask for help. Turn and walk away.

"Emergency Trick"

This is a scary one for a child to be subjected to. A stranger will tell you that there is an emergency in your family and your mom or dad asked them to get you. The stranger may even say that your mom or dad got hurt. Think straight. Your mom or dad would never send a stranger to tell you news like this. Turn around and run away!

"Accident Trick". This is when a stranger lays on the ground and looks like they have been injured and unconscious or in pain. The desire to help this person is big and kids want to help and be heroes. Do not go over to the person. They can grab you and take you away. Instead, go to someone you know and tell them about the situation or call 911 and they will come to help. You don't need to be near the person while an adult or emergency crew come to assist. Stay away!

"Animal Trick" is another one that is hard to resist. This is when a stranger holds a small animal and invites you to pet it. This is a trick! You are close enough for this stranger to discard the animal and grab you. The stranger might ask you to come back to their car or home and help feed the baby animal. Don't! Turn around and run away.

"Bribe Trick". This is when a stranger promises you candy, money or something else of interest. People do not give gifts to people they do not know. This is a trick. Once the stranger has you alone you are going to be hurt. Turn around and run away.

People who look friendly are not always nice. **Keep safe** with these tips:

1. Always tell your parents where you are going.
2. Try not to walk anywhere alone. Walk with a friend.
3. Don't take shortcuts through the woods, a back street or empty lot.
4. Do not get close to strangers. Make sure you have room to run.
5. Don't tell your name or address to a stranger.
6. Never take candy, money or gifts from a stranger.
7. Never go with a stranger to help look for a lost pet or play a game.
8. Never get into a car with anyone you don't know.
9. If a stranger bothers you, run away and ask an adult for help.
10. Know safe places you can go. Try a police or fire station, the library, a store or a friend's house.
11. If a stranger follows you or grabs for you, yell real loud. Shout, "I don't know you," so people know you are in trouble. Fight back and make as much noise as you can. If they treat to hurt your family, keep yelling. They can't hurt you from jail.
12. If anyone touches you in a bad way, say "NO" as loudly as you can and run away. Tell an adult immediately.
13. Tell your parents about places or people that make you feel unsafe.
14. Talk to your parents and come up with a secret code word for emergencies. Never go with anyone unless they know the secret code word.
15. Know how and when to call **9-1-1**.
16. Never open the door to a stranger.
17. Never tell anyone on the phone you are alone.
18. Do not tell callers your name, phone number or address.
19. If you don't like what someone is saying on the phone, hang up right away.