



# KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE

## WHAT ARE THE EXPERTS SAYING?

Experts who work with missing and exploited children as well as psychologists are now encouraging parents and teachers to steer away from using the phrase "stranger danger".

There are three main reasons for this:

- ❖ Statistically a child is **much** more likely to be harmed by someone known to them- less than 1% of kidnappings are performed by people unknown to the child and less than 14% of child sexual abuse is the act of a stranger.
- ❖ Many children, particularly young children, do not fully understand the concept of a *stranger*.
- ❖ Children may find themselves in a situation where they are lost or in trouble and will need to reach out to a stranger for help. Most 'strangers' are good people.

## SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

Instead, we are now encouraged to talk to children about ways to identify a **SAFE ADULT**. These include those in a job (like a waitress at a café or supermarket employee), in uniform, wearing a name badge, police officer or any other emergency services worker or a parent/carer with children. People with these 'safety markers' are who you would encourage your child to reach out to if they ever found themselves in a situation where their known trusted adults are not around or they are lost.



## SAFETY NETWORK

Identify '**network** people' such as parents or guardians, family members, teachers, and so on, as a support system that your child can use if they need help.

The **network** people should be adults they trust, who will listen and help them.

## EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Teach your child to follow their gut instinct! Early warning signs could be, changes in heartbeat, breathing, and muscle tension - stop, notice the reaction in **your** body, and be curious about why it occurred.

More information for parents and teachers related to keeping kids safe is available through the Daniel Morcombe foundation website:

<https://danielmorcombe.com.au/keeping-kids-safe-resources/>

In addition to being able to identify a **SAFE ADULT** another important conversation is about what to do if your child is approached by someone who is making them uncomfortable or they feel is an unsafe adult.

The police recommend teaching children the following:

- ❖ Make sure your parents or another trusted adult knows where you are at all times.
- ❖ Always walk straight to the place you are expected to be going, and take a route that is busy or there are other people nearby.
- ❖ Know where safe places are.
- ❖ Never get into a car with someone you don't know.
- ❖ Know the markers to safe adults (as explained above).
- ❖ If you are scared and have a phone or access to a phone call 000.
- ❖ If someone tries to grab you, yell out "Go away, I don't know you". This lets other people know you have been approached by someone you don't know.
- ❖ **NO, GO, TELL**

