

**new** neighborhood

# **SAFETY** tips

NATIONAL  
CENTER FOR  
  
**MISSING &  
EXPLOITED**  
CHILDREN

**OJJDP** Office of Juvenile Justice  
and Delinquency Prevention  
Office of State Programs • U.S. Department of Justice



**1**

Make certain that your children know their full name and learn their new address and telephone number as soon as possible. Help your children learn the location of their new school and make a point of visiting the school prior to their first day.

**2**

If your children ride the bus to school, visit the bus stop and learn the bus number. Remind your children to always stay with other children and report any unusual or confusing incidents to you.

**3**

Make a point of meeting your neighbors and introducing them to your children while you are with them. This may provide a good opportunity for your children to meet other children in the neighborhood.

**4**

List emergency telephone numbers by your telephone as soon as possible after you move into your new home. If you have a new pager or cellular telephone number, make certain that your children have these numbers as well. Make certain that there are backup people your children can contact if they need assistance and you are not home.



# new neighbors

5

Take your children on a walking tour of the neighborhood. Help them learn the surrounding streets and main roads by name and landmark. Caution your children about taking shortcuts. Make certain that they always stay on main roads and determine some public places they can go to for assistance if they are ever in trouble or lost. When you get home, make a map with your children of the acceptable routes to school, the playground, store, and any other locations that they are allowed to visit. They should keep this map with them to refer to if they need help finding their way.

6

Once your children have made new friends in the neighborhood, remind them that they must **CHECK FIRST** before they go anywhere with their new friends. This includes accepting rides from new neighbors or going into their homes.

7

Remind your children of the safety rules when they are home alone. These include keeping the doors and windows locked; never opening the door for someone they don't know; and **CHECKING with you FIRST** before they open the door, even if you are there.

8

Caution your children never to give out personal information to someone who calls on the telephone. Instruct your children to tell the caller that you are not available and to take a message.

neighborhood

9

Reassure your children that you are there to help them if they need assistance or just want to talk about this new experience. Let them know that they should **TELL** a trusted adult if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable, afraid, or confused in any way.

10

Remember to practice these safety rules with your children to make certain that they really know and understand them. Make outings around the new neighborhood “teachable moments” and a chance to put their skills to the test.

safety  
tips

# **MOVING** across town or across the country has become a way of life for many families in the United States. As an example, the U.S. Census Bureau stated that approximately 16 percent of the total U.S. population, an estimated 43 million people, moved within the one-year period between March 1997 and March 1998.<sup>1</sup>

Moving to a new neighborhood represents a big change for everyone in the family. It's an exciting time but may also create some stress and confusion for family members, especially children.

Communicating with your children about the new home and neighborhood and reassuring them about the changes are vital. It is also important to pay careful attention to their feelings and allow them to express themselves about all the changes they are experiencing. Some simple rules to reinforce and practice with your children to help ensure a safer and happier new home for them are listed here for you.

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, *Geographic Mobility: March 1997 to March 1998 [U.S. Census Bureau the Official Statistics online] (citing January 2000 Current Population Survey, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, accessed March 10, 2000); available from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2000pubs/p20-520.pdf>; Internet.*

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