

Protect Children from Paedophiles

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Advice and Information for Parents

PROTECT CHILDREN!

Parents who contact KIDSCAPE are worried about the best way to protect children, especially when they are out on their own. This leaflet gives practical advice for keeping children safe and information on how paedophiles (people who sexually abuse children) target children.

WHO ARE PAEDOPHILES?

- Paedophiles may seem perfectly respectable and 'nice'. They are extremely cunning and clever at worming their way into your confidence so that you trust them alone with your children.
- Paedophiles do not necessarily look dirty, weird or creepy or act suspiciously – they often behave like everyone else and look 'normal'.
- Paedophiles come from all classes, professions, racial and religious backgrounds.
- The majority of known paedophiles are male, though some women abuse children.
- 66% of paedophiles are known to the child, 34% are strangers.

WHAT PAEDOPHILES SAY

This information comes from the paedophiles themselves, who told KIDSCAPE how they ensnare children. *

- Paedophiles are good at making friends with children. They offer to teach them games, sports or how to play a musical instrument. They take them on outings, give them gifts, bribes, toys & money or treats and trick children into trusting them.
- Paedophiles often target single-parent families where mothers might be especially grateful for help with looking after the children.
- 48% of the paedophiles found their victims through babysitting.
- 30% of the paedophiles had *each* committed offences against 10 to 450 victims, 70% had between 1 to 10 victims.
- Paedophiles find victims by hanging round places children are likely to go, such as:
 - arcades
 - school premises
 - shopping centres
 - amusement or theme parks
 - playgrounds
 - parks
 - swimming baths
 - fairs
 - fast food chains
- Be suspicious if someone is more interested in your children than in you, someone who always wants to babysit, take your children on outings - someone who wants to get your children alone.

* Two year study of paedophiles sponsored by The Nuffield Foundation

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Check on anyone who is left in charge of your children or wants to spend time alone with them, especially babysitters. Talk (not just write) to other people they have worked for.
- Encourage discussions about personal safety, getting lost, and bullying by playing 'What if?' games with children.
- Practise the KIDSCAPE rule "**Yell, Run, Tell**" with children so they feel confident about using safety strategies.
- Explain to children the difference between "safe" and "unsafe" secrets. A secret about a surprise birthday party is OK, but *no one* should ever ask them to keep kisses or touches secret.
- Buy your children a Travelcard and/or Phonecard so that they can always call you or get home.
- Arrange to have a family codeword. Tell your child that if anyone ever tries to collect them for you, the person will always know the codeword. "**No Code, No Go**".
- When visiting public places (shopping centres, funfairs) always arrange a meeting place with your child in case you get separated ("I will meet you outside Marks & Spencer" or "by the fountain").
- **Most paedophiles are not strangers.** Tell children that if anyone, even *someone they know*, touches them in a confusing or frightening way they should tell you.

TELL YOUR CHILDREN

- To be wary of public toilets and to go in with a friend, if possible. If anyone approaches you, get out fast. (Parents - don't be embarrassed to stand outside the toilet and shout in "Are you all right in there?" - puts paedophiles right off!)
- If someone you don't know speaks to you, pretend you haven't heard and walk quickly away.
- Never take sweets, presents, or lifts from people you don't know.
- Never go up to a car to give directions - keep away so that no one can get hold of you and you can run away.
- If something bad does happen to you, even if you have broken a rule, you should tell me about it and I will help sort things out. (One child was walking in a park when told not to and was molested - she was afraid to tell because she had broken the rule about being in the park).

CHILDREN SHOULD MAKE A FUSS!

- If someone tries to touch or grab you, shout "**NO**", get away as fast as you can and then tell an adult.
- Practise the KIDSCAPE rule: "**Yell, Run, Tell**".
- Remember, if someone frightens you, it is okay to break rules, shout or make a fuss.
- Always run towards shops or places with people.
- If you think that you are being followed, go into a shop or knock on the door of a house - ask for help.
- Break any rule to keep safe. Even break a window to attract attention, if necessary.

PLAY SAFE

- Never play in dark or lonely places, or in empty streets and stairwells.
- Stay with friends or with a group and don't wander off on your own, even if you're playing hide and seek - hide with a friend.
- If you are in a shopping centre, arcade or disco and someone offers you money to do a job or errand, don't do it - it could be a trick.
- Don't walk to and from school on your own - team up with a friend or a group.
- Always tell your parents where you're going and when you'll be back.

GETTING LOST

- Learn your own address, telephone number and postcode.
- If you get lost, go into a shop or a place with lots of people and ask for help, or find a police officer, a security guard, or a traffic warden to ask. If you can't find a shop assistant or a person in a uniform, ask a man or a woman with children to help you.
- Don't go into a house or office, or phonebox with anyone - wait outside while they telephone your parents or the police.
- Don't get into a car or accept a lift from anyone - say you'll wait for your parents or the police to fetch you.

TRAVELLING ALONE

- Travel in a train carriage with other people.
- Carry enough money for your return trip and *never* spend it on anything else.
- Work out what you would do if you missed your train or bus. How would you get home? Is there someone you could call?

TELEPHONES

- Know how to use a public call box and how to contact your parents or whoever takes care of you.
- Know how to make an emergency 'phone call.
- You don't need money to make a reverse charge call (the person at the other end pays the bill).
- Carry a Phonecard so that you can always call home if you get stuck somewhere.

WHAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS?

- Be aware of changes in your child's behaviour which might indicate that something is not right. (See 'Child Abuse: Signs and Symptoms' leaflet).
- If your child doesn't want to be with someone, find out why. Children may say things like, "I don't want you to go out tonight", when they really mean "I don't want to be left with the babysitter".
- Stay calm and try not to transmit anger, shock or embarrassment to your child.
- Ensure that your child knows you believe her/him.
- Tell children it is NEVER their fault if someone abuses them.
- Praise your child for having told you and for 'getting through the ordeal'. Tell them you love them.
- Seek help for the child and yourself.

FREE KIDSCAPE SAFETY GUIDES

Child Abuse: Signs and Symptoms

Good Sense Defence for the Young

Keep Them Safe

Why My Child? advice for parents of children who have been sexually abused

For a free copy of these safety guides or for our free anti-bullying guides and details of our books and schools safety programmes, send a large, stamped, addressed envelope to:

KIDSCAPE, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH. Tel: 0207-730 3300

The KIDSCAPE research study of paedophiles (sponsored by The Nuffield Foundation) is also available, upon request, from the above address.

KIDSCAPE is the only national Charity teaching children about keeping safe *before* they become victims of abuse or bullying. [KIDSCAPE'S MESSAGE IS PREVENTION.](#)

HELP ORGANISATIONS

The following organisations may be able to offer additional help. Please visit our web site, www.kidscape.org.uk, and go to the *Links* section for further details

- Ring the police, social services or child guidance clinics listed in your local directory
- Childline
- Children First
- Children's Legal Centre
- NSPCC
- Samaritans
- Victim Support

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