

Tips For Parents



Most of us know that the Secret Service protects the President of the United States. But what many people don't know is that the Service also provides investigative support for cases involving missing or exploited children. The Crime Bill of 1994 and PROTECT Act of 2003 mandated the Secret Service to provide forensic and investigative assistance in support of any investigation involving missing or exploited children [18 USC 3056(f)]. It is under this mandate that the Secret Service provides these free community outreach programs called "Operation Safe Kids" and "The Childhood Smart Program".

Know the routes your children take, especially to and from school. Practice walking the routes with them so you can point out places they should avoid or where they can go for help.

Talk to your child's school or day care facility about its pickup policy. Be clear that no one should pick up your child without your permission. Ask to be contacted immediately if someone else tries to pick up your child.

Use role-playing scenarios to help children learn how to recognize and respond to risky situations. For example, have children practice yelling, kicking, pulling away or otherwise attracting attention when grabbed or approached by someone they do not know.

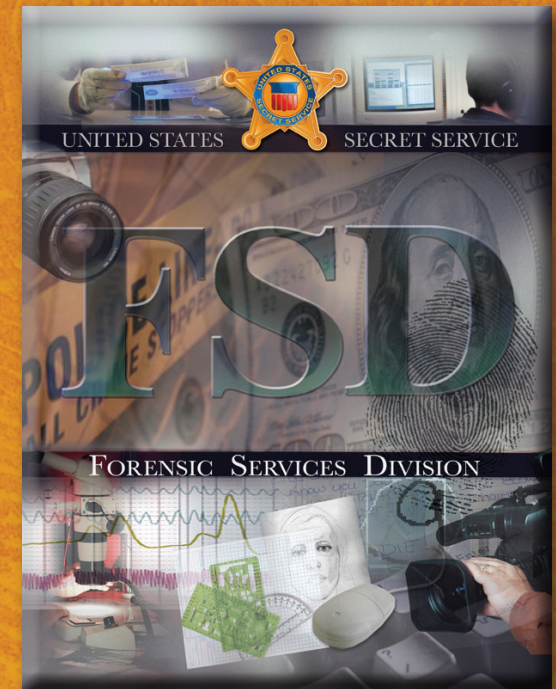
Teach your child about the methods would-be abductors use. Have your child practice responding to the tricks by saying "no," walking away and telling a trusted adult immediately.

Prepare children to act when you are not with them. They should know their full names, home addresses and telephone numbers, and how to dial 911.

Keep a recent photo of your child and descriptive details such as age, height and weight.

United States Secret Service

Child Safety Outreach Programs



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When a child is reported missing to law enforcement, federal law requires that child be entered into the FBI's National Crime Information Center, also known as NCIC. According to the FBI, in 2021 there were 337,195 NCIC entries for missing children. Similarly, in 2020, the total number of missing children entries into NCIC was 365,348. The seriousness of these statistics cannot be taken lightly. Because of this, The United States Secret Service Forensic Services Division established the following child safety outreach programs as a means of bringing safety awareness to the public. Ensuring this safety is a responsibility shared broadly among parents, teachers, Government, and communities.

Operation Safe Kids

Operation Safe Kids is a program that offers "Livescan Child ID" cards that consolidate the child's biographical and biometric data into a single document that parents can provide to law enforcement in the event that a child is reported missing, lost or abducted. The Operation Safe Kids equipment can be brought to various locations and a record would be produced for each child on site that day for parents to keep in a safe place. No information about the children or their families will be recorded or maintained by the U.S. Secret Service or its employees, or shared with any other entity.

Many people are rightfully apprehensive to provide personal information for fear that it will be added to a government database. The Secret Service is prohibited, by law, from collecting or maintaining personal information on any person who is not an applicant, employee or an individual under criminal investigation. The Livescan equipment used to produce the identification will not store a child's personal information. A parental consent is required to be completed and returned in order for a child to participate in the event. Additionally, there is absolutely no requirement for an individual child to participate. The program is provided as a free service to the public; therefore, it is at no cost to those hosting the events or parents. While similar services are often offered by local police departments and private companies for a fee, this program is funded by appropriation from Congress.

The Childhood Smart Program

The Childhood Smart Program was created in partnership with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) to help educate parents and children about online and personal safety. The child safety experts at NCMEC create educational resources for parents and K-12 students. The Secret Service helps to disseminate these resources to schools and communities across the nation. We are proud to partner with NCMEC to bring KidSmartz and NetSmartz presentations to schools and communities nationwide.

NCMEC's KidSmartz program educates families about preventing abduction and empowers children in grades K-5 to practice safer behaviors. The KidSmartz presentation teaches K-5 students about the 4 Rules of Personal Safety. This is an interactive presentation that engages children using age-appropriate demonstrations, quizzes, music and animated videos.

NCMEC's NetSmartz program educates parents and children in grades K-12 about online safety and the responsible use of the internet. Their presentations for younger children, tweens, teens and parents/guardians cover issues like cyberbullying, inappropriate content, privacy and sexting. These presentations engage audiences using discussion, videos and practical tips for staying safer online.

These community outreach programs can be requested by schools, scout troops, church groups, summer camps or any number of private or public entities. If you are interested in learning more about the United States Secret Service Child Safety Outreach programs, contact the Secret Service Forensic Services Division at fsdncmec@uss.s.dhs.gov or your local Secret Service field office.

