Your Employee and Family Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Stay alert and stay safe: streetproofing your kids

What's streetproofing all about? It's about helping your child identify and react to situations that are uncomfortable, unwelcome or even dangerous. It's also about encouraging discussions with your child every day, practicing family guidelines and developing an understanding of what's acceptable and what's not.



As a parent or guardian you can help make personal safety second nature to your child's daily activities. You may not be able to follow your child around everywhere, but you can teach your child to "keep their radar on" and always trust their instincts—they're their best protection.

Here are some additional guidelines you can put in place to help streetproof your child:

Record important info. Have your child memorize important addresses and telephone numbers and go over these on a regular basis. Whether it's your own contact info, or that of a trusted neighbour or relative, children need to know where they can go, and who to call if they find themselves in need of help.

Dial 911. Instil in your child that 911 is the number to call if they feel in danger. Point out local payphones in your area, or along your child's regular route to and from school, and ensure that he or she can confidently use the phone to dial for help.

Avoid personalized attire. Avoid your child's name on T-shirts, lunch boxes, jackets or jewellery in public. A child is likely to respond to anyone who addresses him or her by name.

Turn up the radar. Remind your child to "keep their radar on." Teach your child to watch, listen and trust their instincts. Discuss why it's never silly to be "scared" and that instinct is one of the best ways to spot and avoid danger.

Keep no secrets. Stress the importance of "telling" and make sure your child understands that adults do not keep secrets with children—especially not ones that make a child feel uncomfortable.

Stick to the ground rules. Set rules with your child outlining "approved" and "off-limit" areas for playing. Review these rules each time your child goes out and take time to discuss why it's best for them to avoid isolated parking lots, woods or unpopulated areas.

Check in. Develop a family check-in procedure. Set a firm time for your child to check in either by phone or in person on a daily basis so you will always know where your child is, whom they are with, and when to expect them home.

Know your child's friends. Keep a list of their telephone numbers, where they live and get to know their parents. Teach your child never to enter anyone's home without your permission. Make it a rule for your child to stay in pairs or groups when they're at the park, the mall, the movies or going to a bathroom in a public place.

Set the house rules. Safety rules for the child home alone and those for the street may be slightly different, but apply the same “stranger alert” principal. Sit down and discuss these with your child; write them out together and post them by the door or phone. Include as part of your list those names of “acceptable” or “parent approved” people who can enter the home.

Start a child identity kit. Your local police can assist you in creating your own child identity kit. Kits usually include: an up-to-date color photograph of your child, at least one for each year (more for younger children), your child’s fingerprints, a medical and dental history including your child's blood type, medical problems, scars, broken bones, pulled teeth, braces, glasses, medication, allergies, etc. and any other pertinent information.

Talking to your child about strangers, or potential dangerous situations, can be difficult. You want to provide them with as much information as possible without creating fear or anxiety about the world around them.

© 2026 Morneau Shepell Ltd. Your program may not include all services described on this website, please refer to your benefit material for more information. For immediate assistance, call 1.844.880.9137.