



## ATA OFFERS GENERAL TIPS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS TO HELP KEEP THEIR CHILDREN SAFER

While many parents and guardians feel they are faced with new and unprecedented challenges when trying to keep their children safer in today's fast-paced and increasingly global society, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children offers these common-sense, general safety tips to help parents and guardians put these challenges into perspective. Parents and guardians should choose opportunities or "teachable" moments to reinforce safety skills. If an incident occurs in your community, and your children ask about it, speak frankly but with reassurance. Explain to your children that you want to discuss the safety rules with them, so they will know what to do if they are ever confronted with a difficult situation. Make sure you have "safety nets" in place, so your children know there is always someone who can help them.

1. ***Make sure you know where your children are at all times.*** Know your children's friends and make clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit. Make it a rule for your children to check in with you when they arrive or depart from a particular location and when there is a change in plans. You should also let them know when you're running late or if your plans have changed so they can see the rule is for safety purposes and not being used to "check up" on them.
2. ***Never leave children unattended in an automobile, whether it's running or not.*** Children should never be left unsupervised or allowed to spend time alone or with others in automobiles, as the potential dangers to their safety outweigh any perceived convenience or "fun." Remind children to never hitchhike, approach a car or engage in a conversation with anyone within a car they do not know and trust, or go anywhere with anyone without getting your permission first.
3. ***Be involved in your children's activities.*** As an active participant, you'll have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children. If you are concerned about anyone's behavior, take it up with the sponsoring organization.
4. ***Listen to your children.*** Pay attention if they tell you they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.

Most ATA/WTTU/STF schools offer FREE Child Safety and Abduction Awareness seminars to protect children in their communities. These seminars allow parents and children to learn and practice safety tips, techniques and strategies. Contact your local Songahm Martial Arts school to find out more!

