

For the Parents

Without doubt, you are the first and the most influential teacher in the development of your children. You feed and nurture them along the growth continuum that leads to their entry into their adulthood. You have taught them to walk, to socialize, and to talk, which some educational psychologists say is the single most difficult activity your children encounter before entry into school. Parenting is nerve-wracking, difficult and fulfilling. You have the memories to prove it.

Others have different memories, decidedly more painful ones. Child abduction is an issue that will not go away. Congress passed into law the *Missing Children Act* in 1982. *The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children* was created in 1984. *Amber Alerts* are part of our national lexicon. Abductions continue. Check your local newspapers and you'll see a small article every so often about children disappearing throughout our nation. These, such as Carlie Brucia who have been murdered, and every exploited child who has not been reunited with their family, are tragic examples of what can happen in one moment.

There is no magical formula for protecting children. Before our Stranger Safety Awareness Program was initiated in your school, a letter identifying our program was sent home by your children's teachers. Do you remember the answer to the old, old question, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" Of course you do. You get there by "practice, practice, practice"! That's our request of you:

Please practice the Stranger Safety Awareness skills presented to your children during the simple lessons provided by The Rose Brucia Educational Foundation (also refer back to www.rosebrucia.org for ongoing blogs and updates).

- Ensure your children know who strangers are.
- Practice the correct and safe way to deal with strangers at the door.
- Select a secret word/password for identification of trusted adults or teenagers by your children.
- Instill the proper way of dealing with being lost at the mall or in a big store.
- Go over the proper response to an emergency.
- Model the mirroring technique for maintaining a safe distance from a stranger.

You sit with your children and go over their daily homework assignments. You help them with their long-term projects. In a perfect world, child protection would not be a concern. Regrettably, that concern must be addressed by all of us. The Rose Brucia Educational Foundation asks that your family review the principles of Stranger Safety Awareness long after the lessons have been presented. It is our belief it does make a difference.