

The Parent's Guide To Child Abduction Prevention



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The Parent's Guide To Child Abduction Prevention

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About This Book

I would like to take a moment to thank you for your purchase of this short book. It is my hope that it will provide you with the necessary knowledge to enable you to improve the safety of your children and/or the children in your care.

This book can be viewed on your computer or it can be printed off and read at your convenience. You will notice that I have used numerous colors to enhance the book's appearance, so if you should choose to print it I do recommend that you choose "print in gray-scale" to save on ink.

You will find that there are numerous links embedded throughout the book. They are blue in color and are underlined. These links can be used to visit websites related to the subject or to directly e-mail recommended authors, as long as you are connected to the internet. To activate these links just scroll over them with your mouse and left-click on the link. However, it is strongly suggested that you read the entire book first before browsing the recommended links. This will prevent you from losing your place or getting sidetracked.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding this topic, do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Thank You!

Steve Zorn, ICPS

Table of Contents

Preface.....	6
Steps To Prevent Child Abduction.....	8
Awareness, Avoidance, and Prevention.....	9
Foiling A Child Predator.....	10
Stranger-Danger Fallacies.....	11
Teaching Children To Protect Themselves.....	13
Child Lures	16
Child Grooming.....	18
Child Safety Tips	20
Check First Rule.....	23
Internet Safety.....	24
Physical Escape Strategies For Children.....	25
First Things First! (The 10 Foot Rule).....	27
Run, Shout, & Get Help.....	28
Being Non-Compliant.....	30
Grip, Dip, & Spin.....	32
Demo Videos.....	39
Worst-Case Scenarios.....	39
Child ID Kits.....	44
Continuing Education.....	46
Conclusion.....	48
References.....	49
Ordering Information.....	50
About The Author.....	51

Preface

Child abductions and sexual abuse are an ever-increasing issue. As our communities grow in size so does the number of predators who prey upon innocent children.

Unfortunately, abduction & abuse prevention is often a neglected aspect of a child's education. This can stem from a number of reasons such as - living in a state of denial, overconfidence, lack of educational material, etc. However, it's my hope that this manual will help to change that.

This book is written for parents, educators, and childcare specialists. It is designed to be an instructional guide to assist the reader in teaching children how to avoid abductions, sexual abuse, and other potentially dangerous situations.

While there are hundred of books out there that address this topic, I have found most of them lacking. The majority of available titles emphasize basic safety tips but neglect to teach the reader how to tactfully pass the information on to their children. It's not just enough to know how to keep your children safe. You must also know how to teach your children to keep themselves safe as well.

While there are many other safety related topics that are just as important (internet safety, fire safety, bully prevention, conflict resolution, etc.), the focus of this guide is the specific topic of abduction and sexual abuse prevention. Also, while this book covers various aspects of the subject matter, it is not meant to be all-inclusive. Although, I have attempted to address information that is rarely covered elsewhere.

While the risks of stranger abduction are considerably less than the risks of acquaintance molestation, they both occur more frequently than they should. This fact alone means that parents must be willing to educate themselves on this topic and must also be willing to educate their children. Regardless of how much we would all like to avoid this topic, it is a reality that we are forced to face. We must accept this reality and deal with it head on.

The Parent's Guide To Child Abduction Prevention

This particular topic is similar in context to fire safety education; while it's not something that your children will need very often, you will be glad you took the time to address it if the need should arise.

It is my hope that this instructional guide will be read with an open mind and applied to the lives of children everywhere.

May you, your children and the children in your care...stay safe!

SAFETY POINT:

“Child safety isn't an option, like tennis or piano lessons. It's life or death. Without a certain kind of street smarts, your child is a sitting duck.”

Ric Bentz

SAFETY POINT:

Avoid scare tactics when teaching children how to stay safe...present it just like you would when teaching them to ride a bike, cross the street, or how to swim.

Steps To Prevent Child Abduction

There are 3 basic steps that parents and caregivers must take in order to successfully apply the material presented in this book. These 3 steps are vitally important and must not be overlooked.

Step #1- Eliminate Denial -

In many cases people tend to live in a state of denial. They believe that if they don't think about things like child abduction that it will just go away. However, we know that this just isn't the case. In fact, those who avoid addressing such issues with their children can actually increase the likelihood that their children will become victims. In order to enhance your child's safety you must not deny the fact that there are predators out there who prey upon children. You must also acknowledge that predators don't discriminate...they can target anyone at any time, regardless of age, gender, race, or social status.

Step #2- Accept Responsibility -

As parents and caregivers it's your responsibility to take the necessary steps to keep your children safe. You should never delegate this important responsibility to your children's teachers, grandparents, daycare providers, etc.

Step #3- Take Action -

Once you have eliminated denial and assumed the responsibility for your children's safety it's time to take action. This includes improving your own safety education and then passing that education on to your children. This can be accomplished by attending classes, reading books & articles, or contacting professional instructors to present programs at your child's school.

Awareness, Avoidance, and Prevention

Awareness is one of the most important components to keeping yourself and your children safe. It is the foundation for all other personal safety strategies that you will learn about in this book. By learning how to enhance awareness children can actually avoid and prevent abuse, abductions and other crimes. Essentially they will learn to recognize potentially dangerous situations before they become victims.

So, what is awareness? It is simply the act of paying attention to the world around us. This includes paying attention to people and places. It also includes paying attention to how we feel in a particular situation or around particular individuals.

Intuition is a big part of awareness. This is that feeling we all get deep down in the pit of our stomach when something just doesn't seem right. It isn't some form of psychic phenomenon, it's a natural safety mechanism that is designed to help keep us safe. It's also an important topic in addressing the issue of safety with your children.

Teach children that if they get that feeling in the pit of their stomach, that feeling that something just isn't right, they should acknowledge it. You should give them permission to leave any situation or stay away from any person that makes them feel unsafe.

Explain to children that they need to be alert to their surroundings when out and about. This might include: when out playing, walking to the bus stop, going into a public restroom, hanging out at a friend's house, etc.

They should be taught to look out for anyone demonstrating strange behavior or anyone attempting to use tricks to lure them into unsafe situations.

Improving your child's awareness of potentially dangerous situations and people is one of the most important things you can give them. Teaching them how to stay safe will provide them with a sense of accomplishment and empower them with a sense of independence and confidence.

Foiling A Child Predator

Abductors and abusers want easy targets. They look for children who they believe won't resist. Teaching children how and when to resist will increase the chances of foiling the abductor's plan.

3 things the predator doesn't want -

#1 They Don't Want Resistance -

A predator normally picks a target that they believe won't resist. If the intended victim does resist this increases the likelihood that the predator will get caught. However, the type of resistance used can also determine the level of violence the predator chooses to use.

#2 They Don't Want To Draw Attention To Themselves Or The Situation -

Criminals, especially abductors follow a "quick-in, quick-out" strategy. Essentially they want to get in as quick as possible, grab their target and get out as quick as possible. The longer they stay on the scene the greater the chance that they will get caught and end up in jail, where they belong.

Teaching children to passively resist a potential abductor not only reduces the risk of retaliation, it also slows the abductor down. This drastically increases the opportunity to draw attention to the situation.

#3 They Don't Want To Get Caught -

If a predator gets caught and goes to jail it prevents them from doing what they enjoy the most, committing crimes. Obviously, this is the last thing that they want. However, by teaching children to use non-aggressive resistance (when they can't run, shout, & get help) you can reduce the child's chances of being abducted and increase the predator's chances of being caught red-handed.

Stranger-Danger Fallacies

As a child, how often did your parent's tell you "don't talk to strangers"? As a parent or childcare provider, how often have you told your children not to talk to strangers?

Unfortunately this is a common "safety" strategy taught to children who in turn become parents who in turn pass on this poor advice to their own children. The truth is that this "safety" advice might seem solid on the surface but further inspection tells another story.

What exactly is the definition of a "stranger"? The truth is, most adults can not specifically define the characteristics of a stranger. If adults can't do this, how can children be expected to?

Here are some examples - You tell your children to never talk to strangers yet they watch you interact with the employees at the bank, post office, local department store, etc. They may even observe you giving directions to a person passing by, or watch you stop to help a person whose car has broken down along the side of the road. They might also observe you paying the local pizza delivery driver, for the supper that was just delivered. How often do you think your children have observed you politely smiling, nodding, or waving at others as you pass them in stores or on the street? Do these people not fit the definition of "strangers"?

While you might say this is teaching children to be polite, courteous, and helpful to others, I say it's confusing them as to what a stranger actually is.

Here is another example - what if you teach your children to never talk to strangers, you reinforce the idea almost daily but they still end up being abducted. Now, they are miles from home in an unknown area. While they may find the opportunity to escape, where do they go? What do they do? Obviously everyone in the area will be a "stranger" and since they have been taught to never talk to strangers they may likely avoid seeking out help from the most obvious source, strangers.

Starting to see the picture here?

I define “strangers” as people that we don’t know very well. The truth is that there are good “strangers” and there are bad “strangers”. The fact that we don’t know people or that we don’t know people very well doesn’t automatically make them bad people. In fact, we encounter dozens of good “strangers” on a daily basis, and so do children. So, you ask what does all of this mean? If the stranger-danger concept isn’t valid what can we teach children to help them avoid potentially dangerous situations?I am glad you asked!

SAFETY POINT:

Children shouldn’t be taught to fear “strangers”. Instead they should be taught to be on the look out for strange behavior.

SAFETY POINT:

The first step to keeping your children safe from predators is...the elimination of denial.

Teaching Children To Protect Themselves

First of all, teach your children what a “stranger” is, a person that he or she doesn’t know very well. Explain to them that most strangers are good people and would likely be willing to help them under most circumstances. However, there are some bad “strangers” out there and these are the ones they need to be cautious of. There is no need to scare them, just help them to understand the difference.

Once they understand the difference, they must then be taught how to recognize an actual bad “stranger”. The easiest way to tell the difference is through the observation of behavior.

Tell children not to be worried or scared of “strangers” but to be alert to strange behavior. What is this person doing or saying? How are they acting? Would this person’s behavior be appropriate if you or other adults were present? Describe unusual and inappropriate behaviors to your children. Help them develop a solid understanding of what to look for. Here are some examples of strange behavior -

- Adults approaching children when parents are not around
- Adults asking children for help - finding lost pets, getting directions, etc.
- Adults who do not have children but are hanging out at playgrounds or parks
- Adults attempting to touch or hold children without permission
- Adults who observe or stare at children who are not their own
- Adults acting as though they are afraid someone will see them - erratic eye & head movements, etc.

- **Adults attempting to use any of the common lures to gain the child's trust**
- **Adults who make inappropriate comments toward children**
- **Adults who make the children feel "funny" or "weird"**
- **Adults who like to spend more time with children than people their own age**
- **Older children and teens who demonstrate any of the above behaviors**

Teaching Guidelines

Teaching children to protect themselves isn't easy, but it isn't impossible either. Here are some basic guidelines for teaching children how to protect themselves -

- 1) **Start teaching children at an early age** - generally the best time to start teaching children about safety is between the ages of 2-4. At this stage children are starting to develop a natural sense of appropriate and inappropriate touching, they are developing clear ideas of what they like and don't like, and they can easily recognize and learn to respect their instincts or intuition.
- 2) **Don't use scare tactics** - using methods such as Stranger-Danger can actually increase the child's fear and confusion, thus making the situation worse. Teach your child about safety issues just as you would teach them how to ride a bike, cross the street, or how to swim. Make the lessons fun while being sure to convey the seriousness of the message.
- 3) **Play the "what if" game** - the "what if" game helps the child to develop problem-solving skills and ultimately practical solutions to potential abduction situations. It's as simple as asking "what would you do if you were lost in the grocery store?", "what if someone approached you and asked for help finding a lost puppy?", etc. The "what if" questions can be used in infinite combinations and can cover a variety of safety related issues.

- 4) **Teach the difference between telling and tattling** - if you teach your children that it's not OK to tattle on their siblings for doing something wrong, make sure they understand the difference between tattling and telling. Teach them it's OK to tell someone if an adult or older child demonstrates any of the strange behaviors previously mentioned.
- 5) **Teach children not to stereotype** - help your children understand that predators can't be recognized by appearance alone. A dirty or unshaven person may not necessarily be a bad person. In fact, the majority of child predators are average looking people that go unnoticed until they are actually apprehended.
- 6) **Teach children self-responsibility** - teach children that there may be times when they will have to be responsible for themselves. For example, children playing outside away from you, or leaving older children at home alone. In such cases, children need to be encouraged to do what is necessary to remain safe.
- 7) **Teach your children general safety rules** - provide basic safety rules to all of your children. Make sure they know and understand them.

SAFETY POINT:

The "what if" game is one of the simplest yet most effective exercises you can do with your children.

Child Lures

Child predators will often use a number of tricks or ploys to victimize children. These tricks are more appropriately referred to as “lures”. Just as fishermen use lures to catch fish, predators use lures to abduct and/or abuse children.

Here is a list of the 18 most common lures that have been used against unsuspecting children. As your child's safety educator you can use these during the "what if" game to help educate them on how best to avoid these types of tricks.

- 1) **Affection Lure** – Just as the name implies the predator will offer affection or “love” to a child that is easily susceptible and is in need of attention. Children who are not provided the necessary attention from parents and family members are the most susceptible. The easiest solution is to make sure to let you children know that they are loved and to provide them with attention on a daily basis.
- 2) **Pet Lure** – This is one of the most successful lures used by child predators. The concept is simple. The offender will use the child’s attraction of animals to catch the them off guard. Most children love animals, which can be used against them.
- 3) **Assistance Lure** – Offering to help or assist the child or asking the child for help in an effort to get physically and psychologically close to the child.
- 4) **Authority Lure** – Using the power of authority to gain control of the child. A common one is for the predator to portray a police or security officer.
- 5) **Bribery Lure** – Offering toys, candy, or gifts to gain the child’s trust so they can be deceived.

- 6) **Ego / Fame Lure** – Playing on the needs of children who desire ego boosts or even fame.
- 7) **Emergency Lure** – Deceiving children by claims of a family emergency, etc.
- 8) **Fun & Games Lure** – Offering games and other enjoyable activities to gain a child's interest.
- 9) **Hero Lure** – Using a child's admiration to gain their trust.
- 10) **Job Lure** – Offering the child small jobs to gain their trust.
- 11) **Name Recognition Lure** – Using the child's name to make the child believe they know them or their family. This is why it's important to avoid putting a child's name on his or her clothing.
- 12) **Playmate / Companion Lure** – Using other children to help in abuse or abduction.
- 13) **Threats & Weapons Lure** – Using physical threats toward the child or the child's family to get the desired response.
- 14) **Pornography Lure** – Using pornographic material to gain a child's interest and trust. Children are vulnerable to this lure due to their natural curiosity.
- 15) **Computer / Online Lure** – Using the child's lack of computer knowledge to deceive them.
- 16) **Drugs Lure** – Offering abusive substances to gain control of the child and to gain their trust.
- 17) **Hate & Violence Lure** – Using a child's curiosity and negative feelings to gain their trust and their loyalty.
- 18) **Favor Lure** – Asking a child to do a favor in an effort to gain the child's trust.

Child Grooming

“Grooming” is the act of manipulating children in order to obtain certain results. However, predators are very fond of “grooming” parents as well.

Predators want access to children and they know that the easiest way to accomplish this is to gain the parent's trust. They want the parents to feel comfortable when leaving children in their care. They will generally go out of their way to make parents believe that they are something they are not.

Child “grooming” is a similar process but generally easier for predators due to the trusting nature of children. The idea is to get children to trust them enough that they won't tell anyone about the abuse they have been forced to endure. This is usually accomplished over a period of time so that it doesn't draw suspicion. However, if parents know what to look for they can learn to spot the grooming process and take steps to protect their children before they become victims.

In order to understand the grooming process it's important to note that the majority of sexual abuse cases are not random incidents. According to statistics, upwards to 85% of all children who have been sexually abused knew their abuser, and in close to 50% of those cases a family member was the perpetrator.

The following information can help you learn to recognize and deal with the grooming process-

1) Basics of Grooming -

- Used to gain the child's and parent's trust
- Uses lures and threats to manipulate the child
- Progressively exposes child to sexual contact

2) Warning Signs of Grooming -

- Individual spends excessive amount of time with your child
- A person who fails to respect personal boundaries
- Someone who doesn't take NO for an answer

- A person who is overly friendly and overly helpful
- Someone who continues physical contact with children, after being asked to stop. (tickling, horseplay, etc.)
- A child who acts uncomfortable around such a person

3) How To Respond To Grooming -

- Watch for signs or behaviors
- Listen to your intuition
- Encourage your child to talk about the person or the situation in question
- Listen for statements, comments, or questions that support your suspicions
- Take assertive steps to end contact between the person and your child if you have reason to believe there is ill intent

4) Preventative Steps -

- Implement all of the safety strategies included in this manual
- Teach your children to be assertive, to stand up for themselves and their rights
- Help children learn to acknowledge and trust their intuition, that 'gut feeling' that can help keep them safe
- Let them know it's OK to say NO to anyone that makes them feel uncomfortable
- Talk with children regularly about safety and empower them with the knowledge they need to stay safe
- Let them know that you love them and will support them when they come to you about these issues

SAFETY POINT:

One of the best ways to empower children to stay safe is to just show them that you love them on a daily basis.

Child Safety Tips

Young Children Should...

- Never be left unattended.
- Never be forced to be affectionate to family members.
- Be taught to check first before taking anything (gifts) from anyone.
- Not invite anyone into the house without the permission of a parent or babysitter.
- Not go into people's houses without letting anyone know where they are.
- Be taught to check first before going anywhere with anyone.
- Never play in deserted buildings or isolated areas.
- Scream and yell "fire" if they are forced toward a building or car.
- Be taught it's OK to talk to parents about any issues they feel uncomfortable about.
- Be taught to trust their instincts regarding uncomfortable situations, people, etc.
- Be taught that it's all right to say "no" to anyone who wants them to do something you've taught them is wrong.
- Know that no one has the right to touch any part of their bodies that a bathing suit would cover.
- Tell school authorities or a police officer about anyone who exposes private parts.

The Parent's Guide To Child Abduction Prevention

- Tell parents if someone talks to them about sex or love.
- Go to the nearest female cashier if lost or separated from parents in a store or mall.
- Know their full name, their parent's name, their address, and their phone number.
- Know how to use the telephone and how to dial "911" in an emergency.
- Never wear clothing or other items with their name exposed.
- Be taught the difference between "tattling" and telling on someone.
- Be taught about lures used by abductors & molesters.
- Be taught to be aware of strange "behavior", rather than just strangers.
- Be taught a code-word that only you and close family members know.
- Play in groups, rather than alone.
- Be taught about safe places in their neighborhoods (police stations, fire departments, etc.).
- Be taught Grip, Dip & Spin or other similar anti-abduction skills.

Older Children & Teens Should...

- Be taught the previous safety tips.
- Tell parents where they are at all times or leave a written or recorded message at home.
- Never hitchhike.

The Parent's Guide To Child Abduction Prevention

- Never say they are alone if they answer the phone: They can offer to take a message or say their parents will phone back.
- Avoid shortcuts through empty parks, parking lots, fields, or alleys.
- Never open the door to someone they don't know.
- Learn to recognize suspicious behavior and remember a description of the person or vehicle to give to parents or the police.
- If attacked for money, jewelry or clothing; give it up rather than risking injury.
- Phone home periodically to check in with parents.
- Be taught not to stereotype, abductors can look like anyone and don't always look like bad people.
- Tell parents who their friends are and where their friends live.
- Travel in groups, there is safety in numbers!
- Never give their personal information to anyone they don't know.
- Be taught Grip, Dip & Spin or other similar anti-abduction skills.

SAFETY POINT:

"The best forms of self-defense are those with little or no risk to the child intended to be the victim. Physical self-defense always involves the risk that the response might miss it's mark, offer no effective protection and even enrage the attacker."

Grace Hechinger

Check First Rule

The “Check-First” Rule is a simple preventative step that children can use to avoid the various lures / tricks used by child predators. This simple safety rule will drastically improve your child’s safety.

The rule is pretty simple. Tell your children that they must “check first before going anywhere with anyone”. This means that they must come to you (or another trusted adult such as a teacher, grandparent, etc.) to ask for permission to leave with others, regardless of who that might be. This will instantly neutralize the majority of the common lures used by child predators.

The rule can also be modified to cover some of the other lures by changing it to “check first before taking anything from anyone”. This would be applicable to everything from accepting ice cream from someone they don't know very well to taking a toy from a friend at school.

Teach this rule to your children and have them repeat it daily.

Charley Check-First says:

“Check first before going anywhere with anyone!”



Learn more about Charley Check-First at www.safetykids.org

Internet Safety

While it's true that an abductor can't literally come through your child's computer and take them away, the internet does pose a potential risk to children who are unaware of the dangers.

Child predators often use internet chat rooms, message boards, and even e-mail to target their potential victims.

However, this doesn't mean that you should just take away your child's access to the internet. What it does mean is that you should implement some basic safety policies regarding the use of the internet and follow basic safety tips to make sure your child stays safe.

Internet Safety Tips:

#1- If they see something that makes them feel uncomfortable while online they should immediately tell you or another trusted adult.

#2- Children should never give out personal information over the internet, regardless of how well they think they know the person.

#3- They should avoid entering chat rooms or message boards without your knowledge or permission.

#4- They should tell you immediately if they are solicited through e-mail or while in a chat room / message board, or if anyone online makes them feel uncomfortable.

#5- You should provide your children with rules for internet use and make sure they follow them.

#6- Make sure kids use kid-friendly search engines or search engines that allow parental controls.

#7- Keep computers in open areas of the house such as the living room.

Physical Escape Strategies For Children

There are many martial arts schools out there that teach various self-defense techniques to children. While the majority of such techniques might successfully work against someone comparable to the children in size, they rarely work against a potential abductor.

Statistically, children are often abducted by adult males who are both larger and stronger than their chosen victims. This fact alone means that the punching, kicking, and grab releases taught in the various martial arts schools will be next to useless against such a predator. If we take a moment to consider that size and strength are determining factors in all aspects of sport, especially boxing and wrestling, we quickly realize that teaching children to strike and kick is both inappropriate and ineffective.

The abduction prevention skills taught to children must be specific to their needs and must not rely on size, strength, or athletic ability in order to be used successfully. Such skills must also be simple, direct, easy to learn, easy to retain, and easy to apply under the stress of a real abduction attempt. Finally, the skills must increase the child's ability to avoid abduction without potentially escalating the risks of danger.

On the following pages you will find descriptions of skills that fit the above criteria. These skills have been pressure-tested in the real world. They have been successfully used by both children and adult women to avoid potentially dangerous abduction attempts.

I first learned of these skills from a child safety expert by the name of John Hall. John interviewed women and children who were lucky enough to escape their abductors. What John found, was that the abduction attempts were foiled by simple instinctive movements, not fancy martial arts techniques. The information obtained from the interviews and research was used to create a simple but effective program that John calls...Kid Escape!. I am one of a number of instructors spreading the life-saving information offered through the Kid Escape! program.

Please review the reference section of this booklet for additional information on John Hall and Kid Escape!.

Please note that the skill pictures and descriptions that follow are not meant to replace a hands-on course under a qualified instructor. It is highly recommended that the reader attend a Kid Escape! course with myself or with John Hall directly. This book and it's contents should be used only as a review of a hands-on course.

The skills are outlined in a step by step progression. The reader should attempt to follow and review the skills in the order outlined to ensure that the children learn the material in a logical and efficient manner. This will also ensure proper retention of the material.

SAFETY POINT:

*When they can:
Children should Run, Shout, & Get Help!*

SAFETY POINT:

*Children should develop the habit of staying
6-10 feet away from people that make them
feel uncomfortable or those they don't know
very well.*

First Things First! (The 10 Foot Rule)

The first thing that children need to learn is how to stay a safe distance from potential abductors.

The general rule is that children should stay 6 -10 feet away from people they don't know well or people demonstrating strange behavior. The reasoning behind this is relatively simple, the further away from the abductor the child is the greater their chances of successfully running away. In order for this to work the child must be paying attention to the world immediately around them. They must keep an eye out for strange behavior and be prepared to act if they feel threatened in any way.

To practice the "10 Foot Rule" take the child outside where there is plenty of room to move around. Position yourself approximately 10 feet from them so they have an idea of what 10 feet looks like. Tell the child that they need to make sure they stay far enough away from you regardless of how you attempt to approach them. Now try to get close to the child while they attempt to stay at least 10 feet from you.

Start off slowly moving toward the child in a straight line which will give them time to move backwards or sideways away from you. As the child becomes comfortable with the exercise and is able to maintain the 10 foot distance, progressively start to move at them faster and in unpredictable ways. However, remember that the key to this exercise is to progressively increase the speed at which you approach the child so that you are actually training them to be successful. **Never train a child to fail!**

SAFETY POINT:

Children should be taught to shout "Fire!" rather than "help" in order to successfully draw attention to a situation.

Run, Shout, & Get Help

The next skill children must learn is how to run away. While most children know how to run, few know how to run from an abductor intent on carrying them away.

Teach the child that they should always attempt to run, shout, and get help when faced with a potentially dangerous situation. The children should run diagonally away from the predator while maintaining visual contact. In other words, they need to keep watching the predator as they run away. This allows them to see if the potential abductor is still chasing them and it provides the child with more options.

If they were to turn their backs completely toward the predator in order to run away, they would lose visual contact. This would increase the chances that the abductor would catch them and it places them in a vulnerable position from which they are less likely to defend themselves.

As the child runs away, they will need to do everything they can to attract attention to the situation. While running away is the best option, there is a chance that it will fail. In such a case, drawing attention may bring much-needed assistance.

So, how does the child draw attention? It's actually pretty simple.

Teach the child to yell and scream at the top of their lungs. However, haphazard screaming may not be enough. Teach them to yell "Fire!, Fire!", "this is not my parent", or a combination of the two. While children may feel the urge to yell "help", it must be made clear that this is less likely to draw attention to the situation. Unfortunately, we live in a society where people try to avoid being drawn into trouble. In such cases, cries for "help" will likely be ignored. On the other hand, because of our natural curious nature, people tend to flock to situations involving fire. Therefore, yelling "Fire!" greatly increases the chances of drawing attention. Have the child practice running away as described, while yelling "Fire" as loudly as possible. It might be a good idea to perform these practice sessions in an area where it's less likely to alarm others.

To recap...children should be taught to run, shout, & get help whenever they feel threatened or find themselves in a potentially dangerous situation. When running away, they should continue to keep their eyes on the person while being careful not to trip or fall down. As they run they should loudly and repeatedly yell "Fire!" in order to draw attention to the situation. Last but not least, they should attempt to get help. But, where exactly should they go for help? Should they go to a police officer or a security guard? Should it be a man or a woman?

Essentially, the answer to those questions depends on where the child happens to be at that moment in time. For example, if a child should become separated from you while in a shopping mall, it's a good idea to have them stay in the same general vicinity and seek the help of a female employee. Why a female employee? Simple...statistically females are less likely to be child predators.

Where should a child go within their own neighborhood? Again, this all depends. If for some reason your child needed to find a safe place to go and you weren't home, they should have designated neighbors that they can go to for assistance. These neighbors should be people you can trust and they should be notified in advance that they have been chosen as a possible safe-place for your child.

Your children should also be familiar with the locations of the local police and fire departments. Both are locations your children could go to for assistance in the case of an attempted abduction or other emergency.

Whenever, you travel with your children you should talk with them about possible safe areas in and around the places you intend to visit. Help them understand what to look for and where to go if they should find themselves in a dangerous situation or if they should get separated from you.

Possible Safe-Havens

- Police Department
- Fire Department
- Court House
- Highly Congested Areas
- Neighbors
- Schools

Being Non-Compliant

While running away and getting help should always be the primary option for abduction situations, there may be times when this fails. The child may also find themselves in a situation that doesn't provide the opportunity for running away, such as being cornered. Under such circumstances, the child's next best option is to become completely non-compliant. In other words, they will do everything in their power to avoid being carried away. It's important to note that when children can't run, shout, and get help that they must avoid going to a secondary location with anyone. Statistically, it's safer for the child to protect themselves at the first location rather than to allow anyone to take them to a secondary, more secluded location.

This is easily accomplished by applying a simple skill-set called **Grip, Dip, and Spin**. This series of moves starts off with the child wrapping their arms around the upper thigh of the potential abductor (Grip). The child will then drop to the ground in an attempt to sit on the ground (Dip). As the child sits they will simultaneously wrap their legs around the leg of the potential abductor. Then as the abductor attempts to walk or pull the child free, the child will move around chaotically while maintaining their grip on the leg (Spin).

If the abductor is still able to walk, the child will then reach over and grab the abductor's opposite leg with the hands while they keep their feet securely wrapped around the first leg. This will greatly reduce the abductor's mobility which will take up time, draw attention, and prevent the abductor from carrying the child off.



Why No Karate?

You might be wondering why I don't advocate teaching children those cool kicks, punches, and karate chops often taught in martial arts classes..... good question!

Karate and other forms of martial arts are designed to teach children many things, but realistic self-defense is not one of them. In most cases children will not have the strength, speed or accuracy to effectively fight back against their abductors.

While it is true that such tactics have worked in some situations, statistically fighting back will just make the abductor angry and increase the likelihood that the child will be hurt at the first location prior to being abducted.

Teaching children to be non-compliant is a safer and more effective means of avoiding abduction. In such a case the abductor will just assume the child is scared, which will reduce the chances that they will retaliate with violence.

SAFETY POINT:

Remember... the first option should always be to Run, Shout, & Get Help but when running away isn't possible, children should: Grip, Dip, & Spin to stay!

Grip, Dip, & Spin

Now that you have a basic understanding of what Grip, Dip, & Spin entails, let's break the skill-set down into a simple progression.

Step #1 = GRIP

Grab your child by the arm and prompt them to reach out and grip your upper thigh with both hands.



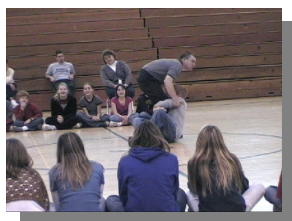
Step #2 = DIP

As your child grips your thigh have them lower their bottom toward the ground, actually sitting on the ground or even on your foot, if possible.



Step #3 = SPIN

As your child sits on the ground teach them to automatically wrap their legs around your ankle and hug your leg as tightly as possible. The spin part actually comes into play as you start to move around or attempt to pull them off of your leg.

**Step #3A – Transition Hands To Other Leg**

As you attempt to walk have your child simply reach over and grab your opposite leg while still keeping their feet securely wrapped around the first leg. Now they have restricted your mobility by wrapping themselves up in both of your legs. Make sure they are holding on as tight as possible.



Step #3B – Maintain Grip On Leg

Now attempt to pull your child free from your leg. Each time you pull one of their arms free make sure they immediately re-grab the leg in some fashion. Each time you pull a leg free, they need to immediately wrap it back around your leg in some fashion. Tell them to imagine that they are a monkey in a tree and they must maintain their grip to avoid falling from the tree.



This basic progression is outlined for the sake of being able to learn the steps. Obviously, if a child is in danger of being abducted and they can't run, shout and get help, they should just focus on dropping to the ground and wrapping themselves up in the predator's legs. They should not worry about doing each of the movements in a step-by-step fashion as I have outlined here.

Advanced Grip, Dip, & Spin

You might be asking yourself, “This works great if my child is just grabbed by the arm but what happens if they are grabbed in some other fashion or if they are picked up off the ground?”

That's a perfectly good question and the answer is actually pretty simple. The concept behind Grip, Dip, & Spin is more important than the actual skills that are used. In other words, the most important thing is for the child to use any means possible to slow the abduction and draw attention to the situation, all without escalating it to violence...if possible.

The actual skills can be used in numerous situations and against various types of grabs, with some modifications.

Grabbed by the arm, shirt, hair, etc.-

It doesn't matter if the child is grabbed by the arm, the hair, or the shirt they can still apply the previously learned skills as described. They just drop to the ground and wrap themselves up in the predator's legs. If the child is grabbed in some other fashion they may have to do something a little different in order to use the skills, the basic idea remains the same.

Grabbed from behind-

For example, if the child is grabbed from behind they just need to figure out a way to drop to the ground where they can apply the standard Grip, Dip, & Spin skills. Generally this requires that they lean forward, reach for the abductor's pant leg with their hands, wiggle violently, and pull themselves toward the ground. Once they get to the ground they resort to the basic skills, assuming that they can't just get up and run away.

Grabbed From Behind



If they are picked up and thrown over the abductor's shoulder, the concept is still the same. This time they will reach down and grab the abductor's belt or belt loops for leverage. They will wiggle and kick violently, while they pull themselves down the abductor's backside in order to reach the ground. From there they can look to escape or use their basic skills.

While these variations are not that difficult to figure out I do recommend that you either purchase the Kid Escape! video or attend a Kid Escape! presentation to learn the subtle details necessary to make these variations most effective. (see "**References**" for information on ordering the video)

Even if your child is prepared for the various ways a person may attempt to grab them, it's still possible that they may be caught off guard or grabbed in such a way that they are immediately unable to break free. If that happens to be the case, there are still available options using the concept of Grip, Dip, and Spin.

While your child may not be able to “Grip” the predator's legs, they may still be able to reach out and “Grip” nearby objects such as lamp posts, car doors, small trees, fences, or anything else that may help to slow the predator down. Other options include using their feet to prevent being placed inside a vehicle by kicking the door shut or pushing off the door, seats, etc. Another possible option for a child that happens to be grabbed while riding a bicycle is to actually Grip onto the bike making it difficult for the predator to move them or put them inside a vehicle. Again, the actual skills are not what's important; the goal of slowing the predator down and drawing attention to the situation is what counts.

Take some time to practice these simple skills with your child. Grab them in various ways and give them an opportunity to use the skills in different types of situations and against varying types of resistance. The more you practice with them the easier the skills will become and the child will be less likely to freeze under the stress of a real abduction situation.

Extreme Options

As mentioned, the idea is to use non-compliance to reduce the chances that the abductor will become violent. However, if the situation escalates to violence your child must be prepared to use more extreme options to escape. These options include- biting and eye gouging. If your child is left with no other choice, let them know that it's OK to use these techniques in order to escape a dangerous situation.

Biting can be used on the legs during Grip, Dip, & Spin. It can also be used on the hands as well as on or around the face should the abductor attempt to pick them up. Eye gouging can be used anytime the child is near the face. It is especially valuable if the child gets trapped inside a vehicle with a predator. However, due to the seriousness of these techniques you must stress that they never be used on family, friends, or used during play.

You might think that it's irresponsible to teach children to bite and eye gouge but if their lives are in danger they must have every option of escape available to them. However, if your child is too young to understand when and where these techniques should be used or if they

aren't quite up to the responsibility then it might be a good idea to wait until they get a little older before addressing these options.

****Important Points****

Remember... I said that running away should always be the child's first option. Grip, Dip, & Spin is the next best option when running away isn't possible. But the child should always continue to look for the opportunity to escape. In other words, they should not just continue to Grip, Dip, & Spin if they are provided a chance to run away.

During the application of Grip, Dip, & Spin the abductor may become frustrated because they are unable to accomplish their goal or afraid that they may get caught. In such a case they may just change their mind and attempt to push the child away so that they can retreat. That particular moment would be a perfect opportunity for the child to attempt an escape.

If the child securely grips both of the abductor's legs it's possible that abductor will lose his balance and fall to the ground. If that happens this provides the perfect opportunity for the child to attempt an escape.

In either case it's likely that the abductor will be so focused on his own safety (possibly getting caught) that he will forget about the child.

Also, the child must remember to continue to shout and do everything in their power to draw attention to the situation.

SAFETY POINT:

Remember..the first goal is to escape, so children should continue to focus on that goal. Grip, Dip, & Spin is only a tool to delay the abduction long enough to draw attention or escape.

Worst-Case Scenarios

Children should be taught to run, shout, & get help when they can. When they can't run away for whatever reason, they should Grip, Dip, & Spin to stay. However even when your children are properly educated to deal with potential abduction situations there is still a possibility that they could be caught off guard or physically overwhelmed and end up inside the predator's vehicle or trapped inside a house. For such situations, children should be taught simple tactics and techniques to aid in their escape.

1) Escape from a Vehicle -

If your child is pulled into a vehicle they should be taught to respond as quickly as possible. The longer they are kept inside the vehicle, the further from safety they will be.

The first option is to attempt an escape before the abductor gets the chance to start the vehicle or to drive away. To accomplish this the child will do the opposite of what the abductor expects. Instead of immediately trying to open the door and get out, the child should first crawl into the abductor's lap in an attempt to block the abductor's vision and ultimately prevent them from driving away. During this process, the child will block the driver's access to the steering wheel, the gear shift and even the ignition switch.

The child can do a number of other things that include honking the horn, grabbing the car keys from the ignition, violently pulling the gear shift, flashing the headlights, etc. Generally, the abductor will immediately become flustered and attempt to push the child out of the way. At that moment the child will most likely get a clear path to the door. They should be taught to take advantage of the opportunity and make their escape by either opening the door and getting out or climbing out an open window.

Children should be taught how to operate a variety of door locks to include power locks and standard locks found in older vehicles. They

should also know how to operate various styles of window controls. Knowing how to use lock and window controls will give any child an advantage in potential abduction situations.

You should also teach your children how to jam an ignition switch by stuffing paper, buttons, or some other type of item directly into the switch opening. This can prevent the abductor from putting the key into the ignition. Although, this isn't something a child can likely do right in front of the abductor, it would be reserved for a time when the child is left alone inside the vehicle for any length of time.

Another strategy that a child can attempt, especially if they are left unattended inside the vehicle, is to reach up under the steering-side dash and pull out as many wires as they can find. By doing this it is possible to pull out the ignition switch wires, preventing the abductor from starting the vehicle.

If the child should find themselves inside a moving vehicle, it may be difficult for them to actually get out and run away. However, they still have options. One such option is for the child to attempt to get the attention of other nearby cars or pedestrians. They can also throw clothing and various items out of the windows in an effort to draw attention.

One of the worst-case scenarios is for the child to get locked inside the trunk of the vehicle. The key is to teach the child to keep actively looking for ways to escape and to never give up trying.

If they should find themselves inside the trunk, teach them to first look for a trunk-release which is pretty common in newer vehicles. Show them where the trunk-release will most likely be found and how to activate it. If they can't find a trunk-release tell them to feel around the trunk for something that can be used to pry at the lock, like a tire iron or something similar. Should those options fail, explain how some older vehicles have the break light wires exposed and tell them to attempt to pull these wires free from the lights. If the break lights are nonfunctional it will increase the chances of the car being pulled over by the police.

The final option may be for the child to wait for the abductor to open the trunk so that they can seek an opportunity to escape.

While there are no guarantees that these tactics will work, statistically having such options is better than having no options at. Obviously, the best solution is for the child to avoid getting into the vehicle in the first place by running away or using Grip, Dip, & Spin skills to stay.

2) Escape from a House -

If a child should find themselves locked inside a house or apartment there are quite a few options available to aid in their escape.

The first is the most obvious, teach them to attempt to use the door to escape. This means they must know how to work various types of locks and how to use chairs or other items to assist in their ability to actually reach the locks.

The next obvious solution is to teach your child to attempt to use the phone to call for help. To be successful they must know how to call 911. They should also be taught that it's extremely important for them to keep the line open, even if it means hiding the phone. Teach them to leave clothes or other evidence of their presence near the phone. This will let police officers know that a child is in the house, when they arrive to investigate the call.

Another option is to use a window for escape. However, this obviously will be based on several factors to include the height the window is from the ground, whether or not there is a fire escape, etc. Although, windows can aid in other ways of escape as well. For example, the child can stand at the window and attempt to attract the attention of pedestrians, cars, or even neighbors. They can throw items out the window, in hopes of attracting attention. If they are lucky enough to find a flashlight, they can flash it out the window, which may draw attention as well. Also, the overhead light can be used in a similar manner. Teach your child if it's all they have available, they can turn the light-switch on and off repeatedly.

Other options include, writing "call police-need help!" on trash and hoping someone from waste management sees it or even throwing the trash out the window. In short, anything that your child can think of to draw attention to the situation may be helpful.

3) Escape in Public -

Even if a child is grabbed in a public place there are still no guarantees that they will escape successfully. The biggest issue is the fact that most people do not know how to recognize an abduction situation. Unfortunately, even if people do spot a suspicious situation they may not act on that suspicion for fear of being wrong. This is why it's so important to do all that you can to prepare your children in advance for such an occasion.

Obviously the first thing that children should be taught is to run away. However, if that doesn't go as planned they should immediately Grip, Dip, & Spin. This will draw attention and slow the potential abductor down.

During the Grip, Dip, & Spin process they should also be screaming "Fire!" as loudly as possible. They can also add "this is not my parent, call police!". If this isn't enough there are other options the child can resort to.

If there are other people in the immediate vicinity, teach your child to reach out and grab them by the legs. Again, as they do so make sure they continue to scream and draw as much attention as possible. If they happen to be in a store, tell them it's OK to knock items off shelves and to actually break things in order to get help. This includes throwing items through store windows if the need should arise.

Here is another option that is applicable in stores, malls, and other public places. Teach your child it's OK to pull fire-alarms during a potential abduction situation. This will draw crowds, police, firefighters and possibly local media.

As mentioned previously, teach your child to get help from nearby females whenever possible. Females are less likely to be child predators and are more likely to help a child in need.

Simply put, children should be taught to draw as much attention to these situations as possible. The more attention they draw, the

greater their chances of escape and the greater the chances that the predator will get caught.

4) Hiding Places -

As previously mentioned, the best way for a child to successfully escape is to delay the abduction and draw attention to the situation. This means doing whatever it takes to stay out in the open where people are most likely to see the situation taking place. However, a worst-case scenario may place the child in a situation where there is no immediate help nearby. In such a case, the child may have to resort to more conventional tactics like hiding.

The key to using hiding as an escape tactic is making sure the child knows good hiding place from not-so-good places. Generally put, the best hiding places are those that provide adequate concealment while still providing clear escape routes. In others, children should avoid those places where they can easily be cornered by the predator. Although, such places can still be used effectively they should only be used when all other hiding options have been exhausted.

Good Hiding Places

Bushes, cars, buses, under a bench, under a vehicle, back of truck, behind sales counter, under tables, behind trees, in a mall or department store, full-grown corn field, highly congested areas, first floor rooms with multiple windows, etc.

Not-So-Good Hiding Places

Trash cans, public restrooms, under kitchen sink, behind large appliances, in a stack of laundry, stack of tires, dumpsters, closets, rooms with no windows, etc.

Child ID Kits

I am sure you are familiar with child ID kits. In fact, you might already have one prepared for your child, just in case.

Child identification kits are becoming increasingly popular. They are usually offered at community safety events as well as promoted by local law enforcement officers. They are also sold over the internet. Due to advanced technology, these kits can be offered in other formats such as computer CD's and portable flashdrives.

Child ID Kits are used to collect important information about your child, such as height, weight, eye color, hair color, fingerprints, etc. If your child should become lost or abducted, the collected information is passed on to law enforcement personnel and local media. This greatly increases the speed at which searchers can do their jobs.

The contents of ID kits vary from distributor to distributor, but they all include some of the same basic elements such as: finger print collection forms, photo forms, and a DNA collection kit.

While these ID kits are vitally important, one fact remains...these kits do absolutely nothing to reduce the cases of child abduction and abuse. They are designed as a last-ditch tool for those worst-case scenarios. They are in fact useless, unless your child is missing.

The issue I have with the makers and distributors of child ID kits is that they tend to promote these kits over the much needed safety education programs. The implementation of an effective educational safety program can greatly reduce the need for child ID kits. As the old saying goes "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure".

Don't get me wrong, I believe that child ID kits are an important component of a comprehensive child safety plan. However, there needs to be more emphasis on education so that these kits will never be needed.

That being said, I recommend that you get and use a Child ID Kit in conjunction with the material presented here. A kit should be completed for each child and it should include the child's fingerprints, DNA, current pictures, and general information about the child. These should be kept in a safe place and updated at least every 6 months. However, these kits should never take the place of a proper safety education program.

SAFETY POINT:

One of the most common lures used to successfully abduct children is the “pet lure”.

SAFETY POINT:

*Fighting Back = Potential Retaliation
Non-Compliance = Safer Means Of Escape*

Continuing Education

As a parent and childcare provider it's up to you to keep your children safe. You shouldn't rely on teachers, grandparents, or others to make sure that your children receive the safety education that they deserve. While keeping this in mind, it's important that you learn as much as you can about the subject. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. However, here are a few ideas to point you in the right direction:

Educational Seminars-

Attend seminars specifically on the topic of child safety.

If you aren't familiar with seminars, they are basically one-day classes that provide participants with knowledge and skills on a specific topic. In this case, the topic is child safety.

Safety-Specific Books -

Check out your local library for any books regarding the topic of child safety. Look for titles on abduction prevention, sexual abuse prevention, etc. (See recommended reading list)

Newspaper & Magazine Articles -

Read newspaper and magazine articles related to child safety. Also, pay attention to local crime reports regarding child predators and other sex offenders in your community.

Internet Discussion Groups -

The internet is filled with various discussion groups devoted to every topic you can think of. Find one devoted to child safety and join it. It will provide you with the opportunity to network with other parents and educators who have an interest in keeping children safe.

As your knowledge improves it will make it much easier to successfully pass that knowledge on to your children in a fun and entertaining way.

SAFETY POINT:

*Statistics regarding child safety can be alarming but **NOT** thinking about these issues can actually increase the risks to your children.*

SAFETY POINT:

Don't delegate your child's safety to others. The best person to help them learn to keep themselves safe is... you!

Conclusion

In this book I have attempted to provide you with the essential components for keeping your children safe. While there are no guarantees that the application of this information will prevent abduction or abuse, at the very least...children will have options that were unavailable to them before.

While it's my prayer that your children will never be required to use the knowledge and skills presented here, I do hope that you will take the time to make sure they are physically and mentally prepared to do so, should the need arise.

SAFETY POINT:

Child safety education should start at an early age and continue through adulthood!

SAFETY POINT:

Keep an eye out for strange behavior or actions that may lead you to believe that "grooming" is taking place. Don't assume that just because someone looks like a good person that they aren't predators in disguise.

References

Below is a list of important books and instructional videos pertaining to the topic of child safety and more specifically to child abduction & sexual abuse prevention. Please note: some of these titles are out-of-print but they may be found at your local library or attained through inter-library loan. Some may also be purchased at used bookstores.

Recommended Reading

- “Raising Kids Who Can Protect Themselves”
by Debbie & Michael Gardner
- “Child Lures: Parent’s Guide” by Kenneth Wooden
- “ Be Alert, Be Aware, & Have A Plan” by Neal Rawls
- “Identifying Child Molesters” by Carla Van Dam
- “Child Survival Skills” by Jerry Hyde & Terra Hulse
- “How To Raise A Street-Smart Child” by Grace Hechinger
- “Missing: Stranger Abduction” by Robert Stuber
- “Self-Defense Secrets For Moms” by John Hall
- “Stranger-Danger” by Carol Soret Cope
- “Kid Safe: A Parent’s Guide To Keeping Your Child Safe”
by Susan K. Golant
- “Teaching Your Child To Be Home Alone” by Earl A. Grollman
- “Protecting The Gift” by Gavin De Becker

Recommended Viewing

- “Kid Escape!” with John Hall
- “Can’t Fool Me!” with Yello Dyno

Ordering Information

The information below can be used to order a few of the titles on the previous page.

Survive Institute

7265 Kenwood Road, Suite #315
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236
(513) 791-7453

www.surviveinstitute.com

debbiegardner@surviveinstitute.com

“Raising Kids Who Can Protect Themselves”

Child Lures Prevention

5166 Shelburne Road
Shelburne, VT 05482
(802) 985-8458

www.childlures.com

info@childlures.com

“Child Lures: Parent's Guide”

Kid Escape

8808 Sandymar Dr.
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242
1-800-486-1939

www.kidescape.org

johnhall@kidescape.org

“Kid Escape” Video

About The Author



Steve Zorn has been involved in the field of personal safety for over 20 years. In that period of time he has been exposed to dozens of martial arts, self-defense, and close quarter combat systems; including various law enforcement, child safety, and crime prevention programs.

Here is just a small sampling of his many accomplishments -

Founder of Personal Safety Unlimited
Founder of Simple Defense
Holder of multiple martial arts black belts
Certified close quarter combat instructor
Certified law enforcement instructor
Certified child safety instructor
Certified womens self-defense instructor
Certified TACTIX fitness instructor
Certified Outdoor Fitness Trainer
Creator of multiple specialized safety programs
Former self-defense instructor for United Airlines
Former instructor for the National Law Enforcement & Security Institute
Designated International Crime Prevention Specialist

Over the years Steve has provided his services to men, women, children, teens, and seniors from all walks of life. He has also instructed law enforcement and security personnel in various aspects of personal safety. Steve continues to pursue advanced training, and updates his education each year. He also continues to conduct seminars throughout Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan on various aspects of self-defense and crime prevention.

For more information on this topic or to host a Kid Escape! presentation for children in your area-

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E-Mail:

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On The Web:

www.personalsafetyunlimited.com

Ask about our other personal safety programs including:
Women's Self-Defense, Crime Prevention, Defensive Pepper Spray,
Improvised Weapons, Combat Martial Arts, and more...