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FIRST CLASS



“When it comes to
the education of our
children...failure is
not an option.”

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

GUIDE FOR PARENTS: Personal Safety for Children

Each year, more than 58,000 children in the United States are abducted by non-family members. More than 200,000 children are abducted by family members who are seeking to interfere with a parent's custodial rights. In the most dangerous type of abduction—stranger kidnapping—fully 40 percent of children are killed.

In an effort to protect children against these assaults, the U.S. Department of Education just released a new guidebook entitled ***Personal Safety for Children: A Guide for Parents***. With information that children of all ages can understand, the guide provides facts and figures on child abductions, tips for discussing safety, a list of approaches for staying safe, numbers to call during an emergency and additional resources for more help.

Personal Safety for Children: A Guide for Parents, available in both English and Spanish, is a publication of the Departments of Education and Justice and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. For a copy, while supplies last, contact 1-877-4ED-PUBS (433-7827), or visit www.nochildleftbehind.gov/parents/safety/index.html for the online version.





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New Program Encourages Rigorous Course Work

At the start of the 2002–03 school year, President Bush and U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced a new program that encourages students to take more rigorous courses to better prepare themselves for postsecondary education and the workplace.

The new State Scholars program is a partnership of the business community and educators to encourage students to complete courses of study beyond the minimum requirements for high school graduation. The Scholars Core Academic Course of Study includes at least four years of English, three years of math (algebra I and II and geometry),

three years of lab science (biology, chemistry and physics), three and half years of social studies and two years of a foreign language.

Upon completion of the Scholars Course of Study, students will be recognized and can be made eligible for admission and scholarships to a state college, university or technical training school.

For more information, visit www.centerforstate-scholars.org or call 512-480-3164.

“One of the most important things that a mom or dad can do is talk to their children ... and rehearse what they can say and do if they ever feel threatened,” said President Bush.

Protecting Our Children

President Bush made the following remarks at a Rose Garden ceremony announcing this month's White House Conference on Missing, Exploited and Runaway Children.

“... We're gathered here today because we share a profound concern for the safety of the most precious and important people in our own lives and the life of our country, our children. After the terror of September the 11th, many parents throughout America found themselves holding their children more closely. Unfortunately, as we work to help our children feel safer by fighting terror, America's children and parents are also facing a wave of horrible violence from twisted criminals in our own communities.

Today, I call on all federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and our communities and our citizens to work together to do everything in our power to better protect our children. ...

The most recent statistics available tell a terrible story. More than 58,000 children are abducted by non-family members annually. Many of these children are returned home quickly, but some are not. ...

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U.S. Department of Education

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Today, we're taking steps to focus on preventing crimes against children before they happen. The Department of Justice will release a handbook of simple and practical steps that parents can take to make their children safer.

One of the most important things that a mom or dad can do is talk to their children very specifically, and rehearse what they can say and do if they ever feel threatened. Parents should teach their children how to say no and how to trust their instincts. For example, children should know that unfamiliar adults usually would not ask them for directions or help. Such a request might be a trick to get their attention, and of course to lure them away from safety.

The handbook also has practical advice to help families and communities make their homes and their schools and their neighborhoods safer. Children should know a safe place to seek help if they are approached by a stranger on their way to school, or if they're standing at a bus stop. ...

I urge the families to get these recommendations and to discuss the important safety tips with their children. Next month, we will convene a White House Conference on Missing, Exploited and Runaway Children. This forum will bring together leading national experts to focus on ways parents and communities can help shield children from the harm that is being done to some today.

Recent child abductions have understandably left many of our families in fear, and the most productive response is to improve the safety of their child's environment on the best information and the best advice.

No family should ever have to endure the terrible pain of losing a child. Our nation grieves with every family that has suffered unbearable loss, and our nation will fight the threats against our children. We can take hopeful and practical steps to improve our children's safety, and we will take those steps together. ..."

For fiscal year 2003, President Bush has proposed a 26 percent increase (\$29 million) in funding for the Missing and Exploited Children's Program, which, among other activities, provides training for state and local law enforcement personnel on handling missing child cases. The president's budget request will also enable the Department of Justice to double the size of its task force on Internet crimes against children.

More than 58,000 children are abducted by non-family members annually, although many of these children are returned home quickly.



"... We feel that if [the school is] an environment which promotes teaching and learning, promotes mutual respect among not only students but students and adults, an environment where kids feel comfortable to come forward and talk about their problems, then students will be engaged in learning."

Bill Modzeleski, director of the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free School Programs.

Close-Up:



No Child Left Behind

School Safety

All children need a safe environment in which to learn and achieve. The *No Child Left Behind Act* seeks to ensure a safe and orderly school by encouraging programs that protect students and teachers, encourage discipline and personal responsibility, and combat illegal drugs. The act

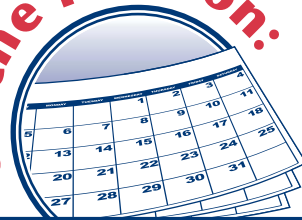
Requires states to report on school safety to the public. The new law also encourages schools to work closely with law enforcement and the community to keep the learning environment safe by enforcing truancy, suspension and expulsion policies and criminal laws.

Protects teachers so they can teach and maintain order. The problem of discipline has been compounded by the increased incidence of lawsuits, which impairs the ability of teachers to maintain discipline and enforce the rules. *No Child Left Behind* protects teachers, principals and other school professionals from frivolous litigation when they take reasonable actions to maintain order and discipline in the classroom.

Anticipates the potential for violence in schools. Violence prevention programs must meet specified principles of effectiveness and be grounded in scientifically based research that provides evidence that the program to be used will reduce violence and illegal drug use. Under *No Child Left Behind*, states must report school safety statistics to the public on a school-by-school basis, and districts must use federal school safety funding to establish a plan for keeping schools safe and drug free.

Provides a mechanism for students to leave chronically dangerous schools. *No Child Left Behind* requires schools to implement a statewide policy requiring students to have the choice to attend a safe public school within the district if he/she attends a persistently dangerous public school or becomes a victim of a violent crime while in or on the grounds of a public school the student attends.

On the Horizon:



October 2 Washington, D.C.

White House Conference on Missing and Exploited Children. Visit www.whitehouse.gov.

October 15 8:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m. E.T.

Education News Parents Can Use monthly broadcast, "Keeping Kids Safe and Drug Free In and Out of School." Visit <http://registerevent.ed.gov> or call 1-800-USA-LEARN (872-5327).

November 5–6 New York City, N.Y.

The National Alliance of Business and The Conference Board's 2002 Business and Education Conference; "A New Era of Education Reform: Implementing *No Child Left Behind*" is among the topics to be addressed. Visit www.conference-board.org/conferences or call 212-759-0900.

Did You Know?

In 1996–97, 90 percent of public schools reported no serious violent crime to the police or a law enforcement representative.

Source: *Indicators of School Crime and Safety 2001*, National Center for Education Statistics.