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CHILD SAFETY: COMMUNICATION

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We all know children are like sponges. They absorb and mimic everything they see and hear from a very young age. This is the reason why adding safety as part of your everyday language can be so valuable. You can start with simple things like talking to them about your safety routine, such as when you leave the house talk about how you check to ensure that all of the windows and doors are locked. As you head down to the car and buckle them up in their car seat talk about the importance of wearing a seatbelt and being properly seated in a child safety seat.

Parents should also familiarize children with basic rules of the road, and how to stay safe within and around vehicles. For example, children should be taught to obey pedestrian signal indications when walking and when riding bicycles. While driving as you obey traffic laws, you can start to point out the colors and then the symbols on traffic lights and signs. Explain that red means stop, and even though green means go, you still check for traffic before proceeding.

As many parents know, once children start walking you need to keep your eyes on them all the time. Young children like to run and hide and sometimes they can get lost. Parents should create and discuss a safety plan with their children as to what behaviors are expected outside of the home and what they should do if they are lost or separated. Expected behaviors such as holding hands with a parent and walking together at all times should be clearly communicated.

If your child is lost, be mindful and ready to give officers a description, a photograph and anything unique that may help us locate your child and return them safely to you. Teach children if they are lost to stay within the vicinity and look for personnel such as employees of a business or police officers for assistance. Teach them their name as well as their parents' or guardians' names. This can be particularly important at outdoor events or parks where part of your routine may be to practice your child recalling their own name and as well as yours. You may also consider writing their name and phone number inside their clothing.

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For more information on crime prevention and personal safety, please visit: crimeprevention.irvinepd.org



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Communicating and implementing safety and emergency plans with children should not only be routine, but also structured to best fit the parent and the uniqueness of each child. For information on crime prevention and personal safety that can be incorporated into your plans, please visit CrimePrevention.IrvinePD.org.

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