## A message from...

Assemblyman
Alfred C. Graf

Dear Parent,

A family's worst fear is the disappearance of a child; every year there are cases of children disappearing without a trace. Some are never found and others are victimized. Children from all economic classes and all races are potential victims.

Children in big cities and small towns or rural settings need to be aware of the dangers, and the best way to keep our children safe is through communication.

These safety tips are important. If I can be of further assistance in this or any other matter, please contact my office.


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## Playing It Safe

***Safety tips for you and your children***

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# Safety Tips

## Teach children:

- ✔ Their full name, address and phone number.
- ✔ How to make a long distance call both by dialing directly to you using the area code and by dialing "0" for the operator.
- ✔ Never to go into anyone's home without your permission. Children should know whose homes they are allowed to enter.
- ✔ While shopping, not to look for you, but to go to the nearest checkout counter and ask the clerk for assistance. Never go to the parking lot.
- ✔ To walk with and play with others. A child is most vulnerable when alone. If your child walks to school, have him/her walk with other children.
- ✔ That adults do not usually ask children for directions. If someone should stop a car asking for directions, the child should not go near the car.
- ✔ If someone is following them, they should go to a place where there are other people, to a neighbor's home or into a store. They should ask for help. They should not try to hide behind bushes.
- ✔ That no one has the right to touch them or make them feel uncomfortable. They have the right to say no.
- ✔ Never to get into a car without your permission. Warn your children that someone may try to lure them into a car by saying you said to pick them up. Tell them never to obey such instructions. Have a code word that only you and your child know.
- ✔ That a stranger is someone they and you don't know very well.
- ✔ Never to tell anyone over the phone they are home alone.
- ✔ Never to answer the door when they are home alone. Teach your children how to call your community's emergency assistance number (usually 911) or another emergency contact person, such as a neighbor.
- ✔ To tell you if any adult asks them to keep a "secret."
- ✔ To tell you if someone offers them gifts or money or wants to take their picture.
- ✔ To yell HELP! Not to just scream.

## Parents should:

- ♦ Know your children's friends.
- ♦ Never leave children unattended; never leave children in a car.
- ♦ Be involved in your children's activities.
- ♦ Listen when your child tells you he/she does not want to be with someone; there may be a reason.
- ♦ Notice when someone shows your children a great deal of attention and find out why.
- ♦ Have your child's fingerprints taken; know where to locate dental records.
- ♦ Be sensitive to changes in your child's behavior or attitude. Encourage open communication. Never belittle any fear or concern your child may express to you.
- ♦ Take a photograph of your child each year (four times a year for children under the age of 2).
- ♦ Have a set plan with your child outlining what he/she should do if you become separated away from home.
- ♦ Do not buy items that have your child's name on them such as hats, jackets and T-shirts. An abductor could start up a friendly conversation with your child after reading the child's name.
- ♦ Make a game of reading license plate numbers and remembering their colors. This will help children recognize the numbers and letters on license plates and their state origin.
- ♦ Be sure your children's day care center or school will not release your children to anyone but you or people you designate. Instruct the schools to call you if your children are absent.