

TRICKY PEOPLE TROUBLE

ABOUT:

We live at the top of a hill where there is only one way in and one way out. Several times a day people drive up the hill and turn around after they realize it is a dead-end. We have several children here and everyone in the neighborhood has always felt safe until the day a car drove into the neighborhood and parked. The driver let down his window and started asking the children questions. It might have been innocent enough, but no one wanted to take the chance by assuming this. Now I am on the alert for my grandchildren and Winston. He is a very friendly dog, and it wouldn't take much to tempt him. Children also are generally trusting, especially if they know the person who might be trying to tempt them. This is what inspired me to write this story.

PURPOSE:

When my children were young, I taught them about 'stranger danger.' Today we no longer use that phrase, instead, we say 'tricky people,' because not all abusers are strangers. Children need to be aware of the tricks used by abusers, such as asking for help finding their puppy or giving directions and asking the child to walk with them to show them the way, or asking for help with something in their car, things they normally would ask another adult for help. Tricks used by often used by known tricky people are asking a child to go somewhere with them without the child getting permission first, or telling a child to keep a secret when that secret them feel uncomfortable. As adults, we need to educate ourselves on the tricks used on children, then, in a non-frightening way, teach our children.

SUGGESTIONS:

Be your child's advocate. If a child acts uncomfortable around anyone, a family member, a visitor in your home or school, be a safe place for them to tell you. Empower children. Give them strategies on what to do when they feel uncomfortable or frightened. Think of an unusual password, so if anyone does approach the children in your care, they will have to know the password before going anywhere with an unfamiliar person or a family friend. Give them tools for what to do when they get lost from the person caring for them. Encourage them to always trust their instincts.

IDEAS:

Invite a police officer to speak to your class, or visit a police station.
Write thank you notes to local police officers, or first responders.
Have someone speak to the children about Internet safety.
Make up a safety plan for what to do in case of an emergency.