



# Pause for a child

Parenting is not an easy job, including responsibilities that seem to change every day. The daily tasks and roles you perform as a parent evolve and change as your child gets older. However, there is one task that is always important: monitoring your child's contact with his or her surrounding world. Parents need to be aware of their children's activities and interactions through every age and stage of growth.

### What does monitoring mean?

Monitoring means establishing firm guidelines and limits for your child to keep track of what is going on in his or her social world. Monitoring also means establishing clear expectations about what your child should always tell you AND that he/she can always talk to you about the things going on in his/her life.

#### Monitoring Basics

- Make a list of you child's weekly activities and keep it in your day timer or on the refrigerator.
- Know your child's friends (first and last names) and their home phone numbers.
- Know your child's friends' parents and their cell numbers, if possible.
- Insist that your child call and let you know where he or she is after school.
- Find out who the adults are who are going to be home at any parties your child attends.
- Find out where your child is going and with whom.
- Find out how your child will get there and back home.
- Arrive early to pick up your child so that you can observe his or her behavior.
- Check in with your child periodically to confirm where you think he/she is.

#### Tip for Creating a Safe Community for Your Child:

1. **TEACH** children that respect does not always mean blind obedience to adults and to authority.
2. **ENCOURAGE** professional prevention programs in the local school system.
3. **OPEN** the lines of communication when your child is young and keep those lines open.
4. **BE AWARE** if a child's behavior changes after being around specific adults and take notes.
5. **WORK** with the parents of your child's friends. Exchange each other's email addresses and phone numbers so that you can work together and help each other stay informed.
6. Always **CHECK REFERENCES** of babysitters, counselors, etc. Many states have public registries that allow parents to screen individuals for prior criminal records and sex offences. Once you have a chosen a caregiver, drop in unannounced to see how your child is doing.
7. **Monitoring your child** is a powerful way to express your care for your child and better understand their behavior and choices. Sit down with your child and start a discussion today. Remain open to their thoughts, questions and concerns. Tell your children that they should always speak up, ask questions and keep in talking until someone listens.
8. **Talk to your kids** today and ensure a safe tomorrow!