



Street-Proofing Tips

Street proofing tips for baby-sitters and older kids caring for younger brothers and sisters:

When you are given the responsibility of babysitting young children, we know that you will use your good judgment and common sense at all times. This means turning up your radar, or listening to that little noise inside you that will help you make good decisions and avoid any potential problems.

Here we've provided some basic Street proofing tips for you to follow to ensure your safety and the safety of the children you are caring for. Following these guidelines and trusting the power of your own instinct is the best way for you to stay alert...and stay safe!

TIP NO. 1: Try not to take the children to lonely parks, woods, parking lots or even a school yard at any time, particularly late afternoon or evening.

TIP NO. 2: When taking the children to after-school activities, work out the best route with your employer or parents in order to avoid unsafe places. Make sure you stick to that route each and every time and know where your neighborhood Block Parents are located.

TIP NO. 3: If a grown up invites you and the children you're in charge of into their home or car, always say no unless your employer or parent has given you permission and knows exactly where you are.

TIP NO. 4: If someone does grab you or the children you're taking care of, scream loudly and keep screaming. Yell out Help! Kidnap! If screaming doesn't work, tell the child to spin around fast. This makes it hard for someone to hold onto them.

TIP NO. 5: Remember, if you have to ride on an elevator to get to and from your babysitting job or apartment, stand by the control panel in case of an emergency.

TIP NO. 6: Always listen to your radar. It's that little voice inside that tells you when something doesn't feel quite right.

TIP NO. 7: Make sure that there is a message center with the following information in all homes that you babysit:

a number where the parents can be reached

the children's routes home from school

friendsøphone numbers
emergency phone numbers
location of health cards

TIP NO. 8: Make sure you get clear directions from your employer or parents as to rules around answering the door or answering the telephone.

TIP NO. 9: If youøre in trouble, you choose the person you want to help you. Safe people to choose may be a police officer, a fire fighter, a Block parent, mothers or fathers with children, teachers, uniformed bus drivers or store clerks. Keep the children with you.

TIP NO. 10: If you and the children find yourselves in a situation that feels uncomfortable, get out of it ... fast! These are just a few of the Street proofing tips we have for you. A babysitting course is the best way to get all the information you will need to know when caring for younger children, whether it be babysitting or caring for younger brothers and sisters.

By CONSTABLE DOUG LOCKE
Community Safety Officer
Brockville Police Service