

Self-Defense Tips for Kids

How Can Martial Arts Benefit Your Child



If you're looking for a way to encourage your children to take more physical exercise it's worth considering a martial arts class designed for youngsters. Your child may have already expressed an interest, thanks to popular comic creations such as the Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles or your child may be more suited to independent sports ...

The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that more than 58,000 children each year are abducted by people who are not family members. Because children are most vulnerable when they are alone, many of these predators wait for opportunities. Unfortunately, the world is not always a safe place for children. Therefore, parents need to teach their kids to use common sense and think fast in order to get away from an attacker as quickly as possible.

Escape

While you do not want to make your child afraid, he needs to know what to do if he ever finds himself in a dangerous situation. Be honest with your child and make sure he understands that getting away should be his first priority. Instruct your child to begin screaming if he feels threatened by someone, and then run. If a person comes up from behind and grabs him, tell your child to start yelling as loud as he can and to keep kicking his feet hard. If he is lucky, he might be able to strike a painful blow to his assailant's groin. Young children should be taught to yell, "You aren't my Mommy," or "You aren't my Daddy," to attract attention if a stranger approaches them. Love Our Children USA, a nonprofit organization committed to preventing violence against children, advises parents to teach their children to do whatever they have to in order to get away from a stranger who might try to grab them.

Fighting Back

Let your child know that it is okay to fight back if someone tries to hurt her, even though an adult is bigger. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) now takes the position that teaching children not to talk to strangers is no longer enough. Pediatricians say that while parents should try not to frighten a child, it is important to teach children how to protect themselves. When fighting off an attacker, a child should not hesitate to aim for the person's eyes or groin. Safety experts say that one of a child's best defenses is to act quickly, as even a small child can take a good hit at an assailant's knees. Another self-defense technique is for a child to bite her attacker. When explaining this defense to a child, tell her to imagine that she is taking a big bite out of an apple.

Warning

Explain to your child that the bad guy does not always look bad. In fact, most child predators look quite average. Some try to pass themselves off as trusted authority figures such as police officers. Often a child predator will ask for help in an attempt to gain a child's confidence. Just saying hello to a child over the course of a few days can sometimes be enough to gain his trust. Other predators use the ruse of telling a child that one of his parents has been hurt.

Strange Vehicles

Teach your child never to approach an unfamiliar vehicle unless she knows the driver or other passengers in the car. A common ploy used by many predators is to ask a child for directions. However, the National Crime Prevention Council warns that adults do not typically stop and ask children for driving directions. Whether a vehicle is moving or parked, if an abductor gets a child close enough, he can force her inside. Love Our Children USA recommends instructing children to run toward the back of the car. This makes it harder for the driver to chase the child. The AAP tells parents to make it clear to children to run away from danger never toward it.

More Tips

The National Crime Prevention Council advises parents not to leave young children outside by themselves, even for brief periods of time. That includes leaving children unattended in a car. School age children are encouraged to walk to and from school or bus stops in groups. Children should also avoid taking shortcuts through isolated areas even if they are walking with a friend. It is usually safest to walk where there are plenty of people nearby. It helps for parents to walk the neighborhood with a child and choose the safest routes. You should point out safe places along the way where your child can go if he needs help. Instruct your child to tell you or a teacher at school if he notices a car following him or if the same car is always parked on the street when he is walking to and from school or a friend's house.

Parent's Role

Parents need to make it a point to know their neighbors, their children's friends, as well as those children's parents. Police also say that children should be encouraged to trust their own instincts. If something about a person does not look or feel right, the child needs to get away from that person as quickly as possible. Parents, too, need to learn to trust a child's instincts, and believe their child if he says that he feels threatened by someone. Child advocates for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children emphasize that it is better if a report about someone turns out to be nothing than if you do nothing and a child is harmed. Unfortunately, most people tend not to imagine the worst.

SOURCE:

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