

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **KIDS AT GREATEST RISK OF ABDUCTION WHEN GOING TO AND FROM SCHOOL & SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

#### ***Children Who Successfully Escaped Abductions Knew What to Do***

**WASHINGTON, DC – Aug. 30, 2012** – An analysis by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), shows that approximately 35 percent of attempted abductions of children occurred when the child was going to and from school or school-related activities. Children who escaped abductions successfully, used life-saving skills that every child needs to learn and know. NCMEC recently completed the seven year analysis of more than 7,000 attempted abductions that occurred Feb. 1, 2005 through Jan. 31, 2012. The analysis showed that of the children – mostly girls between the ages of 10 and 14 - who were successful in escaping:

- 53 percent walked or ran away from the suspect.
- 28 percent yelled, kicked, pulled away or attracted attention.
- 19 percent involved a good Samaritan or parent rescuing the child.

"We know that teaching children about safety makes a difference, and we encourage parents and guardians to talk to their children so they know what to do in a real life situation," said John Ryan, CEO of NCMEC. "Teach your children to recognize and get out of dangerous or uncomfortable situations right away and practice basic safety skills with them."

Some of the common lures used included providing the child a ride, offering candy/sweets, asking the child questions, offering money or using an animal as a ruse. In 72 percent of the incidents, the suspect was in a vehicle and approximately one-third of the attempted abductions occurred during 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., when children are least likely to be supervised.

#### **NCMEC has developed the following 10 back-to-school safety tips**

- Teach your older children to always **TAKE A FRIEND** with them when walking or biking, and stay with a group while standing at the bus stop. Make sure they know which bus to ride.
- Walk the route to and from school with your children, pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. Teach your children they should **NEVER TAKE SHORTCUTS** and always stay in well-lit areas.
- Even though there may be more safety in numbers, it is still not safe for younger children to walk to and from school, especially if they must take isolated routes

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anytime during the day or in darkness. Always provide supervision for your young children to help ensure their safe arrival to and from school.

- Teach your children that if anyone bothers them, makes them feel scared or uncomfortable, they should trust their feelings and immediately get away from that person. Teach them it is ok not to be polite and **IT IS OK TO SAY NO**.
- Teach your children that if anyone tries to take them somewhere, they should **RESIST** by kicking and screaming, trying to run away and **DRAWING ATTENTION** – and saying “This person is trying to take me away” or “This person is not my father/mother.”
- Teach your children **NOT TO ACCEPT A RIDE** from anyone unless you have said it is ok in that instance. If anyone follows them in a vehicle, they should turn around, go in the other direction, and run to a trusted adult who may help them.
- Teach your children that grownups should **NOT ASK CHILDREN FOR DIRECTIONS**, they should ask other adults.
- Teach your children to **NEVER ACCEPT MONEY OR GIFTS** from anyone unless you have told them it is ok to accept in each instance.
- Make sure the school has current and accurate emergency contact information on file for your children and confirm names of those authorized to pick them up.
- Always know where your children will be. Teach your children to always **CHECK FIRST** before changing their plans before or after school. Teach your children to never leave school with anyone unless they **CHECK FIRST** with you or another trusted adult, even if someone tells them it is an emergency.