



911 & Child Safety

What does my child need to know about 911?

Did you know that children usually make the best callers? They often remain calm in the face of an emergency and are very cooperative. There is a great call going around the internet about a 5 year old from Indiana who called 911 and saved her father's life when he suffered from shortness of breath and could not speak. Just google "child calls 911" and you'll be surprised at how many child heroes we have! Here is a link to a video with three 911 calls from children that helped to save lives: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Z0vAdzr8s>

The following are some points to go over with your child to prepare him/her for emergencies and calling 911.

Make sure your child knows what an actual emergency is. Just as often as a child uses 911 appropriately, sometimes a child can misuse 911. These calls usually are not intentional or malicious, but young ones need to realize that even though 911 is there to help, we are only helpful in true emergencies. As with the call going around the internet about the 5 year old girl saving her father's life, there is also a call going around about a child calling 911 for homework help.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoTlaRyGzac> As cute as that clip was, it is still not an emergency meriting a call to 911.

While on the subject of non-emergency calls to 911, make it known to your child not to play with the phone or make prank phone calls to 911. Not only is this an inconvenience to the dispatcher that answers, it also ties up emergency phone lines as well as first responders that have to investigate the call and may result in criminal charges depending on the severity of the situation. If your child does call 911 in error, make sure your child stays on the line to verify there is no emergency. Just advise him/her to tell the truth and be honest about what occurred.

Some of the most important things for your child to know that may go overlooked is his/her full name, home address and phone number, and mom's and dad's real names, along with work and cell phone numbers, if used. And for times when you are not at home, make sure your child knows where he/she is at. You can show your child how to find an address if not at home, by finding mail inside the residence or business, reading the numbers on the house or mailbox, looking for street signs or business signs nearby, asking safe, familiar people in the area (beware of strangers, though), etc. It is important to practice these with your children so in a time of emergency it will be second nature for him/her.

Here is a great website with additional information for both children and parents on 911. It is full of safety tips for children along with expectations upon calling 911, videos and games. www.911ForKids.com