

Keeping Kids Safe: Be Alert to Predators' Common Tricks

The Bribe or Offer Tricks: The victim is offered something he or she might want. A young child might be offered candy, a toy, or gum; a teen might be offered money, free food, a ride, or a trip to someplace novel or exciting. Sometimes a person will take a valued belonging and then offer to return it only if the victim goes with the person, or allows sexual contact.



The Animal Trick: The person is lured away from others by an invitation to play with, or receive a gift of a puppy or kitten, or some other cute or unusual animal.

The Emergency Trick: A person pretends that a fire, accident, or illness, death, or some other emergency has happened to the victim's family, home, or friend. Or the person says there was a change in plans, and he/she was to pick-up because of the prearranged ride fell through.

The Help Trick: Someone asks the child/teen for help: For directions, to use the phone, or carry heavy bags, to search for someone or something lost, like a pet, child, or money.

The Friend Trick: A person pretends to know the family and says that the child's parents have asked him/her to come and give the child a ride home. A person pretends to have a mutual friend and uses that as a lure to separate the teen from others.



The Bad Child Trick: A person accuses the child/teen of doing something wrong. The child/teen is ordered to go with the person. Sometimes a real-looking badge or ID is shown as fake proof of the predator's official status. Sometimes a child/teen will be convinced by someone they trust that his/her parents do not want him or around anymore because the child/teen is a troublemaker, nuisance, or obstacle to the parents' happiness.

The Flattery Trick: The person might ask the victim to go with him/her (posing as a photographer) so pictures or a video can be taken. (team photo, newspaper story, acting, modeling, surveys.)

The Open the Door Trick: The person tricks the victim into opening the house door or car door. The person might look like a repair person, or say he/she needs to use the phone, or deliver a package, or needs the help or directions. Sometimes a minor car accident is staged to get the victim to pull the car over and open the car door.



The Secret Trick: Sometime victims are warned to keep physical and sexual harassment or assault a secret because: No one will believe them, it is the victim's fault, their parents and friends will be angry or reject them if they knew, or that something awful will happen to them or loved ones if they tell. Often the victimization continues because the victim is afraid these threats might be true.

Children and teens have been lured into dangerous situations by people using compute online services to make contact. The communications usually start as harmless exchanges, but then the predator asks for a face-to-face meeting, or messages become increasingly sexual in content.