

## **Safety Tips for Children**

At their regular monthly meeting, the Chamber's Parenting & Family Committee discussed the recent tragedy in Souderton where a child was abducted and murdered. Noting how many parents were discussing the incident on social media outlets and that their postings were filled with fear and confusion, the Committee came up with some tips to help parents guide their children toward making safe decisions.

Tips for Parents:

- 1.) Since 85 to 90 percent of victims of sexual assault know the perpetrator, create a list of "safe neighbors."
- 2.) Tell children not to go with anyone or in anyone's home, for any reason, without first checking with you.
- 3.) Employ the use of a secret word known only to you and your children. Tell them that if anyone says they are there to pick them/drop them off, et al that the person must know the secret word.
- 4.) Teach your child to trust and listen to his/her 'gut' instinct. If something feels "weird" or uncomfortable, get out. Tell them not to worry about hurting the person's feelings.
- 5.) Teach your child to adhere to these rules even when dealing with someone in a position of authority.
- 6.) Tell children that both men and women can be predators or accomplices to predators.
- 7.) Make sure that your children never keep any relationship with an adult a secret from you. Predators have many tactics to convince children that they should not talk to their parents about this relationship.
- 8.) Teach your children to avoid walking or playing alone outside and in public places.
- 9.) Role play different scenarios with your children, rather than simply telling them how to act. For example, "What would you do if..."
- 10.) Be sensible; be cautious; but don't panic. The goal is to help your child be safe not afraid.