

# PREFACE

Seth Goldstein, Esq.

There are a few, essential, classic, parenting books that every parent should have. Among them is *Raising Safe Kids in an Unsafe World*. It stands alone as the one parenting book addressing something you may never think you need to teach your child: SURVIVAL.

If there were ever a need to protect our children, the need is even greater today. With each passing day, media reports of missing, murdered and molested children have placed this issue on the national agenda.

Compounding the problem are the shrinking budgets and other educational mandates of public institutions that compete for the time that child assault prevention lessons take among other equally important educational objectives. Unfortunately, due to these competing priorities, schools have to make child safety education programs short, mostly one-time events in a child's life. However, moving in the right direction, the state of New York has made child abduction prevention a mandate. Other states have made anti-victimization a higher priority. Yet, there needs to be a greater alliance between the schools and the home, with parents taking a more active part in educating children about their own protection.

Proper safety education requires a well thought-out supportive framework that allows parents to educate their children in a non-threatening, pro-active fashion. The New York Police Department once published a prevention guide for children and parents that suggested that parents *enlighten*, not frighten their children about personal safety. This is

important, because we need children to have the ability to act logically, rather than be paralyzed by fear in a dangerous situation. Similarly, we do not want to create or instill in children a fear of the things they don't yet understand, such as their own or another person's sexuality. Through gradual and matter-of-fact discussions and lessons between parents and children, our children will be empowered with knowledge and confidence. Research has found that when learning is fun, it sticks.

A short twenty years ago, children were given simplistic messages such as "Look out for strangers with candy" and "If someone bothers you in the movie theater tell the usher." Yesterday's lure of candy has become trips to McDonald's and lost kittens. Even the once considered sacrosanct zone at home has been violated. In fact, children are kidnapped, molested, and murdered in virtually every place they play, pray, go to school, and live. In some cases, children have even been molested right in front of their own parents without anyone realizing what was happening. Of the hundreds of child sexual abuse cases on which I have worked, one fact repeatedly comes to the surface: children need personal safety survival tools and self-esteem to prevent abduction and molestation from happening in the first place. The front line for developing these tools is the school. Educational programs can make a difference, but they need to be emphasized and reinforced in the home to be truly effective. This book helps form a partnership, building a bridge between home and school.

Parental involvement in children's safety education is even more important because children learn through repetition and reinforcement – the two things that school safety programs rarely afford. In the home, the lessons that you, as a parent, think are important and need emphasis, may be repeated and reinforced with your child. How then does a parent begin?

Through rhyme and music we have learned our lessons of the ages - “A Stitch in Time, Saves Nine,” “Doe a deer, a female deer...” *The Yello Dyno Method* uses this successful concept in a musical, fun, memory-enhancing program.

When the issue of missing children first entered the national spotlight, photographs of missing children appeared on milk cartons as a means of trying to find those children. Today, the TV screen has become the prime time reminder and message machine for Amber Alerts. One morning during the milk carton era, a twelve-year-old son of a friend of mine was looking at a milk carton and asked his dad, “What does ‘abducted’ mean?” His father, a seasoned police veteran of twenty plus years, simply asked, “What do you think it means?” The boy said that he thought it meant that someone had taken a child. His father replied, “Yes, there are people who sometimes do bad things to children and you must be aware of it wherever you are.” The boy said, Oh, and that was the end of the conversation. The father had used neither fear nor hyperbole to answer his son’s impromptu question. *The Yello Dyno Method* takes this lesson to the next level. When I asked my then ten-year-old daughter what she would do if threatened by a dangerous person, she said that she would yell what her friend had told her to yell, “bloody murder”. We used that opportunity to discuss with her how people would respond if she did yell that phrase and we gave her some other options.

What a shame my colleague and I didn’t have Jan Wagner’s parent/educator handbook, *Raising Safe Kids in an Unsafe World*. The book’s simple and non-fearful guidelines to child security could have helped us take these important lessons even further with our own children. The personal safety lessons contained in *Raising Safe Kids* can be a lifesaver for your child. Jan’s dream is to prevent “every parent’s nightmare.” To help make this dream a reality, she has spent countless hours researching, planning, and applying these

child safety principles through *The Yello Dyno Method* for over 16 years. The lessons and preventative guidelines described in *Raising Safe Kids* are unique. Moreover, they directly involve parents in protecting their children from being victimized.

Parents will have less stress when their children leave their presence. They will have the confidence that, when used as directed, *Raising Safe Kids* will provide their children with the tools they need to avoid or respond to any potential threat. These lessons afford parents and educators the opportunity, through direct interaction with their children, to enlighten the spirit, body, and mind.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seth L. Goldstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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Pacific Grove, California, September 2002