

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
MISSING ENDANGERED PERSONS
INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE
ADVISORY BOARD



Presents the

2010 FLORIDA MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY
STATEWIDE FIFTH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

Title: Safety is as simple as ABC...Always Be Careful!

PURPOSE: To promote safety awareness among Florida's children and encourage them to proactively think of ways to keep themselves safe from any person who would harm them.

During 2009, Florida law enforcement agencies handled more than 50,000 cases of children who were reported missing across the state. That number includes children who were abducted as well as some who ran away. When children are away from adult supervision, it increases their chances of encountering dangerous situations. It is incumbent upon them to do whatever it takes to get away safe.

Children may be approached via the Internet, where predators disguise their identity and use tactics to lure them away from the safety of their homes. Children are approached while walking to or from school, and some are drawn in by concocted stories of family emergencies. Children can prepare themselves to "Always Be Careful" by proactively arming themselves with knowledge.

We are requesting all Florida fifth grade students to participate in this essay contest. They would need to write an essay about things they can do to "Always Be Careful" so as not to fall victim to abduction. They will need to research and construct their thoughts into a one page essay. The slogan "*Safety is as simple as ABC...Always Be Careful!*" is the title for the essay. The essay must focus on what children can do to "Always Be Careful" of situations and people who try to abduct them.

Attachment #1 of this document provides a few websites children can use to conduct their research. Teachers and parents are encouraged to review these sites and hold discussions with the children. Doing so will equip them to protect themselves and to be careful of the choices they make. Listed below are helpful hints to use in the discussion:

- What would you do if you were approached by someone who made you feel uncomfortable?
- What if someone tried to take you or get you to go somewhere with them? What would you do?
- What if you were chatting on line and the person wanted to meet you somewhere or asked for personal information?

CONTEST GUIDELINES:

1. The contest is open to all 5th grade students in the state of Florida.
2. We encourage all schools to hold an essay contest among their 5th grade students. Each school must choose only one "School Winner". THE WINNING ESSAY MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH THE CHILD'S SCHOOL.
3. The School Winner's essay must be submitted to the Essay Contest Coordinators by the deadline (Friday, April 16, 2010) in order to be considered for the regional and statewide competitions. ONLY ONE ESSAY FROM EACH SCHOOL WILL BE ACCEPTED BY THE ESSAY CONTEST COORDINATOR.
4. Essay topics must focus on the choices that children can make to keep themselves safe from abduction. There are many situations that might seem okay, but could quickly become uncomfortable. What choices do children have to avoid those situations and get away safely?

Essays may be based upon, but are not limited to:

- Personal experiences where the child had to overcome adversity.
 - Discussions with their parents and teachers about abduction safety tips.
 - Discussions with their parents about places they can go to get safely away from uncomfortable situations.
 - Interviews with people known to and approved by the parent(s) who could assist them if they should encounter situations beyond their control.
5. Participants should develop their thoughts into an essay no longer than one (1) typewritten page or two (2) handwritten pages. If it is typewritten, the font and font size must be Times New Roman, size 12 or 14. If it is hand written, it must be legibly written in print rather than cursive. The child's first and last name must be on the page with the essay.
 6. The submission form (see Attachment #4) with complete school contact information must accompany each essay.
 7. Essays must be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. They must demonstrate clear thought processes and be based on realistic scenarios.

AWARDS:

1. **School Winner** – Each participating school must select **one (1) winner**. The winning essay must be submitted to the contest coordinator Patricia Rutherford by **Friday, April 16, 2010**. A certificate of participation will be given to all of the school winners. The school contact person should submit the school winner's essay in one of the following ways:

- E-mail from school: Forward the following to mepic@fdle.state.fl.us
 - Submission Form
 - A copy of the school's winning essay
- Fax: (850) 410-8744
- Mail: FDLE, Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse, PO Box 1489, Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489, ATTN: Essay Contest Coordinator

2. **Regional Winners** – All essays received by April 16, 2010, will be reviewed by a committee. One Regional Winner will be chosen from each of the seven FDLE regions. Please see the map on Attachment #2 to determine the region in which your county is located. The seven FDLE regions are:

- (1) Tallahassee Region
- (2) Jacksonville Region
- (3) Tampa Region
- (4) Orlando Region
- (5) Miami Region
- (6) Ft. Myers Region
- (7) Pensacola Region

Each regional winner will receive:

- A certificate
- A \$100 check
- A chance to be selected as the Statewide Winner

3. **Statewide Winner** – The statewide winner will be selected from among the 7 Regional Winners and will need to be available to participate in the Florida Missing Children's Day formal ceremony on Monday, September 13, 2010. At that time the Statewide Winner will receive the following:

- A trip to the Capitol in Tallahassee to read their winning essay during the formal Florida Missing Children's Day Ceremony on Monday, September 13, 2010
- An additional \$100 Cash Award
- A trophy
- A VIP package from Universal Studios

*** Winners will be announced prior to the close of the 2009-2010 school year.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Students

- You can use the interview sheet (see Attachment #3) to conduct interviews of individuals who can provide helpful safety tips. Ask them if they are available to help if you are in a situation where you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Discuss the subject of abduction and internet safety with friends and classmates. Determine if anyone has received messages or requests for information from someone that they do not know. Talk about what should be done in such cases.
- Hold discussions to find out what your friends and classmates would do if they are approached by someone who tries to get them alone or make them feel uncomfortable.
- With a parent's permission, go to the library or visit the internet to research different sites (some are listed on Attachment #1) to find helpful websites that offer information to keep you safe and protect you from abduction.
- Talk to your parents about using the internet and social networking sites and ask their permission before you conduct interviews or go on the internet.

Teachers/Families

For your use, a promotional flyer has been created and an electronic copy is included with this information. We encourage you to duplicate the flyer and post it to advertise this contest to all of your fifth grade students. You can use the essay topic as a daily journal entry or writing prompt. Some suggested topics are:

- What would you do if you were approached by someone who made you feel uncomfortable?
- What if someone tried to take you somewhere or get you to go somewhere with them? What would you do?
- What if you were chatting on line and the person wanted to meet you somewhere or asked for personal information?

Conduct a class or family discussion about situations that make them feel uncomfortable or what they can do if someone asks them to secretly meet somewhere.

Have students break into groups to discuss safety measures to use when creating social networking sites.

Have students make a safety "quilt" that shows ways to be safe. Have each square represent a danger and the solution to overcome it.

Suggest that students discuss the essay topic during dinner, while traveling in the car, or at any time a "teachable" moment arises. Suggest they include all siblings as much as possible.

If a child opts to conduct interviews, help devise a plan with the permission of the parents, so that the information gathered can be helpful.

WEBSITES WITH CHILD SAFETY INFORMATION:

The following is a brief list of websites that are available to provide information concerning child safety. Each of these sites has appropriate information for students, teachers, and parents and will be helpful in developing a child safety plan. You are not limited to this list. If you know of other helpful websites, feel free to use information from those sites as well.

1. FDLE, Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse
<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MCICSearch/SafetyTips.asp>
<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MCICSearch/Documents/SafeSteps.pdf>
2. Jimmy Ryce Center for Victims of Predatory Abduction
www.jimmyryce.org/ Provides tips on how to be a predator smart kid.
<http://www.jimmyryce.org/SafetyLinks.html>
3. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
www.ncmec.org/ (Click "Child Safety" link on left)
www.netsmartz.org/ Provides information about Internet Safety
4. National Crime Prevention Council – McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog
<http://www.mcgruff.org/Advice/>
5. Office of the Attorney General of Florida
www.myfloridalegal.com/ (Click "Child Safety" link on left)
6. Internet Safety Sites
www.i-safe.org
www.ikeepSAFE.org
www.safekids.com
www.safeflorida.net/safesurf
www.netsmartz.org/

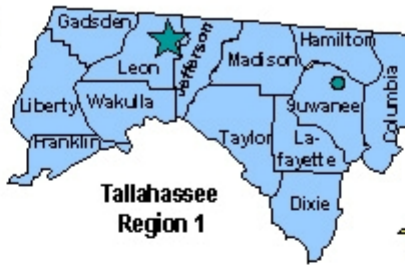
Map of the 7 FDLE Regions



**Pensacola
Region 7**

Tallahassee Region 1

Columbia County
Dixie County
Franklin County
Gadsden County
Hamilton County
Jefferson County
Lafayette County
Leon County
Liberty County
Madison County
Suwannee County
Taylor County
Wakulla County



**Tallahassee
Region 1**



**Jacksonville
Region 2**

Jacksonville Region 2

Alachua County
Baker County
Bradford County
Clay County
Duval County
Flagler County
Gilchrist County
Levy County
Marion County
Nassau County
Putnam County
St. John's County
Union County

**Tampa Bay
Region 3**



Tampa Bay Region 3

Citrus County
Hardee County
Hernando County
Hillsborough County
Pasco County
Pinellas County
Polk County
Sumter County

Miami Region 5

Broward County
Miami-Dade County
Monroe County
Palm Beach County

Ft. Myers Region 6

Charlotte County
Collier County
Desoto County
Glades County
Hendry County
Highlands County
Lee County
Manatee County
Okeechobee County
Sarasota County

Pensacola Region 7

Bay County
Calhoun County
Escambia County
Gulf County
Holmes County
Jackson County
Okaloosa County
Santa Rosa County
Walton County
Washington County

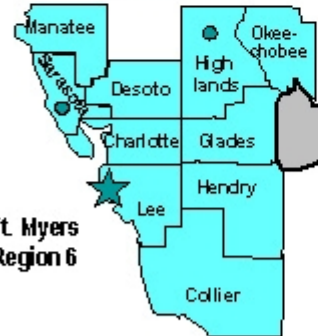
Orlando Region 4

Brevard County
Indian River County
Lake County
Martin County
Orange County
Osceola County
Seminole County
St. Lucie County
Volusia County



**Orlando
Region 4**

**Ft. Myers
Region 6**



**Miami
Region 5**



ATTACHMENT # 2

INTERVIEW SHEET

If you decide to interview someone, you may use this sheet. Be sure to interview adults who can provide useful tips to help protect you from abduction. Be sure to get permission from your family prior to contacting anyone. You may duplicate this form if you have additional people to interview. The information you gather can be used to write your essay.

Suggested people you can interview with a parent's permission: school resource officers, family members, school officials, security officers, law enforcement officers, etc.

Name _____

What is your name and what is your occupation?

What tips can you provide to help me stay safe from abduction?

If I need help, are you available? When is the best time to contact you?

May I have a good phone number to reach you?

If you are not available, is there someone else that I can call?

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

SUBMISSION FORM

2010 FLORIDA MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY STATEWIDE FIFTH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

Title: Safety is as simple as ABC...Always Be Careful

Complete this submission form and send it with your school's winning essay to the attention of the Essay Contest Coordinator via:

E-mail: to mepic@fdle.state.fl.us

Fax: (850) 410-8744

Mail: FDLE

Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse

PO Box 1489

Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489

ATTN: Essay Contest Coordinator

PLEASE PRINT

Student's Name as it should appear on the certificate.		

School Name		

School Address	City	

State	Zip Code	School County
Florida		
Teacher/School Contact Name		Phone Number
_____		_____
Fax Number	e-mail address	
_____	_____	
Alternate School Contact Name		Phone Number
_____		_____
Fax Number	e-mail address	
_____	_____	

ATTACHMENT # 4



Statewide **ESSAY CONTEST**

Calling all 5th grade students across the state of Florida!

TITLE: Safety is as simple as ABC...Always Be Careful!

- What would you do if you were approached by someone who made you feel uncomfortable?
- What if someone tried to take you somewhere or get you to go somewhere with them? What would you do?
- What if you were chatting on line and the person wanted to meet you somewhere or asked for personal information?

GRAND PRIZE INCLUDES:

A TRIP TO THE CAPITOL IN TALLAHASSEE to read your essay during the formal Florida Missing Children's Day Ceremony on Monday, September 13, 2010, *a Trophy, *a check for \$100.00, and *a Universal Studios VIP Package!

- Contest is open to all Florida 5th grade students
- Each school is encouraged to hold an essay contest among their 5th grade students. Only one essay per school can be submitted to the Essay Contest Coordinator via:
 - E-mail address - mepic@fdle.state.fl.us
 - Fax number - 850-410-8744
 - Mail - FDLE, Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse
PO Box 1489, Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489
ATTN: Essay Contest Coordinator
- Essay topics must focus on the choices that children can make to keep themselves safe from abduction.
- Essays may be based upon, but are not limited to:
 - Personal experiences where the child had to overcome adversity.
 - Discussions with their parents and teachers about abduction safety tips.
 - Discussions with their parent about places they can go to get away safely from uncomfortable situations.
 - Interviews with people who could assist them if they should encounter situations beyond their control.
- Essays must be no longer than one (1) typewritten page using Times New Roman font sizes 12 or 14, or two (2) handwritten pages, printed legibly.



**All entries must be received by
April 16, 2010**



**For more information contact
the Essay Contest Coordinator
Patricia Rutherford at
(888) 356-4774.**