

Parents - If you haven't already read the pages on "Developing Character in Your Children," you might want to go there first before reading these pages.



Have your children play "Simon Says" to teach alertness.

(Remember how? A leader is Simon, who gives instructions for actions. If he prefaces the command with "Simon says", the command is to be followed. If he doesn't say "Simon says", any who follow the command are out of that game.)



As you are in the car, have your children play "Safety Bingo" to teach them alertness to safety warnings. The first one to mark off all the spaces wins.

Stop Sign	Caution Light	Road Hazard Sign
Yield Sign	Children Playing Sign	Pedestrian Crossing Sign
Dangerous Curve Ahead Sign	Slow School Zone Sign	Railroad Crossing Sign

Alertness

vs. Carelessness

"Being aware of what is taking place around me so I can have the right responses."

Tips for Parents to Encourage Alertness

Alertness is a habit that children can learn to develop. As parents, we can cause them to be aware of hazardous situations in advance and to recognize warning signals that accompany them.

A child needs to learn the balance between being attentive and focused on tasks at hand and yet remaining alert to sounds and activity around them. It takes maturity and practice to obtain that balance, so be patient.

Even mistakes can be turned into valuable "teaching moments" to identify missed warning signals as preparation for future awareness. Some situations might even call for advance rehearsals and practice in knowing how to respond. One such example might be if a stranger stops and offers your child candy and a ride home. Another might be learning to call 911 and identifying when that would be appropriate.

Help your children develop the habit of staying alert to your voice or other authoritative voices and sounds. Make an intentional effort to provide warning sounds when they are absorbed in play and reward them for responding.

Here are some suggestions for further practice in alertness:

- ~ As you travel, make it a game for the children to call out potential hazards or warnings that they see. Discuss with them some possible safe responses to those situations.
- ~ Give them a simple first aid course and be sure first aid supplies are accessible. Be sure they know how to get help if a wound is serious.
- ~ Have them take a bicycle safety course.
- ~ Read stories of heroic actions and let the children point out the alertness shown by the hero.
- ~ Be sure to praise them when they show alertness. Keep mentioning alertness in your conversation so they stay aware of the need for it!