

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



Presents the

2011 FLORIDA MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY  
STATEWIDE FIFTH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

***Title: "At home, at school, at play; let safety lead the way"***

**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.

Children are our most vulnerable citizens. We must do all that we can to help them stay safe from abduction and predators. Last year law enforcement received more than 40,000 reports of missing children from across the state of Florida. Some of those cases were of children who ran away and some were of children who were abducted. In either case, they may be faced with dangerous situations when they are away from adult supervision. There are times, however; when it is necessary for a child to be alone, such as when they are walking to and from school or waiting at a bus stop or other location. Children may surf the web or communicate via social networking sites. While surfing, they may encounter predators that disguise their identity and use tactics to lure them away. Others may be drawn away by concocted stories of family emergencies. Therefore, it is very important for children to have a plan to help keep them safe. They should proactively arm themselves with knowledge and always remember whether "At home, at school, at play; let safety lead the way".

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 "let safety lead the way" so as not to fall victim to abduction. They will need to research and construct their thoughts into a one page essay. The slogan "*At home, at school, at play; let safety lead the way*" is the title for the essay. The essay must focus on what children can do to keep themselves safe from abduction and predators, especially when they are away from their parents.

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 with knowledge they need to protect themselves and guide them to make good choices. 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in the state of Florida.
2. We encourage all schools to hold an essay contest among their 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Coordinator by the deadline (Friday, April 22, 2011) 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 whether at home, at school or at play. 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 on paper that is 8 ½ x 11 in size and must be 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, Mrs. Patricia Rutherford, by **Friday, April 22, 2011**. A certificate of participation will be given to all of the school winners. The school winner's essay must be submitted in one of the following ways:

Send a completed Submission Form (see attachment 4) and a copy of the essay via

- E-mail from school: Forward to [fmcd@fdle.state.fl.us](mailto:fmcd@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

2. **Regional Winners** – All essays received by Friday, April 22, 2011, will be reviewed by a committee. One winner will be chosen from each of the FDLE regions. See the map (attachment #2) to determine the region in which your school is located. The FDLE regions are:

Tallahassee Region  
Jacksonville Region  
Tampa Region  
Orlando Region  
Miami Region  
Ft. Myers Region  
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 Regional Winners. The winner will need to be available to travel to Tallahassee to read their winning essay during the formal Florida Missing Children's Day Ceremony on Monday, September 12, 2011. During the formal ceremony the Statewide Winner will receive the following:

- An additional \$100 Cash Award
- A trophy
- A VIP package from Universal Studios

\*\*\*\* Winners will be announced prior to the close of the 2010-2011 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 attached at the end of 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](http://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](http://www.ncmec.org) (Click "Child Safety" link on left)  
[www.netSMART.org](http://www.netSMART.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](http://www.myfloridalegal.com) (Click "Child Safety" link on left)
6. Internet Safety Sites  
[www.i-safe.org](http://www.i-safe.org)  
[www.i-keepsafe.org](http://www.i-keepsafe.org)  
[www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)  
[www.safeflorida.net/safesurf](http://www.safeflorida.net/safesurf)  
[www.netSMART.org/](http://www.netSMART.org/)

# Map of the 7 FDLE Regions



**Pensacola Region**

## Tallahassee Region

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**



**Jacksonville Region**

## Jacksonville Region

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**

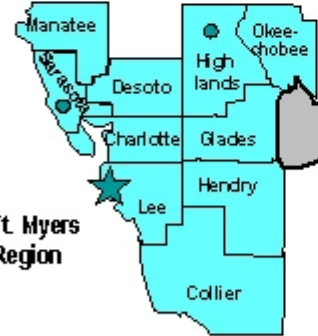


**Orlando Region**

## Miami Region

Broward County  
Miami-Dade County  
Monroe County  
Palm Beach County

**Ft. Myers Region**



**Miami Region**



## Tampa Bay Region

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

## Ft. Myers Region

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

## Orlando Region

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

## Pensacola Region

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

**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

## 2011 FLORIDA MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY STATEWIDE FIFTH GRADE ESSAY CONTEST

***Title: At home, at school, at play; let safety lead the way***

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 [fmcd@fdle.state.fl.us](mailto:fmcd@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. Please print clearly.		
School Name		
School Address	City	
State	Zip Code	School County
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 5<sup>th</sup> grade students across the state of Florida!**

**TITLE: At home, at school, at play; let safety lead the way**

- 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?



**\*a Trophy, \*a check for \$100.00, and \*a Universal Studios VIP Package!**  
**Grand Prize will be presented when you read your winning essay during the Florida Missing Children's Day Formal Ceremony on Monday, September 12, 2011.**

- 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. Send winning essay and completed submission form to the Essay Contest Coordinator via:
  - E-mail address - [fmcd@fdle.state.fl.us](mailto:fmcd@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 on 8 ½ x 11 paper and 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 22, 2011**



**For more information contact  
the Essay Contest Coordinator  
Patricia Rutherford at  
(850) 410-8598.**