

CONFERENCE PAPER PROPOSAL

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EDU 9800: Research Technology

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What is the current mind-set of children towards strangers, and how it can be altered to protect them?

ABSTRACT

This quantitative study will measure the impact of stranger safety awareness training with students in grades K-8. Specifically using the elements awareness, safety and trust from the Rose Brucia foundation curriculum. There will be 100 participants from various elementary and middle schools on the New York. Participants will receive training within the classroom through use of puppet shows and free educational curriculum. First researchers will collect data from surveys. This data is in pre-test/post-test method, meaning participants will complete the survey prior to receiving the training, then after training is complete. The educational importance of this research is to deliver imperative stranger safety ideas to children.

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, each year, there are over 800,000 children abducted under the age of 18 according to the United States Department of Justice. Most abductions are perpetrated by relatives. There are over 21,000 children abducted by complete strangers yearly. Statistics show there are 69 children abducted each day in the United States alone. Children ages 6-14 comprise upwards of 60% of these abductions (Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1990).

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To combat this dilemma, it is important to educate children to be aware of the dangers in the outside world, and to learn how to avoid them. The educational importance of this study is to measure what the current mind-set of children is towards strangers, and how it can be altered to protect them. The current hypothesis of the study is: after performing the safety awareness tactics

and training, children will have the knowledge to cope with stranger awareness and as a result, child abduction numbers will decrease.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

This study will measure the impact of stranger safety awareness training with students in grades K-8. Specifically using the elements awareness, safety, and trust from the Rose Brucia foundation curriculum. The research problem that we seek to answer is: what is the current mind-set of children towards strangers, and how it can be altered to protect them?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The overall goal of the Rose Brucia Stranger Safety Awareness Program is to offer a free educational curriculum; this education plan provides proactive stranger safety awareness and techniques to elementary and middle school children. The program utilizes single-concept video shorts in conjunction with specialized lesson plans. These lessons are specifically written by teachers, and are designed for teachers. This is done in order to actively involve children in their own safety and develop self-advocacy skills as it relates to strangers (Education Letter, 2012).

The Rose Brucia Stranger Safety Awareness Program was developed in order to raise safety awareness for children. It primarily focuses on three concepts. These concepts are: Awareness, Safety, and Trust. By utilizing the *Health and Safety Standards* established by New York State, the program promotes these principals consistently within the free curriculum. The core messages are presented in simple DVD format with individual lesson plans coinciding around each puppet show. These tools are designed to convey vital stranger safety concepts to children in a non-threatening manner. Upon implementation, each lesson plan includes a checklist of short-term and long-term objectives for the teacher to use as a guide; a list of materials needed; summary statements; and suggested homework assignments (SSAP, 2005)

New York Representative Tim Bishop feels, when parents or guardians send their children off to school, walk them home, or enroll them in an afterschool activity, they know that their loved ones are safe and secure. Parents and guardians want to know more about stranger awareness and have the tools to teach and monitor as well. The Rose Brucia program offers both (Sachem Patch, 2011).

“Child abduction is a serious problem; therefore, it is essential that researchers evaluate the efficacy of commercially available abduction-prevention programs. A multiple baseline design across participants (ages 6 to 8 years old) was used to evaluate the effects of a training program, The Safe Side. Experimenters assessed safety responses in situ in two different situations: knock on the door and interaction by a stranger in public. Results revealed that participants did not demonstrate the safety skills following Safe Side training. All participants demonstrated criterion performance following in situ training and maintained the skills over time” (Beck & Miltenberger, 2009, p 761).

In summary, the research clearly indicates that children are often at a disadvantage regarding stranger safety awareness. Often they are in a secondary role pertaining to their own safety. If self-advocacy was taught in the educational setting, children would have an upper hand on protecting themselves from outside harm. There should be more free safety awareness programs available to the public, because they are beneficial. If there was more awareness on the subject, perhaps there would be less child abductions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will guide this study:

Research Question One

Will the participant prior to implementing the safety awareness strategies and training be better equipped to cope with stranger awareness?

Research Question Two

Will the participant prior to implementing the safety awareness strategies and training be better equipped to cope with stranger awareness?

Research Question Three

Will this intervention effect and decrease abduction numbers?

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

The participants are elementary and middle school children. Parents/guardians will also have an active role in participation. The setting for the research is a large school district on Long Island. The participants will be taught a specific educational curriculum that focuses on stranger awareness, specifically safety and self-advocacy. The information will be conveyed through the use of videos and live puppet shows. There will be a survey administered prior to the safety awareness intervention, in order to pinpoint current understandings toward child safety. Upon completion of the intervention, participants will be administered the same survey, in order to see if a change had occurred.

REFERENCES

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