

**Florida Department of Law Enforcement
Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse
Advisory Board**



Presents the



**2022 Florida Missing Children's Day
Statewide 5th Grade Essay Contest**

Theme: "This is How I Stay Safe All Day"

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

To stay safe from abduction and predators, children should arm themselves with a good plan. There will be moments when children find themselves away from the safety of their parents. As they grow older, children encounter different situations. Whether at play, on the internet, on social networking websites, walking to and from school, at the school bus stop or other places, all children should have a safety plan. They should ask themselves "how can I stay safe from abduction especially when my parents are not with me?" Parents should talk to their children and provide clear direction in this regard.

Fifth grade students across the state are asked to write an essay about ways to stay safe from abduction. They will need to conduct research and construct their thoughts into a one page essay. The theme "**This Is How I Stay Safe All Day**" was chosen for the 2022 essay contest. The body of the essay must focus on things children can do to keep themselves safe from abduction.

Attachment #1 of this document provides a few websites children can use to conduct their research. Teachers and parents are encouraged to review and discuss these sites with the children. Doing so will help to arm them with the ability to protect themselves at all times. 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?
- If someone tried to take you somewhere or get you to go somewhere with them, what would you do?
- If you are chatting online and the person asked you to meet them somewhere or asked you for personal information, what would you do?

CONTEST GUIDELINES:

1. This contest is open to all 5th grade students in the state of Florida including public, charter and private schools as well as afterschool programs and home-schooled students.
2. We encourage all schools/programs to hold an essay contest among their 5th grade students. **Each school must choose only one "School Winner"** (except for home-schooled students who may send their entries directly to the Essay Contest Coordinator).
3. **The submission form (see Attachment # 4) with complete school/program contact information AND the parent/guardian release and consent form must accompany each essay when it is submitted.**
4. Participants should develop their thoughts into an essay no longer than one (1) typewritten or two (2) handwritten pages. If it is typewritten, the font and font size must be Times New Roman, size 12 or 14. If hand written, it must be legible.
5. The School Winner's essay must be submitted to the Essay Contest Coordinators by the deadline **(March 4, 2022)** in order to be considered for the regional and statewide winner. ONLY ONE ESSAY FROM EACH SCHOOL CAN BE SUBMITTED TO THE ESSAY CONTEST COORDINATORS (except for home-schooled students who may send their entries directly to the Essay Contest Coordinator).
6. Essays must focus on things children can do to help keep them safe from abduction while at home, at school, at a library, at a friend's house, or anytime they are away from their parents.
7. Essays may be based upon, but are not limited to:
 - Personal experiences of either the child, friends or relatives
 - Discussions with their parents and teachers about abduction safety tips and where they can go to get away from uncomfortable situations
 - Interviews with people who can assist them should they encounter situations beyond their control.
8. Essays must be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. They must demonstrate clear thought processes and be based on realistic scenarios.

AWARDS:

- **School Winner** – Each participating school must select **one (1) winner** (except for home-schooled students who may send their entries directly to the Essay Contest Coordinator). The winning essay must be submitted to the contest coordinator by **Friday, March 4, 2022**. A certificate of participation will be given to all of the school winners. The school contact person can submit the school winner's essay using one of the following methods:

- E-mail from school: Forward the following to fmcd@fdle.state.fl.us
 - Submission Form (See Attachment #4)
 - A copy of the school's winning essay
- Fax: (850) 410-8744, Attn A. Bullard
- Mail: FDLE, Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse, PO Box 1489, Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489, ATTN: Essay Contest Coordinator

- **Regional Winner** – All essays received by March 4, 2022, will be reviewed by a committee. One winner from the seven FDLE regions will be chosen as Regional Winners. Please see the map on Attachment # 2 to determine the region your County is listed. The seven FDLE regions are:

Tallahassee Region
Jacksonville Region
Tampa Region
Orlando Region
Miami Region
Ft. Myers Region
Pensacola Region

- Each regional winner will receive:
 - A check for \$100
 - And an opportunity to be selected as the statewide winner
- **Statewide Winner** – The statewide winner will be selected from among the regional winners. The statewide winner will also be invited to Tallahassee to read the winning essay at the Capitol during the formal Florida Missing Children's Day Ceremony on September 12, 2022. At that time, the statewide winner will receive the following:
 - An additional check for \$100
 - A Trophy
 - A Trip to Universal Studios

**** Winners will be announced prior to the close of the 2021-2022 school year.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

STUDENTS

- You can use the interview sheet (see Attachment # 3) to conduct interviews with individuals who can provide the child with helpful tips on how to stay safe.
- Discuss the subject with friends and classmates. Have they been in a situation where they were asked to provide personal information?
- Have they received messages or phone calls from someone they do not know? If so, how did they handle it?
- With permission from parents, visit the library to research other materials that can provide helpful safety tips. Attachment # 1 has a few helpful links for your research.
- Be sure to ask permission from your parents before you conduct interviews or go on the Internet.

TEACHERS/FAMILIES

- An electronic copy of a promotional flyer is attached and can be duplicated to advertise this contest. 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 that made you feel uncomfortable?
 - What would you do if someone you do not know asked you to go somewhere with them, or if they asked you for your personal information?
 - What would you do if you are approached by someone who made you feel uncomfortable, or if someone tried to take you?
- Conduct a class discussion to explore different dangers that children face. Have students break into groups to brainstorm and discuss safety tips that they can use.
- 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 family time or whenever a “teachable” moment arises. Suggest they include all siblings as much as possible.
- If a child opts to conduct interviews, help devise a plan so that the information gathered can be helpful.

ATTACHMENT #1

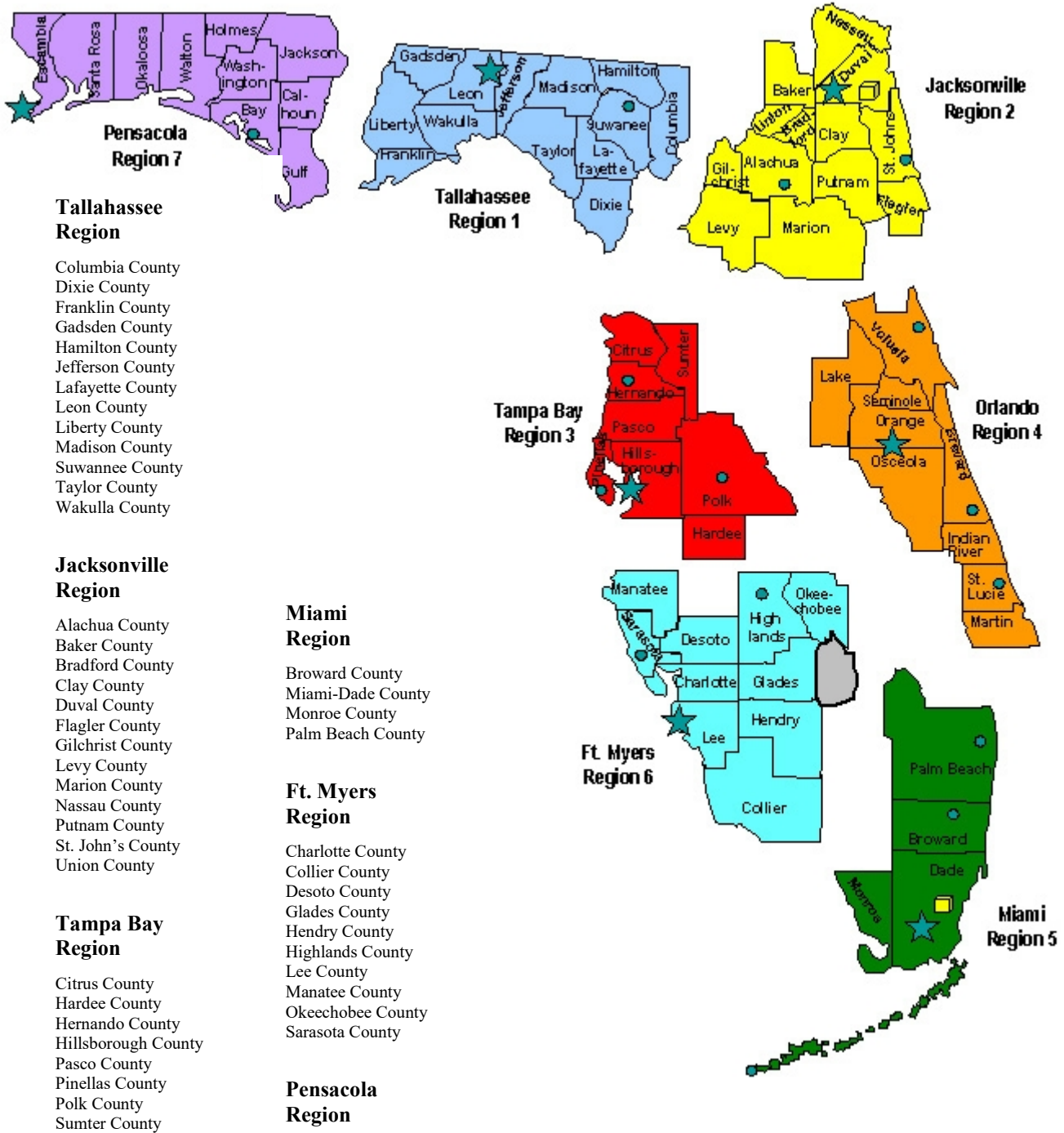
WEB SITES WITH INTERNET SAFETY INFORMATION:

The following is a brief list of available websites that provide child safety tips. Listed within is appropriate information for students, teachers, and parents as all work toward helping children learn how to keep themselves safe.

1. FDLE, Missing Children Information Clearinghouse
<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MCICSearch/> (click on the “Safety Tips” tab)
<http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/MCICSearch/Publications.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

Map of the 7 FDLE Regions

ATTACHMENT # 2



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

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

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

Orlando Region

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

Miami Region

Broward County
Miami-Dade County
Monroe County
Palm Beach County

Ft. Myers Region

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

Pensacola Region

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

INTERVIEW SHEET

ATTACHMENT # 3

If you decide to interview someone, you may use this sheet. Be sure to interview adults who can provide helpful tips on how you can stay safe all day. Be sure to get permission from your parent/guardian prior to your interviews. 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 to interview: 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?
When are you available?
How can I get in touch with you if I need help?
If you are not available, who else can I contact for help?

Parent/Guardian's Signature



SUBMISSION FORM

ATTACHMENT # 4

Florida Missing Children's Day 2022
Statewide 5th Grade Essay Contest

Theme: "This Is How I Stay Safe All Day"



Please include this information to submit your school's essay to the Essay Contest Coordinator.

Email to- fmcd@fdle.state.fl.us

Fax to 850-410-8744, Attn A. Bullard

Mail – FDLE/MEPIC, P. O. Box 1489, Tallahassee, FL 32302

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Student's Name as it should appear on the certificate. Please print clearly.		
School/Program Type <input type="checkbox"/> Public/Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool Program <input type="checkbox"/> Home School <input type="checkbox"/> Other		
School/Program Name		
School/Program Address	City	
State	Zip Code	County
Teacher/Program Contact Name	Phone Number	
Fax Number	Email	
Alternate Teacher/Program Contact Name	Phone Number	