

It's National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week and the San Mateo County Office of Public Communications 9-1-1 Dispatch Center would like to share this important information with you on teaching your child how to use 9-1-1. 1. It's hard to track down "mommy" and "daddy." It's never too early to teach your children your first and last name. 2. Have your children memorize their address, including city, as well as your home phone and cell phone numbers. 3. Knowing the name of their school is important, especially for pre-schoolers and children at day care facilities in the event something happens to the provider and/or teacher and a child has to call 9-1-1 for help. 4. Location, location, location! Explain that knowing where you are is important for the police or an ambulance to get to you for help and that calling from a cell phone doesn't always transmit location to 9-1-1 so help your children be aware of their surroundings and memorize important addresses. 5. Make sure your children understand that calling 9-1-1 as a joke is a crime in many places and stress that whenever an unnecessary call is made to 9-1-1, it can delay a response to someone who actually needs it. 6. Tell your children that even though they shouldn't give personal information to strangers, it's OK to trust the 9-1-1 operator. Walk them through some of the questions the operator will ask, including: What's the address? What type of emergency is this? What is the phone number you're calling from? What's your name? Tell me exactly what happened. 7. Always refer to the emergency number as "nine-one-one" not "nine-eleven." In an emergency, a child may not know how to dial the number correctly because of trying to find the "eleven" button on the phone. 8. Explain what constitutes an emergency, such as a fire, an intruder in the home, an unconscious family member — these are all things that would require a call to 9-1-1. A skinned knee, a stolen bicycle, or a lost pet wouldn't. Still, teach your child that if ever in doubt and there's no adult around to ask, make the call. It's much better to be safe than sorry. For more information, visit our Office of Public Safety Communications at <https://911dispatch.smcgov.org/>.