

t Thursday, February 23, 2017

Children's Authority: **Keep your child safe for Carnival**

Increasing reports of missing children is a matter of concern for the Children's Authority of T&T which notes that children who run away from home are at the risk of being exposed to physical and sexual abuse from perpetrators, who will have increased access and opportunity.

The Authority is appealing to parents and guardians to know their children's whereabouts and ensure that they are supervised at all times by a trusted adult.

In a statement yesterday, the Authority reminded parents and guardians that maintaining open communication with children allows them to feel comfortable to report any incidents or concerns they may have. Parents and guardians were also advised to ensure adequate measures are put in place for children's safety over the Carnival period.

The Authority offered the following advice to keep children safe:

- Set boundaries about places children may go and enforce them
- Encourage children to check in with you frequently when they are not at home
 - Monitor closely social media and cellular phone activity
 - Observe changes in your child's behaviour which may reveal signs of abuse
 - Know your children's friends and observe any new influences which may affect their behaviour
- Older children should not be given the responsibility to supervise younger ones
- When attending Carnival activities, provide young children with identification cards bearing their name, name of parent/guardian, address and telephone number (this should be placed on their person, eg pocket, pinned under shirt or around the wrist)
- Do not serve alcoholic beverages to children
 - If children are attending camps, be aware of the adults supervising them, their contact information and request the itinerary of events
- Monitor children at all times when at the beach or by the river. Never allow a child to go into the water alone
 - Regardless of age, parents and guardians should talk to children about safety rules

The Authority said all incidents of child abuse should be reported to the police or to the Authority at 996, 800-2014 or email registry@ttchildren.org. For more information about the Children's Authority, visit www.ttchildren.org