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## Back-to-School Safety Tips

**SANTA ANA, Calif. (August 5, 2010)** – It's almost time to send your children back to school, and some parents may be breathing a sigh of relief after the long summer. But before you pack the kids up and rush them out the door, there are a few things to keep in mind regarding their wellbeing. Universal Services of America gives you the following tips to help ensure the safety of your little ones, as you send them off to tackle another school year.

- **Walking to and from school:** map out the route your child will take and know who lives along it. While you don't have to know every homeowner, it is important you research for any possible sexual predators that may live in the area. Also advise your children to stay on the preselected path and avoid any parks, alleys, fields, etc., where there aren't a lot of people around. Find out beforehand if there will be crossing guards at the intersections, and arrange for neighborhood children to walk together. Ensure your child knows their address and phone number.
- **Riding a bike or scooter:** make sure they know and obey the traffic laws and wear proper safety equipment. Bike helmets, sturdy shoes and a backpack that isn't overloaded will all help make the trip easier and safer for your little one.
- **If you plan on driving your child to school,** make sure you see them enter the school yard or building before you leave.
- **If your child will be taking the bus,** instruct them to arrive at the stop early, stay out of the street while waiting and always keep themselves visible to the bus driver.
- **Dealing with bullies:** teach your child to stand tall, remain calm and walk away from difficult confrontations; if you suspect your child is being bullied, visit the school immediately and explain the situation to the principal.
- **Playground safety:** check out the equipment your child will be playing on and report any potential hazards. Remove the drawstrings from around the neck of clothing; any drawstrings at the waist or bottom of a garment should be trimmed to no more than three inches long.
- **Children need strict rules in place if they will be home alone:** set a check-in time for them to call and let you know they made it home, and make sure they understand to keep the doors locked once they're inside. Additionally, you and your children should make plans beforehand for what they need to do in emergency situations, such as fires, accidents, earthquakes, etc.
- **Remaining healthy and drug/alcohol-free can be challenging for kids when faced with peer pressure;** take this opportunity to speak to them about it. The Office of National Drug Control Policy has launched a campaign called Above the Influence to help you approach this topic with your children. You can access their information at: <http://www.abovetheinfluence.com/heatmap/>

For additional security tips, please visit: <http://www.universalpro.com/SecurityUpdates.html>

### About Universal Services of America

Founded in 1965, **Universal Services of America** combines tradition with advanced technology to provide clients unmatched security protection, systems, fire/life safety and building maintenance services. Universal provides a full range of building services throughout Arizona, California, Colorado and Texas, and includes Universal Protection Service, Universal Building Maintenance, Universal Security Systems and Universal Fire/Life Safety Services. (State Licenses: 1003458, 14417, 1025514, 0600, 58361). Visit us at: <http://www.universalpro.com>.