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Pt. 1

**MY CHILD IS MISSING
FACILITATOR'S GUIDE:
A Guide to Missing and Abducted
Child Case Investigations**

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**My Child is Missing Video training package is based upon the book:
Missing and Abducted Children: A Law Enforcement Guide
To Case Investigation and Program Management (2nd Edition)
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Foreword

The “**My Child is Missing**” (MCIM) training package is the result of a collaboration of professionals who work with missing and abducted children on a daily basis. It grew out of the observation that there was a startling lack of quality training materials on the subject for the various professionals: law enforcement, social services, medical and human services who deal with missing children and the families of the missing.

It is our hope that this brief instructional “package” will be the beginning of an ongoing process of training on the subject. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) offers several multi-day trainings on this subject. The **MCIM training video**, *Facilitator’s Guide* and *Officer’s Field Guide* have been well researched by leaders in the field. We owe a great deal of thanks to the National Center for permission to use their vast resources including the book *Missing and Exploited Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management*, (2nd Edition). We would also like to thank the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Critical Incident Response Group for the use of portions of the *Child Abduction Response Plan* (1998).

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The author would like to thank John Walsh from Fox TV’s “**America’s Most Wanted: America Strikes Back**” (AMW) for hosting the Video. The efforts of Ms. Sheri Nolan and David Braxton from the AMW staff in organizing schedules and studio time were greatly appreciated.

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Medical Services, and the Greater Baltimore Medical Center. These agencies helped to provide “visual diversity” in the various vignettes, allowing us to show you, the viewer, that what you’re seeing is different than the scene preceding or following.

The musical artists who contributed to the soundtrack deserve specific recognition and thanks. The song used in the introduction, “Among the Missing,” performed by Michael McDonald and Kathy Mattea, appears courtesy of RCA Records. A special thanks goes out to the “Canadian Nightingale” Georgette Fry, for her version of the Tom Waits song “On the Nickel” during the runaway scene and an original contribution for this production, “You Didn’t Come Home Today” heard during the credits. Ms. Fry appears courtesy of Spare Rib Records.

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Introduction

The Facilitator's Manual is written for the men and women who conduct training within their organization. The manual's purpose is to review the material covered in the video, which will allow you to present the class/workshop in an organized, coherent fashion. It will also give you some additional information that you may use to appeal to the different learning styles of your students. Our intent is that you will be able to quickly "brush up" on the various material on the subject of missing and abducted children. For the best treatment on the subject, you may order your own copy of *Missing and Abducted Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management* from the National Center (NCMEC) by simply calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

The training package can be used in "the academy" with new employees, cadets, or at "In-Service Training" with grizzled veterans who "think they know everything." Another important audience should include the Department of Human Resources/Child Protective Services/Department of Social Services staff, who can sometimes be at odds with law enforcement in determining who has jurisdiction for a specific case. Hospital emergency workers are the third group we hope to reach, as their jobs frequently overlap with child protective service workers and law enforcement around child safety issues.

We suggest you stop the tape to review relevant points, specific protocols of your department and any differences in jurisdiction or state law. We have structured the tape to provide ample time "between scenes" for you to do this with the inclusion of the "Stop Tape Here" message.

A word on the chapter structure. Each investigatory chapter begins with "bullets" from the Law Enforcement Guide. The video incorporates most of these points, which are also found in *An Officer's Field Guide for Missing and Abducted Child Case Investigations*. Second, are "call outs/talk points" from the chapter which NCMEC felt were important enough to call to the reader's attention (referenced with the page number), as well as other relevant material the author wished to call to the reader's attention, such as issues which were emphasized in the film. Third, are the "discussion questions," designed to stimulate discussion, emphasize particular points, etc. Fourth, "relevant publications" refers the reader to appropriate/specialized written materials on the particular subject. Finally, the "conclusion" sections are drawn directly from the Law Enforcement Guide's chapter conclusions, with the exception of Chapter 6, which was drawn from the video's concluding remarks.

We have included some suggested questions to use to assess your audiences' competency, that is, did they "get" the information conveyed (which can be used for a quality assurance quiz). Also included are discussion questions that should drive home these points regarding investigative techniques, policies and procedures. The appendix includes some forms your students and departments may find useful. Please feel free to use them as is or to modify them to suit your needs without worrying about copyright infringement.

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CHAPTER 1

Issue Perspective



Historical Overview

The first countrywide awareness of the missing child issue was in 1932, following the abduction and murder of Charles Lindbergh's son. This led to the passage of the **Federal Kidnapping Act** (see figure 1-1). As you can see, several other laws have been passed in recent years pertaining to missing and abducted children.

Other issues have been less clear with respect to runaway and family abduction incidents. Children who voluntarily left home as runaways were classified as **status offenders**. Prior to 1974, habitual runaways could be placed in **secure detention** facilities while awaiting a juvenile court hearing. However, some states did not have separate facilities strictly for juveniles, and so the practice was outlawed in 1974.

The issue of child custody disputes is not a new one. With the rates of divorce increasing significantly in the 1960's, so too did the incidents of family abductions. Parents unhappy with their custody arrangements in one state sometimes abducted their child(ren) and took them to jurisdictions that would grant them custody without much consideration of a previous determination, a process known as **forum shopping**.

Significant Measures Enacted to Assist Children At-Risk

Year	Event
1932	Passage of the Federal Kidnapping Act
1968-1983	Adoption of the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act by all states within the United States of America
1974	Passage of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Passage of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act
1975	Federal Bureau of Investigation instituted the Missing Person File
1980	Passage of the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act
1982	Passage of the Missing Children Act
1983	Federal Bureau of Investigation instituted the Unidentified Person File
1984	Establishment of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
1988	Passage of the Missing Children's Assistance Act United States became a signatory to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction Passage of the International Child Abduction Remedies Act Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act was amended to create the Transitional Living Program for Homeless Youth
1990	Passage of the National Child Search Assistance Act
1993	Enactment of the International Parental Kidnapping Crime Act
1994	Passage of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act including the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexual Violent Offender Registration Act and Child Safety Act
2000	Passage of the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement (CAPE) Act known as "Jennifer's Law"

Figure 1-1

By 1983 all states had adopted the **Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (UCCJA)**. In 1975 the **National Crime Information Center (NCIC)** was established to improve communication among law enforcement agencies concerning notification and information on missing children. Maintained by the FBI, an automated information

sharing system known as the **Missing Person File** has allowed officers anywhere in the nation to verify a report of a missing child within minutes of the entry by the originating law enforcement agency.

In 1980 the U.S. Congress enacted the **Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (PKPA)**, which clarified and set a consistent legal standard for family abduction cases with respect to sentencing.

In 1982, following several shocking incidents of child murders in Atlanta, New York and Florida, Congress passed the **Missing Children Act (MCA)** which called upon law enforcement to vigorously investigate **every** missing child case and enter all pertinent information into the NCIC Missing Person File.

In 1983 NCIC instituted the **Unidentified Person File**, which allowed investigators to compare information from their missing children cases against descriptions of unidentified bodies from jurisdictions across the country.

1984 saw two significant events occur regarding missing children. The first was the passage of the **Missing Children's Assistance Act (MCAA)** which recognized that "federal assistance is urgently needed to coordinate and assist in the national problem of missing and abducted children." Congress directed the Office Of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to establish a private organization that would: operate a national clearing-house of information about missing and exploited children; maintain a toll-free, 24-hour, national telephone hotline to take information on missing and exploited children; provide technical assistance to law enforcement, nonprofit missing children's organizations and families to help locate missing children; develop training programs to aid law enforcement in the investigation of missing and exploited child cases; and increase the public's awareness concerning the issues of missing and exploited children.

The second significant event in 1984 was the opening of the **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)** aided by many of the same people and organizations that helped lobby Congress for the MCAA.

In 1988 the United States became a signatory to the **Hague Convention of the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction**, which assisted investigators and searching parents whose children were removed from the United States. This document accompanied the International Child Abduction Remedies Act of 1988, which established procedures for bringing court actions in the United States for the return of abducted children pursuant to the Hague Convention. The Hague Convention has assisted in the successful return of children *when the other nation is also a signatory of the treaty.*

To obtain further information on the UCCJA, PKPA, Hague Convention and the International Child Abduction Remedies Act of 1988, call **1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)** and request the NCMEC publication *Family Abduction: How to Prevent an Abduction and What To Do If Your Child Is Abducted.*

In 1990 the U.S. Congress passed the **National Child Search Assistance Act** mandating certain actions including:

- No federal, state or local law enforcement agency will establish or observe a waiting period before accepting a missing child case.
- All agencies will enter, without delay, reports of missing children younger than 18 years of age into the NCIC Missing Person File.
- Agencies will update identifying information on each case in NCIC within 60 days.
- Each case will receive proper investigative action.
- Investigators will maintain a close liaison with NCMEC on appropriate cases.

The Numbers

Perspective is one critical aspect to understanding a concept or idea. In law enforcement, government and other professions, statistics are an important way of sizing up a problem. Trying to get a handle on the number of children who are reported missing in the United States, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act commissioned a study in 1975 titled the *National Statistical Survey on Runaway Youth* in an attempt to categorize youngsters who were reported missing. They estimated that 500,000 ran away from home each year.

In 1982 congressional hearings that resulted in the Missing Children Act heard testimony indicating that 2 million young people disappeared each year, with over 5,000 being murdered through kidnapping and abduction. These unsubstantiated numbers were felt to be exaggerated but were repeated so often that OJJDP commissioned the *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America* (NISMART) in 1984. The study was published in 1990 and attempted to accurately estimate the number of missing children in the U.S.

Results of National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America (NISMART)		
Type of Case	Broad Scope Incidents	Policy Focal Incidents
Runaway	450,700	133,500
Lost/Injured/Otherwise Missing	139,100	438,200
Family Abduction	354,100	163,200
Thrownaway	127,100	59,200
Nonfamily Abduction	-	3,200 - 4,600
Attempted Abductions	114,600	-

Figure 1-2

The study discovered that the general concept of missing children actually encompassed five separate and distinct problems, namely: family abduction; runaway; nonfamily

abduction; throwaways; and lost, hurt or otherwise missing children (see figure 1-2). The issue seemed to be that of recovering the children versus the caregiver not knowing their whereabouts. OJJDP is in the process of publishing the NISMART II study, which will be available in 2001.

Law enforcement needs to understand that this is a multifaceted problem and often requires the expenditure or utilization of resources beyond those which have traditionally been used to find missing children.

Law Enforcement's Response to Reports of Missing Children

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention was responsible for accurately estimating the number of children reported missing each year, as well as measuring the priorities and procedures that the nation's law enforcement agencies followed when investigating reports of missing children. In 1992 the *National Study of Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth* was released, containing several findings of interest to police investigators and administrators. It supported the notion that law enforcement readily accepts its important role in the missing children issue. Its findings noted that police evaluate each case on an individual basis; race and socioeconomic status do not influence the way a case is investigated; the longer a case remains active, the greater the risk to the child; officers are unaware of or are reluctant to contact local community groups that offer services to at-risk children, especially after the child has been recovered; law enforcement agencies with written policies on missing child cases are viewed as conducting more vigorous investigations and the parents of missing children are more satisfied when officers pay an in-person visit, request a photograph of the child, and keep in contact during the investigation. The study recommends that:

- An accurate evaluation of the missing child episode is absolutely vital to proper case handling and successful resolution.
- Case screening procedures should be developed to identify at-risk children.
- Law enforcement agencies should institute written guidelines to define responsibilities in missing child investigations.
- Procedures should be developed to integrate a law enforcement response with other family and youth resources in the community.

A copy of the study's executive summary (NCJ 44765) is available from the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC), 1-800-851-3420.

Current Trends, Projects, and Programs

Other issues which have an impact on the topic of missing child investigations of which officers need to be aware are the following:

Training for Law Enforcement Law enforcement agencies often include instruction in missing child investigations as part of recruit training and in-service training since child protection has become a top agency priority. The federal government offers specialized programs aimed at strengthening law enforcement's response to cases of missing children. OJJDP sponsors training courses through NCMEC, such as basic and advanced investigator classes. Contact the National Center (1-800-843-5678) for further details.

Investigation of Family Abduction Cases by the Prosecutor's Office Due to the complex nature often associated with family abduction cases, more jurisdictions are developing cooperative agreements in which the prosecutor's office assumes investigative responsibility from local law enforcement. Check with your agency's standard operational policies and procedures. Reasons for this include limited personnel, length of time for case resolution, ability of prosecutor's office to better evaluate custody decrees and other legal documents, lawyer-to-lawyer effectiveness, ready access to certain data bases, and simplification of violator prosecution.



State Missing Child Clearinghouses State Clearinghouses provide a vital function to law enforcement in missing child case investigation. They act as both a registry for all missing children within the state as well as a liaison to other jurisdictions, states or countries to which the investigation may lead. In addition, some clearinghouses are able to provide specific resources to the investigator such as database checks, flier preparation and distribution, and search and rescue assistance. For a list of these clearinghouses, see Appendix E, State Clearinghouses.

Recent efforts have increased the ability of clearinghouse personnel to disseminate information and leads through electronic information sharing among clearinghouses and

between the National Center (NCMEC) and these clearinghouses. Such information is helpful especially in cases where abductors are believed to be fleeing from state to state and when separate cases in different states may have been committed by the same felon.

Newborn/Infant Abduction Program Although an infrequently occurring crime, infant (birth through six months) abduction by non-family members from healthcare facilities has become a strong concern for parents, nurses, hospitals, healthcare security, law enforcement, and NCMEC. Through a collaboration with several federal, state and private organizations, studies indicate infant abduction is largely preventable by “target hardening” or making it more difficult to abduct the child. Such efforts lead to a dramatic decrease in the number of infants abducted from hospitals. However, there has been an increase in infant abductions from the home and other areas outside the hospital setting. Technical assistance concerning the subject of newborn and infant abduction is available through NCMEC at 1-800-843-5678.

Identifying and Tracking the Sex Offender Statistically speaking, sexual molesters of children are responsible for many abduction cases. As a result, investigative efforts in such cases are often directed towards identifying molesters who might frequent the area where a crime took place or were suspects in other incidents. Officers should be aware of three ongoing initiatives aimed at identifying and tracking sex offenders and obstructing their access to children:

- State legislation that requires careful background checks/screening of all individuals who work or volunteer in positions that bring them in frequent contact with children.
- The enactment of laws that require convicted sex offenders, upon release from prison or placement on parole or probation, to register their current address and their information with local law enforcement (commonly referred to as Megan’s Law).
- Establishment of statewide genetic databases that contain DNA samples from blood or saliva of convicted sex offenders.

Information on such systems to identify and track sex offenders can be found in NCMEC’s publication entitled *Selected State Legislation*. In addition, NCMEC’s Case Enhancement and Information Analysis Unit is available to offer child sex offender case-related technical assistance. Both resources are available by calling 1-800-843-5678.

Participation in Multi-Disciplinary Programs Law enforcement performs one of the most immediate, vital functions concerning missing and exploited children. Officers are often called upon to instantly assess situations of missing or exploited children and promptly render decisions with far-reaching effects for both the child and his or her family. Law enforcement agencies can strengthen their response in these cases by teaming with the many other resource agencies within the community. For more information about such programs, contact NCMEC at 1-800-843-5678.

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse OJJDP established the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC) to collect and disseminate agency publications, research findings and program evaluations concerning juvenile justice issues. Clearinghouse specialists are

available to assist officers by providing information, publications and referrals. In addition, the clearinghouse can also offer access to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), an international clearinghouse established to meet the information needs of the law enforcement and criminal justice communities. Both sources are highly recommended for staying abreast on the latest issues in the justice field. For more information about JJC and NCJRS call 1-800-851-3420.

National Clearinghouse on Runaway and Homeless Youth This organization provides a central source of information on the needs of runaway and homeless youth and makes available program information and materials to youth service providers. It provides information sharing, issue forums, publications development, and networking. For more information on this organization call 301-608-8098.



Refer to Appendix G *Reunification of Abducted Children: A Guide for Law Enforcement* for helpful suggestions

Reunification of Missing Children After weeks, months and often years of investigation, law enforcement officers who successfully locate a missing child are not always aware of the additional trauma associated with reuniting the child and family. OJJDP sponsored the Reunification of Missing Children Project, designed to assist law enforcement officers, criminal and juvenile justice personnel, mental health workers, and social service professionals in developing effective, community based strategies to aid families in adjusting to the return of a missing child.

For a concise guide regarding reunification, see Appendix G, *Reunification of Abducted Children: A Guide for Law Enforcement* and Appendix H, *Reunification of Abducted Children: A Guide for Parents*. For a comprehensive treatment on this subject, contact NCMEC to request a copy of *Recovery and Reunification of Missing Children: A Team Approach* by calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

Deceased Child Project Abductions that result in a child's death present the greatest investigative and emotional obstacles a law enforcement officer is likely to encounter. By reviewing other deceased child cases, officers may be able to see similarities in a current case and find clues that can help resolve their case. For information on available research in this area call NCMEC at 1-800-843-5678.

Call Outs/ Talk Points

- Societal expectations of law enforcement in cases of family abduction were even less clear than those regarding runaways.
- Voicing the nation's concern, parents of missing children testified before U.S. Congressional committees about the tragedy of such incidents and the need for additional resources to help in the investigation of each case (high profile cases such as victims of the Atlanta child murders by serial killer Wayne Williams from 1979 to 1981, the abduction of 7-year-old Etan Patz in 1979, and the 1981 abduction and murder of 6-year-old Adam Walsh).

Discussion Questions

- How does the increase in sex offenders, serial killers and sadistic pedophiles increase the need to respond to missing child cases in a vigorous manner? An increase in child predators elevates the risk to a missing child.
- Discuss the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 and the impact it had on dealing with status offenders. Prior to the 1974 JJDP Act, there was a disjointed response to status offenders. Since passage of the Act law-enforcement's response has been far more uniform and consistent.
- How can your state clearinghouse assist in a missing child investigation? The clearinghouse may be able to:
 - Provide a contact person in another jurisdiction.
 - Quickly create and distribute missing child posters.
 - Provide additional personnel.
 - Provide services to the victim's parents (e.g. victim services, counseling, child locator services, etc.).
 - Provide information on previous missing child reports for the same child.
 - Provide resource information such as search dogs, search teams, etc.
- Why is it important for a law enforcement agency to have written policy and procedures in place for the investigation of missing children cases?

Further Readings

- Collins, J. *National Study of Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth*. Executive Summary available (NCJ 144765) from NCJRS, 1-800-851-3420.
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Recent newspaper articles on missing children

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on facts, statistics and programs related to missing and exploited children to provide perspective on the development of the issue. **Remember, the primary objective must always remain the safe return of endangered children: children with names, children with faces, children with loved ones anxious for their safety.**

Chapter 2

The Initial Response



Initial-Response Investigative Checklist

The purpose of this Investigative Checklist is to provide law enforcement officers and agencies with a generic guide for the investigation of missing child cases. Law enforcement administrators should ensure that their agencies have established effective policies and procedures for the handling of missing/abducted child investigations. Compliance with an agency's standard operating procedures by officers conducting missing-child investigations can result in efficient operations and successful resolution of the incident (and decrease or eliminate the liability of the law enforcement agency).

This checklist is not intended to be followed step-by-step by officers during each missing child investigation. It is meant to provide them with a framework of actions, considerations, and activities that can assist them in performing competent, productive, and successful missing/abducted children investigations.

Administrative

- Intake report from parent/caller.
- Obtain basic facts, details, and a brief description of missing child and abductor.
- Dispatch officer to scene to conduct a preliminary investigation.

- [] Search juvenile/incident records for previous incidents related to missing child and prior police activity in the area including prowlers, indecent exposure, and attempted abductions. Inform responding officer of any pertinent information.
- [] Broadcast known details **on all police communication channels** to other patrol units, other local law-enforcement agencies, and surrounding law-enforcement agencies. If necessary, use the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) telecommunication network to directly alert agencies in multi-state areas.



911 operator

- [] Activate established **fugitive search plans** (prearranged plans among participating police agencies designed to apprehend fleeing fugitives) if necessary.
- [] Maintain records/recordings of telephone communications/messages.
- [] Activate established protocols for working with the media.

First Responder

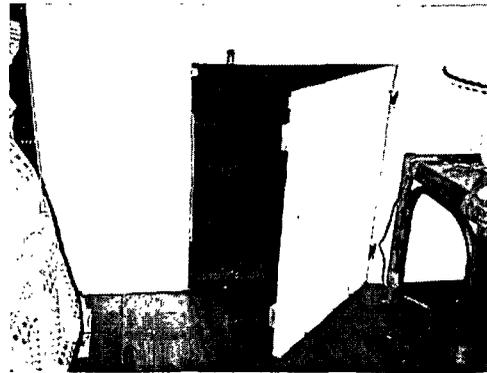
- [] Interview parent(s)/person who made initial report.
- [] Verify that the child is in fact missing.
- [] Verify child's custody status.

- [] Identify the circumstances of the disappearance.
- [] Determine when, where, and by whom the missing child was last seen.
 - [] Interview the individuals who last had contact with the child.
 - [] Identify the child's zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
 - [] Based on the available information, make an **initial** determination of the type of incident whether nonfamily abduction; family abduction; endangered runaway; or lost, injured, or otherwise missing.
 - [] Obtain a **detailed** description of the missing child, abductor, and any vehicles used.
 - [] Relay detailed descriptive information to communications unit for broadcast updates.
 - [] Request additional personnel if circumstances require.
 - [] Request investigative assistance if necessary.
 - [] Request supervisory assistance if necessary.
 - [] Brief and bring up to date all additional responding personnel including supervisors and investigative staff.
 - [] Ensure that everyone at the scene is identified and interviewed separately. Make sure that their interview and identifying information is properly recorded. To aid in this process, if possible, take pictures or record video images of everyone present.
 - [] Note name, address, home/business telephone numbers of each person.
 - [] Determine each person's relationship to the missing child.
 - [] Note information that each person may have about the child's disappearance.
 - [] Determine when/where each person last saw the child.
 - [] Ask each one, "What do you think happened to the child?"
 - [] Obtain names/addresses/telephone numbers of child's friends/associates and other relatives and friends of the family.
 - [] Continue to keep communications unit apprised of all appropriate developing information for broadcast updates.
 - [] Obtain and note permission to search home or building where incident took place.

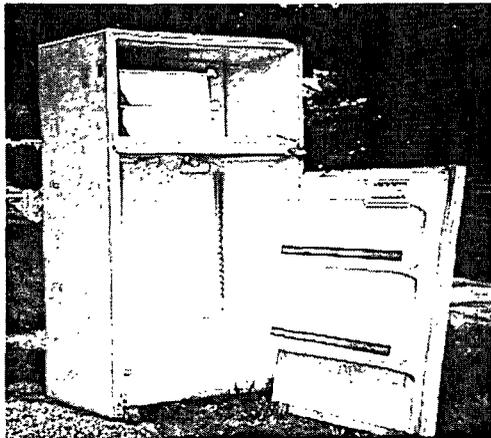
- [] Conduct an immediate, thorough search of the missing child's home, even if the child was reported missing from a different location.
- [] Conduct search to include all surrounding areas including vehicles and other places of concealment.



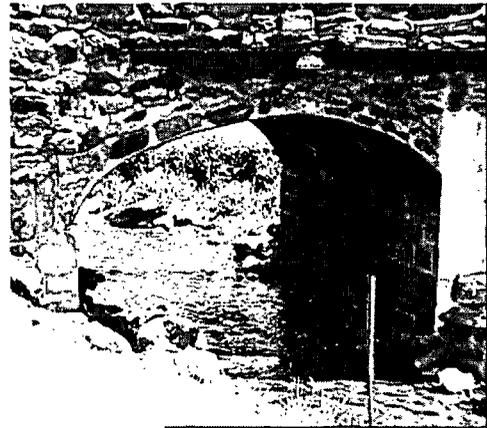
Covered objects



Crawl spaces



Abandoned refrigerators



Under bridges



Construction sites



Other "forbidden" places

- [] Treat the area as a crime scene.
- [] Seal/protect scene and area of the child's home (including child's personal articles such as hairbrush, diary, photographs, and items with the child's DNA/fingerprints/footprints/teeth impressions) so that evidence is not destroyed during or after the initial search and to help ensure that items which could help in the search for and/or to identify the child are preserved. Determine if any of the child's personal items are missing. If possible, photograph/videotape these areas.
- [] Evaluate contents and appearance of the child's room/residence.
- [] Obtain photographs/videotapes of missing child/abductor.
- [] Prepare reports/make all required notifications.
- [] Ensure that information regarding missing child is entered into the NCIC Missing Person File and that any information on a suspected abductor is entered into the NCIC Wanted Person File. (*See Appendices B and C* regarding the child abduction flag and definitions of NCIC categories.)
- [] Interview other family members, friends/associates of the child, and friends of the family to determine:
 - [] When each last saw the child.
 - [] What they think happened to the child.
- [] Ensure that details of the case have been reported to NCMEC.
- [] Prepare and update bulletins for local law-enforcement agencies, state missing children's clearinghouse, FBI, and other appropriate agencies.
- [] Prepare a flier/bulletin with the child/abductor's photograph and descriptive information. Distribute in appropriate geographic regions.
- [] Secure the child's latest medical and dental records.
- [] Establish a telephone hotline for receipt of tips and leads.
- [] Establish a leads management system to prioritize leads and ensure that each one is reviewed and followed up.
- Investigative Officer/Detective**
- [] Obtain briefing from first responding officer and other on-scene personnel.
- [] Verify the accuracy of all descriptive information and other details developed during the preliminary investigation.

- Obtain a brief, recent history of family dynamics.
- Correct and investigate the reasons for any conflicting information offered by witnesses and other individuals submitting information.
- Review and evaluate all available information and evidence collected.
- Develop an investigational plan for follow-up.
- Determine what additional resources and specialized services are required.
- Execute investigative follow-up plan.

Supervisory Responsibility



Call your supervisor



Supervisor directs a search

- Obtain briefing and written reports from first responding officer, investigators, and other agency personnel at the scene.
- Determine if additional personnel are needed to assist in the investigation.
- Determine if outside help is necessary from:
 - State Police.
 - State Missing Children's Clearinghouse.
 - FBI.
 - Specialized Units.
 - Victim-Witness Services.
 - NCMEC's Project ALERT.
- Ensure that all the required resources, equipment, and assistance necessary to conduct an efficient investigation have been requested and expedite their availability.
- Establish a command post away from the child's residence.

- [] Ensure coordination/cooperation among all police personnel involved in the investigation and search effort.
- [] Ensure that all required notifications are made.
- [] Ensure that all agency policies and procedures are in compliance.
- [] Conduct a criminal history check on all principal suspects and participants in the investigation.
- [] Be available to make any decisions or determinations as they develop.
- [] Utilize media (including radio, television, and newspapers) to assist in the search for the missing child and maintain media relations, per established protocols, throughout the duration of the case.

Some Thoughts on Presenting Initial Response Sequence

The film reviews the preceding information from taking the initial call, dispatching the officer, and the responsibility of each person in the chain-of-command. **We suggest you stop the tape** to review relevant points, specific protocols of your department and any differences in state law. We have provided ample time “between scenes” for you to do this with the inclusion of the “Stop Tape Now” message.

Many students may find it helpful to have a copy of the computer graphics displayed in the video. These may be found in **Appendix I**. We suggest copying the four pages onto two pages, front and back (duplex mode), for a handout. That way, they can concentrate on the information contained in the video and not worry about copying the text.

In the Initial Responder scenario, we purposely left case details vague in order to highlight the need to rapidly respond to and assess the situation, involve various personnel and so on. When at first glance a case may seem to be a “typical runaway,” **never assume anything! “Let the facts of the case determine the course of action!”**



Parents are often frantic

Call Outs/ Talk Points

- “Understanding the highly emotional nature of a missing child case is a vital part of being able to assess the situation accurately.”(p27)
- “The attitude or approach an agency and its officers take in the initial response to these situations may actually determine whether the child is recovered and returned home safely, remains missing for months or even years or, worse yet, is never located.”(p28) **Time is critical!**
- “Rather than wait for the responding officer to reach the scene and gather further information...it is recommended that **law enforcement agencies respond to every report of a missing child as if the child is in immediate danger**. Agencies should broadcast an immediate alert, on **all** police communication channels, to **all** other patrol units, providing as much information about the child and the circumstances of the disappearance as possible.”(p29) **Time is critical!**
- “Verify the fact that the child is missing...so that other officers can either continue their involvement in the case or resume regular duties.”(p31)
- Unusual Circumstances Table (p32)

Unusual Circumstances

- ❖ The missing youth is 13 years of age or younger.
- ❖ The missing youth is believed to be out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
- ❖ The missing youth is mentally incapacitated.
- ❖ The missing youth is drug dependent, including prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency on the medication may be potentially life- threatening.
- ❖ The missing youth has been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to the police.
- ❖ Based on available information it is determined that the missing youth is in a life-threatening situation.
- ❖ Based on available information it is believed that the missing youth is in the company of adults who could endanger his or her welfare.
- ❖ The absence is inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained.
- ❖ Other circumstances are involved in the disappearance that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the youth should be considered “at risk.”

Figure 2-1

- “After the initial interviews have been conducted and potential crime scenes have either been searched or secured, the responding officer should ensure that a complete description of the child and circumstances surrounding the disappearance are entered into the NCIC Missing Person File.”(p33)
- “Actions taken by officers during the preliminary stages of an incident are of extreme importance, especially if the case develops into a criminal matter or a long-term investigation.” (p34)
- “While the initial response steps mentioned so far may seem extensive, time-consuming, and labor intensive, law enforcement is urged to commence this preliminary investigation as soon as possible after the original missing child report has been received.” (p35)
- “Major cases will arise, however, when the investigative resources available from other agencies and organizations will be needed to supplement those of the initial agency.” (p36)
- “A command post should be established when the number of people at a scene exceeds the capability of the on-site supervisor’s ability to exercise control.” (p37)
- “If the investigation would be aided by the immediate broadcast of the child’s description and photograph, a press conference held at the command post will be of value.” (p38)
- **AMBER PLAN** – A cooperative effort established with local media, in response to the abduction and murder of 9-year-old Amber Hagerman from Arlington, Texas, in 1996. Simply put, the AMBER PLAN is an emergency broadcast system designed to alert a community when a child has been abducted, instantly adding thousands to the search party. The police will alert the media, who are then expected to stop broadcasts and relay the information to the public, just as they would to warn the community of a tornado. A TIPS line will take calls from the community. As of this writing, there is no formal AMBER PLAN in Maryland and many other states.
- “Coordination and cooperation among all personnel involved in the investigation must be maintained.” (p39)



- Search Fundamentals (p40)

Search Fundamentals

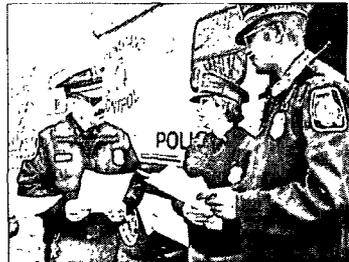
- ❖ Maintain a separate search activity log for each search.
- ❖ Log names and affiliations of **all** searchers, both sworn and civilians, along with their general area of search assignment.
- ❖ Thoroughly brief search team leaders with all the information needed to conduct a complete operation.
- ❖ Instruct all searchers on the search pattern(s) to be used and the techniques employed.
- ❖ Instruct searchers to bring items found to the attention of the appropriate search team leader **without** touching or disturbing them.
- ❖ Control searchers so that no one works alone.
- ❖ Document **all** search activity.
- ❖ Safeguard against the use of inappropriate individuals in the search process.

Figure 2-2

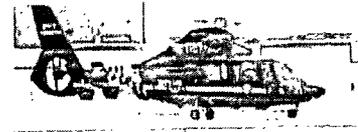
- Other Considerations (p40):
 - Utilizing canine units (both air and ground scent).
 - Considering the use of forced entry into abandoned cars including trunks and spare tire wells.
 - Sealing off apartment complex where the child was last observed and searching vehicles as they leave that complex.
 - Requesting the presence of a prosecutor/county attorney for assistance in search warrant preparation.
 - Conducting a systematic and thoroughly documented search.
 - Notifying and revisiting homes in which no one was found during the initial search.
 - Using search and rescue organizations, fire departments, military units, explorer scout groups, and other volunteers for large-scale search operations.(p40)



Checkpoints

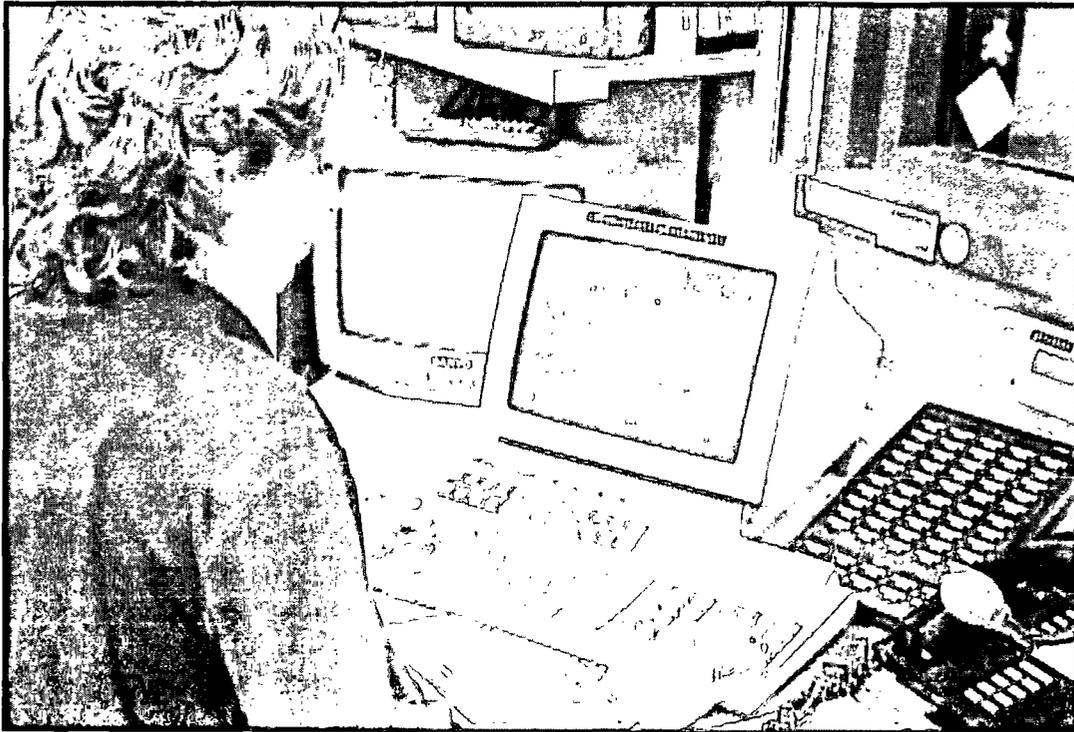


Command center



Aviation support

Law Enforcement Computer Systems



Checking the databases

Computer systems have become the lifeblood of modern-day law enforcement. Here is a brief review of the various systems available to law enforcement officers to instantly request professional assistance in a missing or abducted child case.

The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) NCIC is a nationwide, on-line computer/telecommunications system maintained by the FBI that makes millions of records including files on stolen goods, vehicles, and boats and information on wanted, missing, and unidentified persons instantaneously available to local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies throughout the United States and Canada. Inquiries and replies, available around the clock, everyday of the year, are provided to authorized agencies through the use of an identifying NCIC-ORI (originating resource identifier) number. Established in 1967, NCIC has since created a number of specialized information files and data retrieval programs that are of significant benefit to the law enforcement officer. When investigating cases of missing or abducted children, officers will find three NCIC files to be of particular value when used along with the Wanted Person File (WPF). (See **Appendix A** and **B** for further details.)

- Missing Person File (MPF).
- Unidentified Person File (UPF).
- Off-Line Search Procedure.

The National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System

(NLETS) NLETS is a computerized, high-speed message switching system created for and dedicated to the criminal justice community. Its sole purpose is to provide for the interstate and/or interagency exchange of criminal justice and criminal justice-related information.

The system has the capability to receive, store, and forward message traffic from and to all its user agencies. Administrative message traffic on the system includes all types of free form criminal justice-related data from one point to one or more points. In addition, NLETS supports inquiry into state motor vehicle, driver's license, criminal history and other state databases. NLETS users are primarily criminal justice agencies located nationwide.

The Maryland Interagency Law Enforcement System (MILES)

MILES is the state system allowing users the ability to enter, inquire and update data in the MILES computer as appropriate. MILES provides message-switching capabilities and is interfaced with several systems such as The National Crime Information Center (NCIC), The National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS), the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) and other criminal justice agencies. Each state has an equivalent system that is named by that state.

Unusual Circumstances

- ❖ The missing youth is 13 years of age or younger.
- ❖ The missing youth is believed to be out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
- ❖ The missing youth is mentally incapacitated.
- ❖ The missing youth is drug dependent, including prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency on the medication may be potentially life-threatening.
- ❖ The missing youth has been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to the police.
- ❖ Based on available information it is determined that the missing youth is in a life-threatening situation.
- ❖ Based on available information it is believed that the missing youth is in the company of adults who could endanger his or her welfare.
- ❖ The absence is inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained.
- ❖ Other circumstances are involved in the disappearance that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the youth should be considered "at risk."

Figure 2-3

Discussion Questions

- Have you personally ever been lost in the woods, while driving, etc.? Ever lose your spouse/significant other/kid(s) at a store, the mall, etc.? How did you feel? What did you think? What did you do in the situation? A parent whose child is missing experiences a broad range of emotions -- confusion, anger, fear, panic, and hopefully, relief.
- Why is “time critical” in these cases? Law enforcement’s attitude and approach in the initial response may actually determine whether the child is recovered and returned home safely or remains missing for months or even years, or worse yet, is never located.
- What is the importance of putting the child’s name into NCIC as soon as possible? Records are instantaneously available to local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies throughout the United States and Canada 24 hours a day.
- Name the nine unusual circumstances pertaining to missing children. See Unusual Circumstances in figure 2-1.
- Discuss the importance of the Be On the Look Out (BOLO) bulletins. Not issuing a BOLO slows the resources other agencies can offer and further jeopardizes the safety of the child.
- Discuss the importance of having a case coordinator. The case coordinator permits responding officers to focus on specific, assigned tasks.
- What are some search fundamentals? (Refer to figure 2.2)
- What criminal justice computer systems are available to the investigating officer? There are three:
 1. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) – Missing Person File (MPF), Unidentified Person File (UPF) and NCIC Off Line Search Procedure.
 2. National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS).
 3. Maryland Interagency Law Enforcement System (MILES) – or your state’s equivalent.

Further Readings

- Missing and Abducted Children: A Law-Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management (2nd Edition) Available through the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, 1-800-THE-LOST, 1-800-843-5678
Adams, T. *Police Field Operations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997.
- Dempsey, T. *Contemporary Patrol Tactics: A Practical Guide for Patrol Officers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1992.
- “Missing and Abducted Children: The First Responder” and “Missing and Abducted Children: Supervision and Investigation.” *Training Key Series*, Keys #460 and #461 respectively, Alexandria, VA: International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), 1995.

- U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Child Abduction Response Plan: An Investigative Guide* (1998). Available from FBI Field Division offices. For information call 703-632-4347
- U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*. To subscribe to this monthly magazine or obtain back issues, contact Superintendent of Documents, PO Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Current and back issues can be viewed online at www.fbi.gov.
 - Conner, T. *Incident Command Systems for Law Enforcement*, September 1997.
 - Garrison, D. *Protecting the Crime Scene*, September 1994.
 - Police Practice Series. *Mobile Command Posts*, January 1991.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Publications listed are available from NCJRS, 1-800-851-3420.
- *Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth* (1993). Summary (NCJ145644) and final report (NCJ143397).
- *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America* (1990). Executive Summary (NCJ123667) and complete report (NCJ123668).

Conclusion

Efforts undertaken by law enforcement agencies during the initial stages of a missing child report can often make the difference between a case with a swift, successful conclusion and one that evolves into months or even years of stressful, unresolved investigation. While the investigative aspect of a missing child case is similar in many ways to other major cases, few of these other situations have the added emotional stress created by the unexplained disappearance of a child. When not anticipated and prepared for, this stress can adversely affect the outcome of a missing-child case.

Preparation and pre-incident planning are central to the development of an effective law-enforcement response to missing-child cases. Obviously, pre-incident planning does not just happen. It comes about when an agency, jurisdiction, or region recognizes that this one area of child protection deserves improved, coordinated attention. It also comes about when all related resources within the community, and those who pledge to respond from a distance, agree on a protocol that dismisses rivalries and places the safety of the child as the first and foremost goal.

NCMEC is available at **1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)** to offer resources and technical assistance with any of the suggestions presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3

Nonfamily Abduction Investigative Checklist



Predator eyes his prey

Review all steps outlined in the “Initial Response Investigative Checklist” found on page 17. In addition, in cases of nonfamily abduction, consider the steps listed below.

Initial Investigation

- Assign officer to victim’s residence with the ability to record and “trap and trace” all incoming calls. **In many states you may need a court order to do this; check with your state attorney.** Consider setting up a separate telephone line or cellular telephone for agency use.
- Conduct neighborhood/vehicle canvass.
- Compile list of known sex offenders in the region.
- Develop profile on possible abductor.
- Consider use of polygraph for parents and other key individuals.
- In cases of infant abduction, investigate claims of home births made in that area.

- [] Fully load NCIC Missing Person File (involuntary category) with complete descriptive information, medical information, dental information, and use the Child Abduction (“CA”) flag as described in **Appendix B**.
- [] Utilize NLETS and other information systems to alert local, state, regional, and federal law-enforcement agencies.
- [] Review records found in various law-enforcement databases, including NLETS, for attempted abductions with case similarities.
- [] Provide support for family through nonprofit missing children’s organization (see **Appendix F**).

Prolonged Investigation

- [] Reread all reports and transcripts of interviews.
- [] Revisit the crime scene.
- [] Review all potential witness/suspect information obtained in the initial investigation and consider background checks on anyone identified in the investigation.
- [] Review all photographs and videotapes.
- [] Reexamine all physical evidence collected.
- [] Review child protective agency records for reports of abuse on the child.
- [] Develop time lines and other visual exhibits.
- [] Reinterview key individuals.
- [] Interview individuals such as delivery personnel; employees of gas, water, electric, and cable companies; taxi drivers; post office personnel; and garbage handlers.
- [] Critique results of the ongoing investigation with appropriate investigative resources.
- [] Arrange for periodic media coverage.
- [] Utilize rewards and “Crime Stopper” programs.
- [] Contact NCMEC for photo dissemination, age-progression, and other case assistance.
- [] Update NCIC Missing Person File information as necessary.

Recovery/Case Closure

- [] Arrange for a comprehensive physical examination of the victim.
- [] Conduct a careful interview of the child, document the results of the interview, and involve all appropriate agencies.
- [] Provide effective reunification techniques.
- [] Cancel alarms and remove case from NCIC and other information systems.
- [] Perform constructive post-case critique.

Call Outs/Talk Points



According to NISMART, nonfamily abductions occur hundreds of times per year.

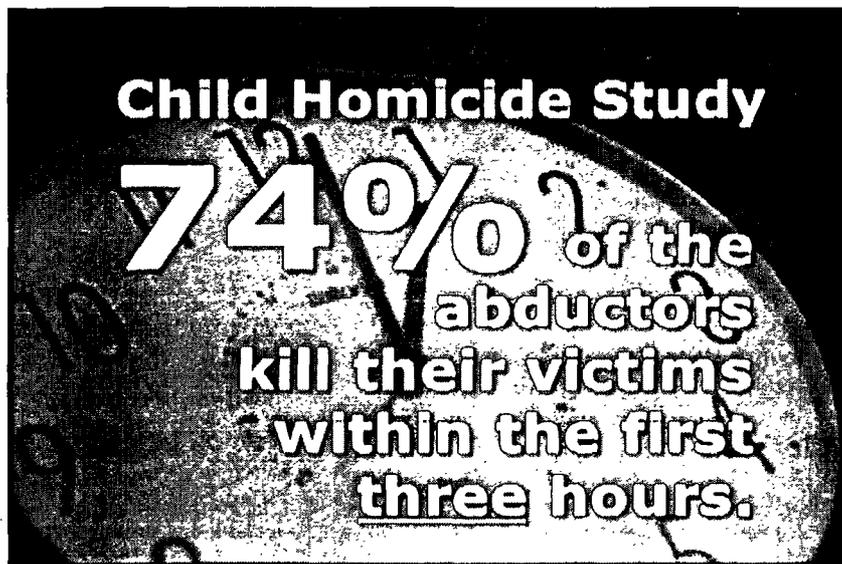
- Legal definition versus stereotypical kidnapping
 - **Legal definition of nonfamily abduction** is the coerced and unauthorized **taking** of a child into a building, vehicle, or distance of more than 20 feet; the **detention** of a child for more than an hour; or the **luring** of a child for the purposes of committing another crime by someone other than a family member.
 - **Stereotypical kidnapping** requires that the child is gone overnight, killed, transported a distance of 50 miles or more, and ransomed, or that the perpetrator evidenced an intent to keep the child permanently (p47).
- **First and foremost is the safe return of the victim** (p49).

- NISMART Data (figure 3-1, p47).

NISMART (1990) Data on Nonfamily Abductions	
Type of Case	Estimates Per Year
Attempted Nonfamily Abductions	114,600
Nonfamily Abductions (Legal Definition)	3,200-4,600
Stereotypical Kidnappings	200-300

Figure 3-1

- Many experts believe that abducted children often face the greatest danger during the first few hours after the abduction (p48). See Washington State’s Attorney General’s study on child homicide in Further Readings section in this chapter.



Washington State’s Attorney General study results

- One of the study’s findings was that “the vast majority (74%) of abducted children *who are murdered* are dead within the first three hours of the abduction. Because of these critical time factors, it is important to respond quickly with a neighborhood canvass and search of the area.”
- Over half (53%) of these child abduction murders are committed by a stranger to the victim.
- The typical hospital infant abduction case involves an “unknown” abductor impersonating a nurse, hospital employee, volunteer, or relative in order to gain access to an infant (p50).

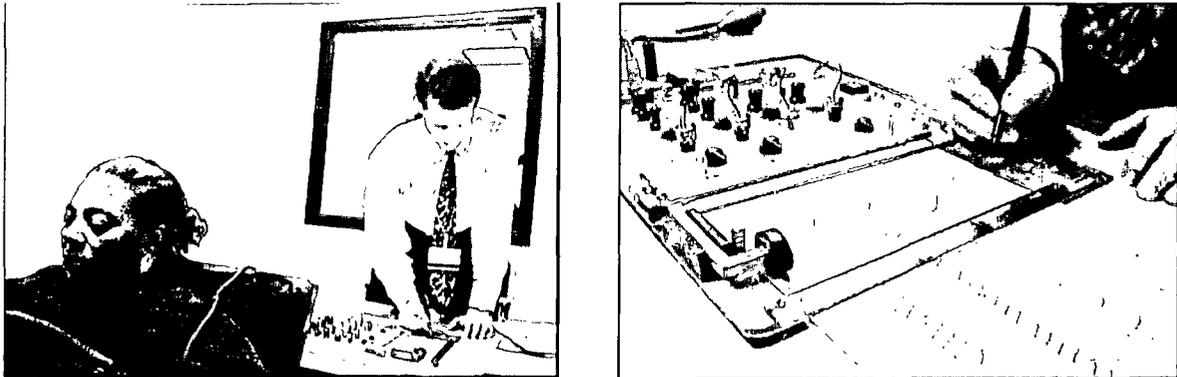
- Unusual Circumstances (figure 3-2, p49).

Unusual Circumstances

- ❖ The missing youth is 13 years of age or younger.
- ❖ The missing youth is believed to be out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
- ❖ The missing youth is mentally incapacitated.
- ❖ The missing youth is drug dependent, including prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency on the medication may be potentially life threatening.
- ❖ The missing youth has been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to the police.
- ❖ Based on available information it is determined that the missing youth is in a life-threatening situation.
- ❖ Based on available information it is believed that the missing youth is in the company of adults who could endanger his or her welfare.
- ❖ The absence is inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained.
- ❖ Other circumstances are involved in the disappearance that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the youth should be considered "at risk."

Figure 3-2

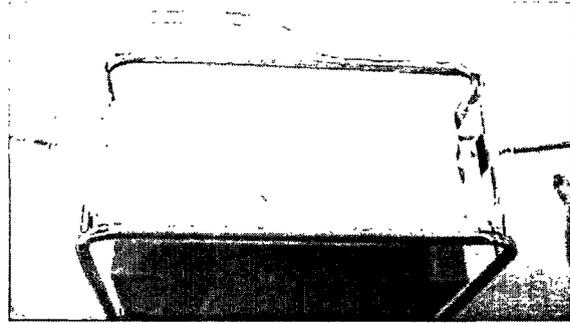
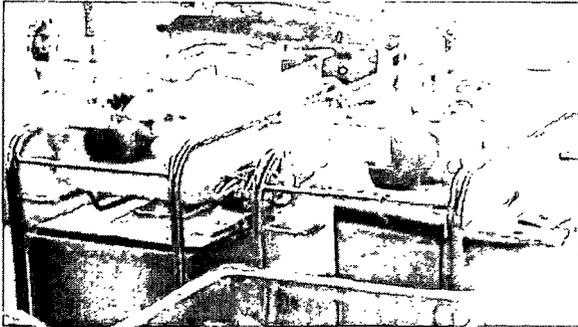
- Most often infants are recovered as a direct result of the leads generated by media coverage of the abduction (p52).



Use a polygraph to eliminate or confirm possible suspects.

- While opinions may differ concerning the validity and effectiveness of the polygraph, officers who do advocate its use recommend holding examinations **early** in the investigative process (p54).
- Parents and other immediate family members should be assured that every resource is being used to recover their child (p55).
- **Many law enforcement agencies also use a licensed certified social worker, counselor or psychologist to work with the family during every stage of the case. Explore use of victim witness support staff from the prosecutor's office (p55).**
- In the role of family support, an officer assigned to the residence is able to:
 - Brief family members about what the investigation will entail.
 - Prepare them for possibilities (e.g., ransom request, crank calls, threats, psychics, private investigators, etc.).
 - Describe the stress factors that will evolve as the situation develops and how the family can influence the investigation in both positive and negative ways.
 - Screen and record the names of all visitors to the home.
 - Arrange for professional assistance to help the family cope with the emotional aspect of the situation.
 - Prepare the family for an eventual outcome (e.g., recovery, reunification, injury, death, etc.) (p56).
- While the involvement of these individuals (community groups and nonprofit organizations) and the many tasks they can perform are appreciated by the investigative team, law enforcement control of the overall investigation must be firmly established and understood (p57).
- Refer the family to local support groups and/or a nonprofit missing children's organization specializing in the stresses created when a child is missing or abducted (p59).
- **Note:** No missing child case should be closed without positive identification of the located child (p60).
- Review the "Reunification Tips for Law Enforcement" found in **Appendix F** for helpful ways to reunite the child and his/her family.
- Do not forget to delete the child and/or wanted person from NCIC (p61).

- The "Typical" Newborn/Infant Abductor (figure 3-3, p51).



The "Typical" Newborn/Infant Abductor

(Developed from an analysis of 187 cases occurring 1983-1999.)

- Female of "child-bearing" age (range 12-50), often overweight.
- Most likely compulsive; most often relies on manipulation, lying, and deception.
- Frequently indicates that she has lost a baby or is incapable of having one.
- Often married or cohabitating; companion's desire for a child may be the motivation for the abduction.
- Usually lives in the community where the abduction takes place.
- Frequently visits nursery and maternity units at more than one healthcare facility prior to the abduction; asks detailed questions about procedures and the maternity floor layout; frequently uses a fire-exit stairwell for her escape; and may also move to the home setting.
- Usually plans the abduction, but does not necessarily target a specific infant; frequently seizes on any opportunity present.
- Frequently impersonates a nurse or other hospital personnel.
- Often becomes familiar with hospital personnel and even with the victim's parents.
- Demonstrates a capability to provide "good" care to the baby once the abduction occurs.

There is no guarantee that an infant abductor will fit this description.

Figure 3-3



- Be sure to do a **post-case critique** to evaluate agency response and make any modifications necessary for future incidents (p61).

Discussion Questions

- What does an abductor look like? Name some stereotypical characteristics, (i.e., such as a pervert in a raincoat, flasher, etc). Stress that they can look like anyone!
- Discuss the similarities and differences in the concepts of stereotypical kidnapping and nonfamily abductions.
- Why is it important to use the term “nonfamily abduction” rather than stranger abduction? (The term stranger is a misnomer; that is, the abductor may be known to the victim, even slightly. For example, a neighbor, baby sitter, delivery person, even a friend of the family could have abducted the child.)
- When should a polygraph examination take place? (Early in the investigation)
- Name three “Typical Newborn/Infant Abductor” characteristics. See figure3-3. NOTE: There is no guarantee that an infant abductor will fit this description!
- Discuss the importance in teaching “good touch-bad touch” type classes.
- Discuss the importance of parents really listening to what their children tell them--take your child/victim seriously!

Further Reading

- *For Healthcare Professionals: Guidelines on Preventing Infant Abductions*, call NCMEC at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)
- *Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis*, call NCMEC at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

- *Interviewing Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation*, call NCMEC at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).
- *When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide*, OJJDP Report (May 1998),
- *Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation*, Washington States Attorney General, May, 1997, 800-345-2793.
- Adams, T. *Police Field Operations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1997.
- Dempsey, T. *Contemporary Patrol Tactics: A Practical Guide for Patrol Officers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1992.
- "Missing and Abducted Children: The First Responder" and "Missing and Abducted Children: Supervision and Investigation." *Training Key Series*, Keys #460 and #461 respectively, Alexandria, VA: International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), 1995.
- U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Child Abduction Response Plan: An Investigative Guide* (1998). Available from FBI Field Division offices. For information call 703-632-4347

U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*. To subscribe to this monthly magazine or obtain back issues, contact Superintendent of Documents, PO Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954. Current and back issues can be viewed online at www.fbi.gov.

- Conner, T. "Incident Command Systems for Law Enforcement," September 1997.
- Garrison, D. "Protecting the Crime Scene," September 1994.
- Police Practice Series. "Mobile Command Posts," January 1991.

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Publications listed are available from NCJRS, 1-800-851-3420.

- *Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth* (1993). Summary (NCJ145644) and final report (NCJ143397).
- *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America* (1990). Executive Summary (NCJ123667) and complete report (NCJ123668).

Conclusion

Incidents of nonfamily child abduction are among the most complex and difficult that a law-enforcement investigator or agency will ever face. The emotional aspect of these cases, combined with an overwhelming sense of urgency to locate the child, places additional stresses on those involved in the investigation and often adversely affects the potential for a successful outcome. With proper pre-planning, however, investigators are able to implement guidelines and procedures that were rationally and logically developed well before a case actually occurs. Like any other type of case, child-abduction investigations require the application of practical procedures in an orderly, systematic fashion. Pre-planning is the key. Being prepared with sound investigative techniques and an awareness of all available resources will greatly enhance the likelihood of successful case completion.

Editor's Note: Some of the investigative concepts discussed in this chapter were developed by a task force of investigators from federal, state, and local law-enforcement agencies in the San Francisco Bay area who met in 1989 to design a coordinated response plan for reports of abducted children. NCMEC appreciates the task force members' willingness to share this valuable information with their law-enforcement colleagues.

Chapter 4

Family Abduction Investigative Checklist



NISMART notes family abductions occur several hundred thousand times per year.

Review all steps outlined in the “Initial Response Investigative Checklist” found on page 17. In addition, in cases of family abduction, consider the steps listed below.

The Initial Investigation

- Examine court records.
- Conduct background investigations on both parents.
- Provide tasks for left-behind parent.
- Interview family and friends of suspect-parent.
- Enter information about the child and suspect-parent into NCIC Missing Person File (Involuntary Category). (See “Appendix C” for definitions of NCIC categories.)
- Obtain and evaluate all information that may indicate location of suspect-parent.

- [] Coordinate the issuance of an arrest warrant against suspect-parent with prosecutor.
- [] Assure entry of warrant information into NCIC Missing Person File (child) and Wanted Person File (suspect-parent).
- [] Confirm entry of warrant information into NCIC Missing Person File (child) and Wanted Person File (suspect-parent).
- [] Consider use of civil procedures such as writ of habeas corpus and writ of assistance.
- [] Provide support for family through nonprofit missing children's organization.

The Prolonged Investigation

- [] Secure federal UFAP warrant, if facts support issuance.
- [] Identify and "flag" all pertinent sources of information about both child (such as school, medical, birth) and suspect-parent (such as employment, education, professional).
- [] Utilize information sources such as credit bureaus, database systems, motor vehicle bureaus, and the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) to search for suspect-parent through identifiers such as social-security number, name, and date of birth.
- [] Request U.S. Postal Service authorities to provide change-of-address information and assistance in setting up a mail cover on selected family members or friends of the suspect-parent.
- [] Identify and evaluate other information about suspect-parent that may provide information such as employment records, occupational licenses, organization memberships, social interests, hobbies, and other lifestyle indicators.



- [] Assist left-behind parent in missing child poster preparation and distribution.

International Abductions

- [] Become familiar with laws of suspect-parent's country concerning custody matters.
- [] Contact U.S. Department of State for assistance in civil aspects of the abduction and potential for return of child through legal and diplomatic channels.
- [] Seek information from INTERPOL, the International Criminal Police Organization, concerning criminal proceedings against the suspect-parent.

Recovery/Case Closure

- [] Arrest suspect-parent away from child, if possible.
- [] Notify child protective service workers about possible need for temporary shelter care until the left-behind parent or investigator arrives.
- [] Conduct a thorough interview of the child and abductor separately, document the results of the interviews, and involve all appropriate agencies.
- [] Provide effective reunification techniques.
- [] - Cancel alarms and remove case from NCIC and other information systems.

Note: Periodic updates will be made in this checklist. To obtain those updates and request technical assistance on specific cases, please call NCMEC at **1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)**.



Family abductions can be legal "quicksand."

Call Outs/Talk Points

- According to NISMART, family abductions occur hundreds of thousands of times every year.
- The emotional scarring caused by these events requires that officers recognize family abduction not as a harmless offense where two parents are arguing over who “loves the child more,” but instead as an insidious form of child abuse (p67).
- Inappropriate or unauthorized actions by an officer who has been called to “accompany and assist” in a child custody question can bring about significant liability concerns for both the officer and the municipality (p70).
- The reality an officer must face is that **the child might very well be at risk with either parent** (p72).
- The very nature of family abduction ensures that an investigating officer will be dealing with troubled families (p73).
- In some cases a parent’s hysteria can also lead to thoughts of a “snatch-back”. This should clearly be discouraged under any and all circumstances (p74).
- An officer’s first contact with a parent on the run may well be the most pivotal point in the entire investigation (p76).
- When involving authorities from other cities, counties, or states, contact the following resources to learn the basic procedures of the other jurisdiction:
 - State Missing Children’s Clearinghouse(s).
 - National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.
 - Appropriate local nonprofit missing children’s organization.
- When requesting assistance from another agency, be as specific as possible. It is advisable to have an investigative packet already prepared. It can include:
 - Photographs of the victim, suspect, and accomplices.
 - Police reports, case synopsis, key statements, suspect/victim fact sheet.
 - Warrant information, confirmation of extradition.
 - Civil court documents, certified copies of principal documents.
 - Miscellaneous items including any psychological summary report or overview on the victim/abductor and any appropriate information from other governmental agencies (p83).
- As soon as it has been determined that a child may have been taken to a foreign country, the left-behind parent should immediately contact the U.S. Department of State at 1-202-736-7000 to discuss the filing of an application invoking the Hague Convention (p84).

- Legislative Initiatives Impacting Family Abduction (figure 4-1, p68).

Legislative Initiatives Impacting Family Abduction	
Initiative	Description
Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (UCCJA)	First drafted in 1968, the UCCJA has now been adopted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The UCCDA determines when a state has jurisdiction to make a custody order and provides procedures for interstate enforcement of orders in custody conflicts.
Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (PKPA) of 1980 (P.L. 96-611)	This act requires authorities of every state to enforce and not modify orders made by the state court exercising proper jurisdiction. It also authorizes the use of the Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution (UFAP) warrant and the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) in family abductions.
Missing Children Act of 1982	Among other provisions, this legislation ensures that complete descriptions of missing children can be entered into the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) computer system, even if the abductor has not been charged with a crime.
National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 (28USC & 5779 and 5780)	This act includes mandates that eliminate waiting periods before taking a missing child report, including family abduction cases; requires immediate entry of information into the NCIC Missing Person File; and requires close liaison with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) on appropriate missing child cases.

Figure 4-1

- Research has shown that in 80 percent of the child recoveries (of all missing children), only an average of 15 minutes is devoted to the recovery process with no psychological or social service support provided (p86).
- Example of the Writ of Habeas Corpus (figure 4-2, p78)

Example of the Writ of Habeas Corpus

The Writ of Habeas Corpus is treated as an emergency order and is issued by the presiding judge once a petitioner demonstrates that a child is unlawfully being withheld from the person having a right to custody. The Writ is normally obtained by a private attorney. Either the Prosecutor's Office or the Attorney General's Office may petition for a Writ under the circumstances noted below.

Prosecutor's Office

- In conjunction with a criminal warrant for Custodial Interference obtained by their office.
- In conjunction with another jurisdiction's criminal warrant that is to be acted on within the County.

Attorney General's Office

- To recover a child removed from "protective custody" who is considered to be at extreme risk.
- In Hague Convention/International cases, they respond to requests from the U.S. Central Authority.

Authority Provided

- Orders child be immediately taken into custody and authorizes placement with Children's Services *if necessary* (when court is not in session).
- Statewide search warrant for any location the child may be or where information pertaining to the child's whereabouts may be found.
- Statewide arrest authority for any individual who obstructs an order.
- There is no expiration date on the Writ.

Figure 4-2

- When Considering Criminal Charges (figure 4-3, p79)

When Considering Criminal Charges

- ❖ Is there sufficient documentation (certified) to demonstrate parentage and the individual's rights to physical custody or access?
- ❖ Can the suspect-parent actually be **identified** as the abductor?
- ❖ A vacation or change of address is not necessarily illegal. Can it be **clearly established** that the intent of the move was to unlawfully deny access to the complainant?
- ❖ If **removal from the state** is an element of the offense, can it be proven that the child has been physically taken across the state line? Can it be demonstrated that the suspect-parent is responsible for the removal?
- ❖ Have **mitigating factors** (domestic violence, abuse, etc.) been evaluated that, by statute, could undermine the filing of a charge?
- ❖ If an **accomplice** was involved, can it be proven that he or she had sufficient personal knowledge of the legal custody issues to form criminal intent? If the accomplice was the abductor, can the suspect-parent's complicity be demonstrated? How can he or she be directly implicated?

Figure 4-3

Discussion Questions

- What does the acronym "UCCJA" represent? (Unified Child Custody Jurisdiction Act of 1968)
- Family abduction is **not** a "critical incident"-- true or false? False, children are greatly traumatized for years following a family abduction.
- What does the acronym "UFAP" represent? Who may request one? (Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution; only a law enforcement officer, provided the state agrees to charge and prosecute.)

Further Readings

- *When Parents Kidnap*, Grief, Geoffrey, L., Hegar, Rebecca, L., Published by Free Press, 19 .
- *Family Abduction – How to Prevent an Abduction and What to do if Your Child is Abducted*, NCMEC – ODDJP in cooperation with the ABA Center on Children and the Law, available from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.



Make arrest away from the child.



Use good reunification skills.

Conclusion

The investigation of family abductions calls for familiarity with different dimensions of the law including civil custody, state criminal statutes, federal legislation, and international accords. Consultation and use of these established resources will be the key to any recovery. It should be apparent that the complexity of this issue begs for the exercise of caution in convening any “curbside hearings” regarding custody. The courtroom is the only proper forum that can offer both due process as well as protection for the child. At the same time, while arbitrary transfers of custody are to be avoided, parents do have the right to look to the criminal justice system for assistance. To dismiss such pleas for help could push an anguished parent into desperate actions. Offering guidance and a realistic avenue of approach can avert potential domestic violence and snatch-back incidents.

NCMEC is available, at **1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)**, to offer resources and technical assistance with any of the suggestions presented in this chapter, especially when conflicts among laws, statutes, and accords impede case resolution.

Chapter 5

Runaway Child Investigations



According to NISMART, several hundred thousand children run away each year.

Runaway Investigative Checklist

Review all steps outlined in the “Initial Response Investigative Checklist” found on page 17. In addition, in cases of runaway children, consider the steps listed below.

The Initial Investigation

- Check agency records for recent contact with child (arrests, other activity).
- Review school record and interview teachers, other school personnel, classmates.
- Check contents of school locker.
- Enter information about the child into NCIC’s Missing Person File. (See “Appendix C” for definitions of NCIC categories.)
- Contact community, child-serving organizations for information.
- Investigate child protective agency records for abuse reports.
- Utilize screening procedures to develop an accurate assessment of the child.

- [] Contact the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) at 1-800-621-4000 where parents can leave a message for their child and check to see if their child has left a message for them.

The Prolonged Investigation

- [] Update initial NCIC entry by fully loading NCIC Missing Person File with all available information including medical and dental records.
- [] Consider upgrading the investigation to “Endangered” if the facts warrant.
- [] Reinterview friends, classmates, and other information sources.
- [] Assist family members in the preparation and distribution of missing child posters.
- [] Provide support for family through nonprofit missing children’s organization.
- [] Consider a search of NCIC’s Unidentified Person File, utilization of NCIC’s Off-Line Search capabilities, and notification of state medical examiners by providing descriptive information and a photograph of the missing child.

Recovery/Case Closure

- [] Conduct a thorough interview of the child, document the results of the interview, and involve all appropriate agencies.
 - [] Why did the child leave?
 - [] Where did the child go?
 - [] How did the child survive?
 - [] Who helped the child during his or her absence?
 - [] Will the child leave again?



- [] Consider a comprehensive physical examination for the child.
- [] Report any suspicions of child maltreatment to child protective service agency.

- [] Make child/family aware of community services to deal with any unresolved issues.
- [] Complete an agency report of the episode that can be promptly accessed and reviewed if the child leaves again.
- [] Cancel alarms and remove the case from NCIC and other information systems.

Note: Periodic updates will be made in this checklist. To obtain those updates and request technical assistance on specific cases, please call NCMEC at **1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)**.



The process starts by taking a thorough report.

Call Outs/Talk Points

- According to NISMART, hundreds of thousands of children runaway (leave home voluntarily) each year.
- When compiling the case report, you may wish to use the “Victim/Family Collection Questionnaire” found in **Appendix D**.
- Investigators should keep in mind that the child might be the victim of foul play. They should be alert to information and observations that are suspicious in nature and do not fit the pattern of a “typical” runaway case (p95).
- According to a National Runaway Switchboard survey conducted in 1998, some reasons callers reported for leaving home included:
 - Family Dynamics 39%

NRS Survey Results (continued):

- Peer Pressure	12%
- Youth Services Issues	10%
- Physical/ Sexual/ Emotional Abuse	9%
- Transportation	7%
- School-Related Issues	7%
- Mental Health	5%
- Drugs/ Alcohol	5%
- Judicial Issues	3%
- Health	2%
- Sexuality	1%

- Endangered Runaway Factors (figure 5-1, p97).

Unusual Circumstances

- ❖ The missing youth is 13 years of age or younger.
- ❖ The missing youth is believed to be out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
- ❖ The missing youth is mentally incapacitated.
- ❖ The missing youth is drug dependent, including prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency on the medication may be potentially life-threatening.
- ❖ The missing youth has been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to the police.
- ❖ Based on available information it is determined that the missing youth is in a life threatening situation.
- ❖ Based on available information it is believed that the missing youth is in the company of adults who could endanger his or her welfare.
- ❖ The absence is inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained.
- ❖ Other circumstances are involved in the disappearance that would cause a reasonable person to conclude that the youth should be considered "at-risk."

Figure 5-1

- According to the *National Study of Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth (1992)*, a major finding is that "law enforcement agencies with written policies and procedures regarding missing children are clearly associated with more aggressive and successful investigative efforts."

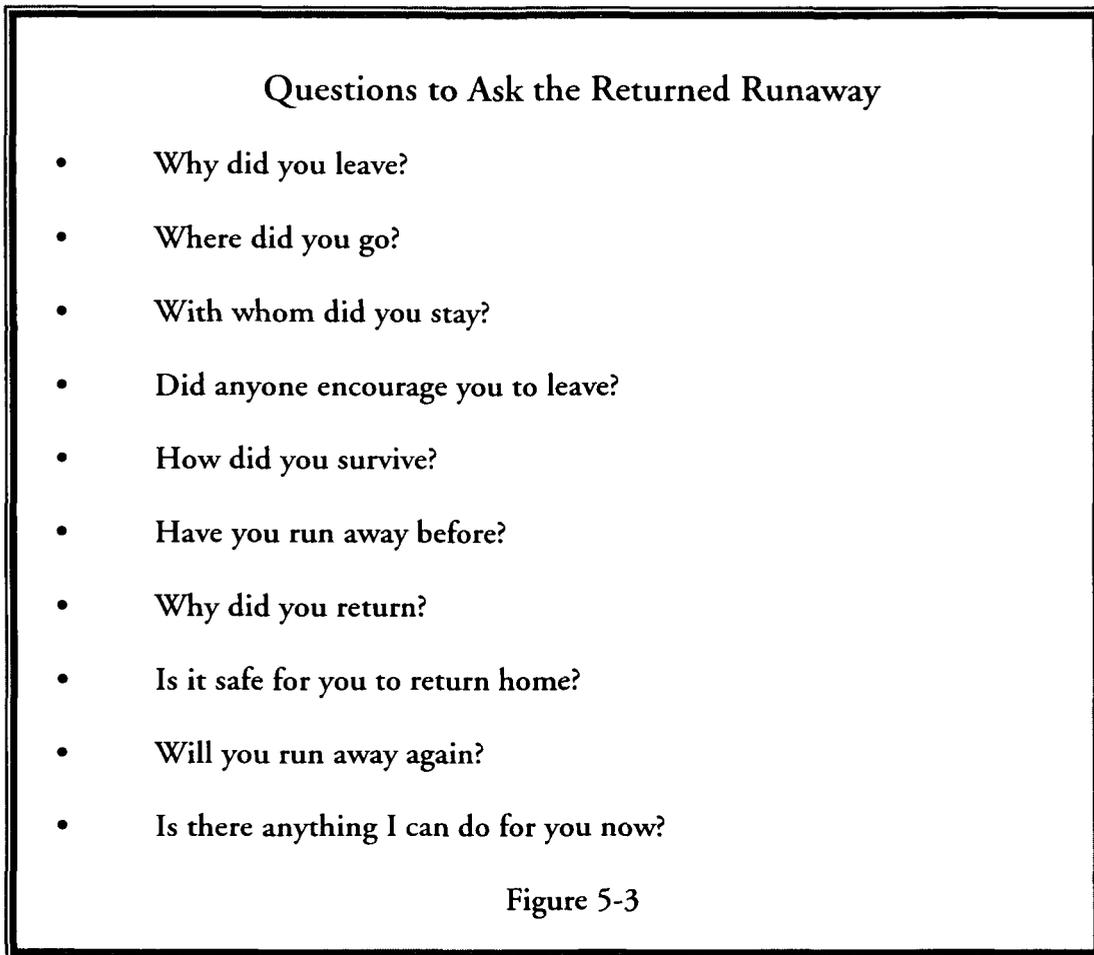
- Another tool to elicit information about the child’s disappearance is the Worthington and Reed “Runaway Screening Mechanism” (figure 5-2, p98).

Runaway Screening Mechanism

- How many times has the child run away?
- Is the child mature and well adjusted for his or her age?
- Is the family setting reasonably “normal?”
- Did the child appear to have his or her life under control?
- Did the child seem potentially alienated either at home or with peers?
- Is the child most likely to return on his or her own?
- Did the runaway seem to be rejected by parents?
- Did the runaway appear powerless, fearful, and/or angry before leaving?
- Did the runaway exhibit little or no self-control and tend to be impulsive?
- To what degree is the child “street-wise”?
- Was the child extremely dependent on home and peers?
- Did the child respond well to a structured environment?
- Is the child/family a good candidate for therapy?
- Would the child gain some power over his or her destiny by running away?
- Has the child recently modified his or her value system in order to be able to survive?
- Has the child developed survival techniques? Has the power that these survival techniques provided over his/her life offered another reason to stay on the streets?
- Had the child become ambivalent about being home?
- Did the child employ lying and manipulation as a primary method of coping?
- Has the child become aggressive and exploitive of others?
- Does the child have any motivation to return home under any circumstances?
- Is the child unable to live or function in any type of structured environment?
- Does the child have an above average probability of becoming an offender?

Figure 5-2

Questions to Ask the Returned Runaway (figure 5-3, p101).



To obtain updates to this checklist and request technical assistance on specific cases, please call NCMEC at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

Discussion Questions

- What are the nine unusual circumstances? See figure 5-1.
- What is the importance of questioning a returned runaway? (To explore why they left- were they being abused, drug/alcohol involvement, family problems, school issues, etc?)
- Is the taking of a runaway report required by Federal/State law? Absolutely, yes!
- What is the National Runaway Switchboard? A not-for-profit organization dedicated and committed to helping missing youth-at-risk through telephone switchboard services. NRS provides crisis intervention, referrals, and youth advocacy. Telephone lines are toll-free and operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Further Reading

- Brennan, D., *et al.* "Longitudinal Study of Runaway Youths." *Journal of Family Issues*, June 1987. Study conducted for the National Institute of Mental Health.
- Collins, J. *National Study of Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth - Executive Summary*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention by the Research Triangle Institute, 1990. Available (NCJ144765) from NCJRS, 1-800-851-3420.
- Dietz, P., and J. Coburn. *To Whom Do They Belong? Runaway, Homeless, and Other Youth in High-Risk Situations in the 1990s*. Washington, DC: National Network of Runaway and Youth Services, 1991. Available from the National Network for Youth, 1319 F Street, NW, Suite 401, Washington, DC 20004, 202-783-7949.
- Forst, M. *Police and the Homeless*. Springfield, OH: Charles R. Thomas, 1997.
- Greene, J., and C. Ringwalt. *Youth With Runaway, Throwaway, and Homeless Experiences: Prevalence, Drug Use, and Other At-Risk Behaviors*. Prepared for the Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by Research Triangle Institute, 1995. Available from National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth, PO Box 13505, Silver Spring, MD 20911, 301-608-8098.
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. *Female Juvenile Prostitution* (1992). Available from NCMEC, 1-800-843-5678.

National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth. The publications noted below were prepared for the Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and are available from the National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth, PO Box 13505, Silver Spring, MD 20911, 301-608-8098.

- *Reconnecting Youth and Community: A Youth Development Approach* (1996).
- *Drug Abuse Prevention Program for Runaway and Homeless Youth* (1994).
- Paradise, E., and R. Horowitz. *Runaway and Homeless Youth: A Survey of State Law*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by the American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law, 1994. Available from the American Bar Association, 740 - 15th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, 202-662-1720.
- Pires, S., and J. Silber. *On Their Own: Runaway and Homeless Youth and Programs That Serve Them*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child

Development Center, 1991. Available from NCJRS, Paper Reproduction Sales, Box 6000, Department F, Rockville, MD 20850, 1-800-851-3420.

- Posner, M. *Working Together for Youth: A Guide to Collaboration Between Law Enforcement Agencies and Programs that Serve Runaway and Homeless Youth*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 1994. Available from the National Resource Center for Youth Services, 202 West 8th Street, Tulsa, OK 74119, 918-585-2986.

- Rohr, Michael *Adolescent Runaway Behavior – Who Runs and Why*

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Publications listed are available from NCJRS, 1-800-851-3420.

- *Helping Vulnerable Youth: Runaway and Homeless Adolescents in the U.S.* (1993). Complete report (NCJ144058).
- *Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth* (1993). Summary (NCJ145644) and final report (NCJ143397).
- *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America* (1990). Executive summary (NCJ123667) and complete report (NCJ123668).
- *Unlocking the Doors for Status Offenders: Twenty Years Since Enactment of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act* (1995). Complete report (NCJ160803).
- *Using Agency Records to Find Missing Children: A Guide for Law Enforcement* (1996). Complete guide (NCJ154633).



Family counseling can help resolve problems.

- Whitbeck, Les B. and Hoyt, Dan R. *Nowhere to Grow: Homeless and Runaway Adolescents and Their Families*.
- Wilson, J. *Help for Children from Infancy to Adulthood*. Shepherdstown, WV: Rocky River Publishers, 1995. A directory of several hundred national hotlines, organizations, clearinghouses, and other support systems for troubled children including runaways and throwaways.

Conclusion



Runaways are potentially at great risk.

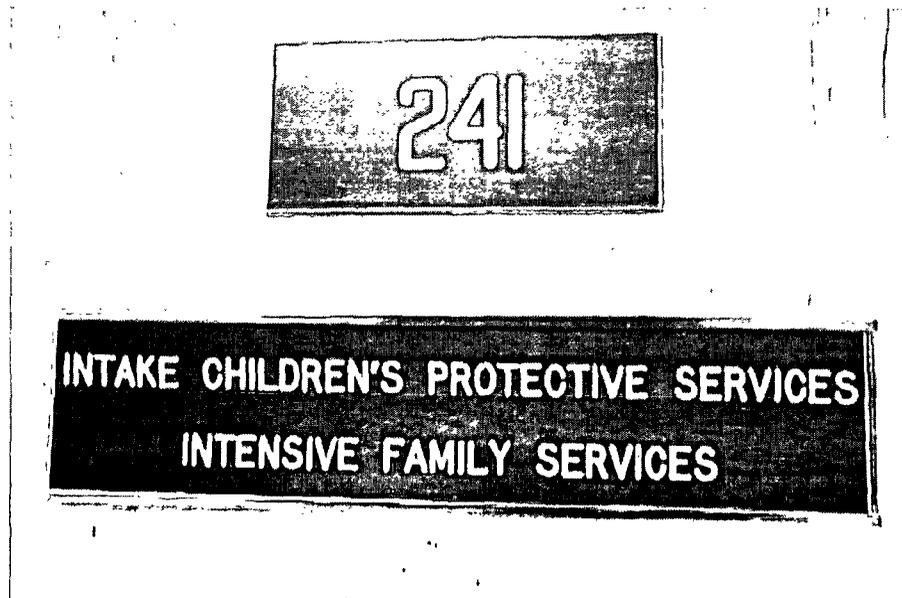
With few exceptions, voluntarily missing children are also children at risk of victimization and exploitation. While missing they are often exposed to the elements of society that they lack the maturity to resist or even understand.

Running away may be the most dangerous act children can commit because they simply do not perceive themselves as potential victims. In most cases a law enforcement officer stands as the only defense between a voluntarily missing child and someone who is all too willing to be an exploiter or victimizer. With continued training, diligence, and awareness, that line of defense will grow stronger and more effective.

For further information on the many resources available to assist with runaway children, contact the National Runaway Switchboard at **1-800-621-4000** and National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth, PO Box 13505, Silver Spring, MD 20911-3505, **301-608-8098**.

NCMEC is available at **1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)** to offer technical assistance with any of the suggestions presented in this chapter and for online reporting of the sexual exploitation of children at www.cybertipline.com.

Chapter 6 Child Protective Services



Function

The role that the Child Protective Services (CPS) worker plays in the safety and welfare of children cannot be overemphasized. The name of the department varies by state; in the case of Maryland, services to children are the responsibility of the Department of Social Services (DSS). DSS, in turn, is further divided into subsections of various units such as Intake/Screening, Investigations, Continuing Protective Services and Family Preservation Services.

More often than not, law enforcement and CPS workers have similar responsibilities in protecting children from harm. They differ with respect to what each agency can do if harm is "substantiated." Law enforcement must investigate criminal matters and arrest the perpetrator pending court action. CPS must also investigate per agency mandates, but they are responsible for ensuring the child's safety after an allegation is made. This can often be done by securing an order from a judge or juvenile master "ordering" the agency to place the child in a safe environment, with a non-abusing parent, a relative, foster family or group home. **If CPS does not have an order, they cannot take custody of a child.**

CATEGORIES of ABUSE

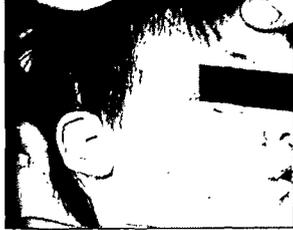
Physical Abuse Warning Signs Many of the slides come from the *Visual Diagnosis of Physical Child Abuse Kit* courtesy of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Baltimore Police Department's Sexual Child Abuse Unit.

Presentation Slides of Physical Child Abuse

(Courtesy of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Baltimore Police Department)



Bruised buttocks



Facial bruising



Belt buckle pattern



Hand print



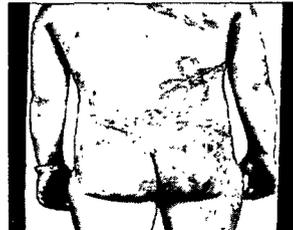
Clustered bruising



Immersion burn



Cigarette burn



Power cord welts



Scalp cut



Neck abrasion



Arm fracture



Rib fracture

Sexual Abuse Warning Signs This section reviews some of the most commonly reported symptoms of child sexual abuse. This list by no means covers every type of sexual abuse symptom.

- Bedwetting (in absence of a medical condition, is a very common symptom).
- Difficulty in sitting or walking.
- Presence of a sexually transmitted disease, such as gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV.
Note: With HIV, a child may have contracted this at birth from a parent with HIV. Check the parent's medical record (you will need a signed release of information or a warrant clearly specifying "HIV Status")!
- Pregnancy.
- Repeated symptoms of medical problems to the genitals or digestive system.
- Unusual bruising on area such as the inner thighs or covering the mouth.

Child Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse A much more subtle indicator of sexual abuse is how a child *acts* or *behaves*. Some indicators are:

- Unusual sexual behavior or knowledge in a young child.
- Nightmares.
- Repeated runaway incidents.
- Nude/sexual photographs or videotapes of the child.

Parental Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse It is very important for the investigator or law enforcement official to be observant for actions on the part of the parent or guardians. Some indicators include:

- Extreme overprotectiveness.
- Overt interest in a child's social and sexual life.
- View of child as highly sexualized.
- High degree of jealousy toward the child.

Child Neglect Warning Signs Issues of neglect may be difficult to substantiate. Coupled with other factors, look for some of the following indicators:

- Poor hygiene (extreme or consistent).
- Inappropriate clothing for weather conditions.
- Malnutrition.
- Bloated bellies.
- Small stature for their age, in the absence of medical explanation/documentation.
- Rashes which may indicate the presence of untreated ringworm or impetigo.

We recommend that you study the warning signs of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. There are several comprehensive in-service training courses available to law enforcement, CPS, emergency medical and human service workers.



Law enforcement, emergency medical staff and child protective services MUST collaborate and cooperate on these troubling cases.

Call outs/ Talk points

- If an officer has any suspicion of abuse or neglect, the child should be taken to a hospital for a thorough medical examination and reported to CPS.
- **Your job is to protect the victim.** DO NOT blame the victim, especially in the case of a runaway. Some officers or social workers may be tempted to say things such as “You brought this on yourself.” You may think it but **NEVER SAY IT.**
- Set the proper tone. If the parent/guardian verbally threatens the child in your presence, use the opportunity to remind the adult of the potential for physical child abuse. Out of frustration, particularly with a frequent runaway, some officers have been known to tell the parent, “If they were my kid, I’d beat their butt.” Instead, encourage them to seek help through a qualified family counselor, minister, etc.
- Regarding child neglect, look at the condition of the home. Is it habitable? While definitions of what constitutes “clean and neat” vary, if most reasonable people would consider the dwelling a “pig sty,” act according to your agency’s policies in this regard.
- If a child victim makes even the slightest hint that he/she was touched/molested by an abductor(s), perpetrator(s), and/or parent(s), procedures should be followed for a sexual abuse exam per departmental protocol.

Discussion Questions

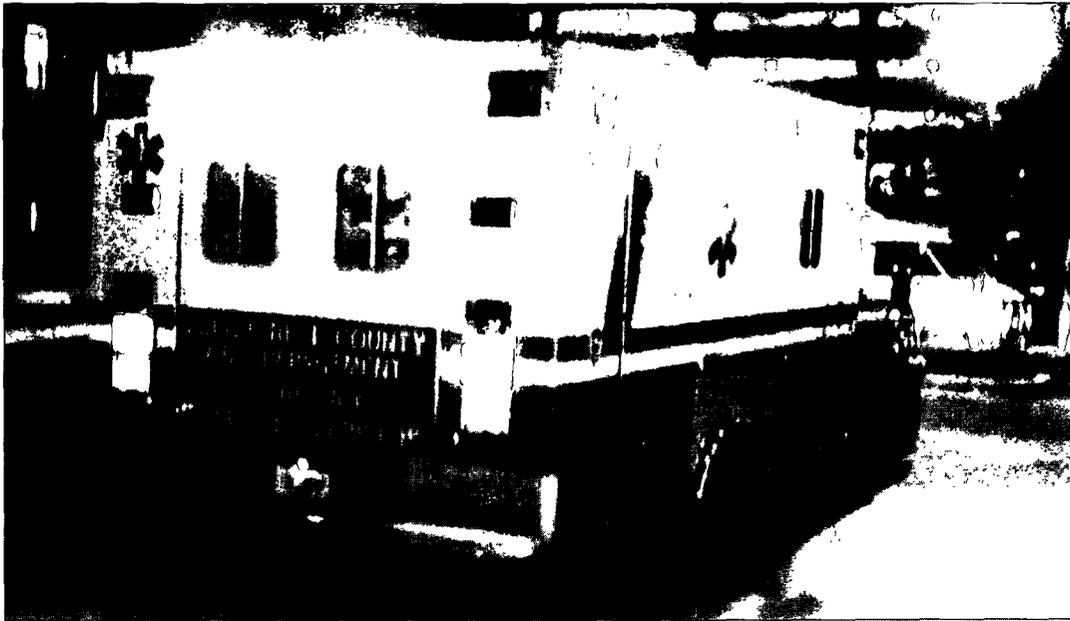
- Is there anything else that you don’t understand or that is unclear about physical and sexual abuse or neglect?
- Discuss your agency’s procedures for investigating child physical and sexual abuse.



Counseling is a MUST for child abuse victims.

Further Reading

- Pelzer, David, *A Child Called It: One Child's Courage to Survive*, Heath Communications, Inc., 1995.
- Pelzer, David, *The Lost Boy: A Foster Child's Search for the Love of a Family*, Heath Communications, Inc., 1997.
- Peltzer, David, *A Man Named Dave: A Story of Triumph and Forgiveness*, Plum – Penguin Putnam, Inc., 2000.
- *Portable Guides to Investigating Child Abuse*, available through NCRJ.
- *Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect: A Resource Handbook for Health Care Professionals*. (2nd Edition) Maryland Department of Human Resources.
- *The Visual Diagnosis of Child Physical Abuse*, available from the American Academy of Pediatrics, 1994.



Conclusions

Children are our future and we need to care about them. As a society we cannot tolerate child abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Appendix A

National Crime Information Center The National Crime Information Center (NCIC) is a nationwide, online computer/telecommunications system maintained by the FBI that makes millions of records -- including files on wanted, missing, and unidentified persons -- that are instantaneously available to local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies throughout the United States and Canada. Inquiries and replies, available around the clock every day of the year, are provided to authorized agencies through the use of an identifying NCIC-ORI number. Established in 1967, NCIC has since created a number of specialized information files and data retrieval programs that are of significant benefit to the law enforcement officer. When investigating cases of missing or abducted children, officers will find the three NCIC resources listed below, along with the Wanted Person File (WPF), to be of particular value.

- Missing Person File (MPF)
- Unidentified Person File (UPF)
- Off-Line Search Procedure

The Missing Person File Created in 1975, the NCIC Missing Person File is an automated database system that stores descriptive information about a missing person using a specific set of identifying factors. Since the Missing Person File is divided into five (5) individual classifications, it is extremely important for the reporting officer to accurately assess each case and designate the proper category. (See "Appendix B: NCIC Missing-Person Categories")

While certain basic identifying information such as name, date of birth, sex, race, height, weight, and hair color are required for the original Missing Person File entry, NCIC has included many additional descriptive entry fields that can significantly enhance the likelihood of recovery or case resolution. With the assistance of parents, investigators can obtain specific information about the child's physical and medical characteristics as well as a complete description of jewelry worn and personal property carried. While most of these fields can be group searched for specific comparisons about the child, investigators should note that information entered in the miscellaneous information section, including comments about a possible endangering companion, is not compatible with group search and will only be revealed if the specific entry is queried.

The Unidentified Person File The Unidentified Person File was established by NCIC in 1983 to facilitate the identification of unknown deceased persons and living persons whose identity could not be positively ascertained. Law enforcement officers and coroners who encounter such situations are able to use the Unidentified Person File reporting system to enter a complete description of the unknown body or individual using much the same entry format as the Missing Person File. Then, each night NCIC cross-references one file against the other and determines those unidentified persons who significantly match descriptions of individuals reported as missing. When such a match takes place, NCIC immediately notifies both agencies through their ORI numbers.

Current and proposed enhancements in this file will greatly aid law enforcement in this identification process including the addition of a mechanism to compile all descriptive information on deceased, unidentified cases in NCIC and the utilization of mitochondrial deoxyribonucleic acid (mtDNA) analysis.

Essential to the success of both the Missing and Unidentified Person Files is the entry of complete, up-to-date dental records. Since, in many cases, dental comparisons may be the only means to identify a recovered body, investigators should collect and enter complete records as an integral segment of their investigation. To facilitate the gathering of these records, NCIC has devised a standard forensic charting form. This form may be obtained from the Criminal Justice Information Services Division of the FBI at 1000 Custer Hollow Road, Clarksburg, WV 26305-0001, 304-625-2000.

The Off-Line Search While most law enforcement officers are familiar with how NCIC's various files can be searched for timely and accurate information in the common, "on-line" method, few are aware of the investigative benefit that can be found by using the "off-line" search format. An example of how NCIC's Off-Line Search capability was instrumental in solving a case can be found in its use by a Phoenix, Arizona, detective investigating the abduction of a small boy by his noncustodial mother. Since the mother left driving a car registered in Arizona, the description of the car and license plates was immediately entered into both the NCIC Missing (child) and Wanted Person (mother) Files. After months went by with little in the way of leads, the detective learned that the suspect's father, living in Florida, had been listed with the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles as a co-owner of the vehicle just a few weeks before the abduction. After finding that the father had then registered the car in Florida, and may have mailed the new plates to the suspect, the detective decided to run an NCIC Off-Line Search using the Florida plates as the subject. Within a few days the detective was informed that the same car, with Florida plates, was the subject of a routine NCIC stolen vehicle inquiry by an officer in Houston, Texas, just one month after the abduction. The Houston officer was contacted and remembered not only where the inquiry was made but also knew that the car was still in a local motel complex. As a result, the child was recovered and the suspect arrested and returned to Arizona.

In brief, the Off-Line Search is a special technique that can be used by investigators in a number of circumstances to obtain NCIC information not normally retrievable in the usual, on-line manner. Missing-child investigators may wish to review active cases to evaluate the suitability of using this valuable investigative technique.

General information on NCIC can be obtained by contacting the Criminal Justice Information Services Division, Attn: NCIC, 1000 Custer Hollow Road, Clarksburg, WV 26306, 304-625-2000. In addition, NCIC has prepared *Data Entry Collection Guides* to assist in the correct completion of both Missing Person File and Unidentified Person File entries. Each *Guide* contains a section describing proper collection and classification of dental records. These guides may be obtained through NCIC State Control Terminal Agencies or directly from NCIC at 304-625-4995. Information and assistance about Off-Line Searches can be obtained by calling NCIC at 304-625-2000.

NCIC has also produced a series of informative videotapes, including segments on the Missing Person File, the Unidentified Person File, and the Off-Line Search. Copies of these and other NCIC videotapes are available from the National Technical Information Services, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield VA 22161, 1-800-553-6847, 703-487-4650.

Appendix B: NCIC's Child Abduction Flag

The Child Abduction ("CA") flag was introduced on February 2, 1997, (NCIC TOU 96-6) to notify the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the FBI's National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime of critical missing-children cases. The "CA" flag is used when there is a reasonable indication of suspicion that a child has been abducted and/or is missing under circumstances suggesting foul play or a threat to life. Once NCIC's "CA" flag is entered into the Missing Person (MNP) field of a record entered with the Endangered or Involuntary message key, both NCMEC and NCAVC are automatically notified.

Appendix C: NCIC Missing Person Categories

NCIC missing person categories include:

- **Disability** (MKE*/EMD): a person of any age who is missing and under proven physical/mental disability or is senile (or demented), thereby subjecting him- or herself or others to personal and immediate danger.
- **Endangered** (MKE/EME): a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that he/she may be in physical danger.
- **Involuntary** (MKE/EMI): a person of any age who is missing under circumstances indicating that the disappearance may not have been voluntary (*i.e.*, abduction or kidnapping).
- **Juvenile** (MKE/EMJ): a person younger than the age of 18 who is missing and does not meet any of the entry criteria set forth in the other categories.
- **Catastrophe Victim** (MKE/EMV): a person of any age who is missing after a catastrophe.

* message-key code

Source: *NCIC 2000 Missing Person File*. Clarksburg, WV: Federal Bureau of Investigation, December 1999, p. 1.

Appendix D: Victim/Family Data- Collection Questionnaire

SAMPLE

Case Number:

Date Form Completed:

MISSING CHILD

Last: _____ First _____ M: _____
 Address: _____ SSN: _____
 Nicknames/Aliases: _____ Nationality: _____
 Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____ Age: (current) _____ (when missing) _____
 Appearance (check one): Age Older than Age Younger than Age
 Birth State: _____ City: _____ Birth Hospital/Address: _____
 School Name: _____ Address: _____ Grade: _____

Hair: Color: _____ **Hair Samples Collected From:** **Eyes:** Color: _____
 Style: _____ Mother: _____ Father: _____ Vision Rating: _____
 Length: _____ Victim: _____ Pets: _____ Glasses: _____
 Facial: _____ Siblings: _____ Others: _____ Contacts: _____

Teeth: Appearance: _____ Braces (Y/N): _____
 Dentist: _____ Telephone: _____ Address: _____

Skeletal: Stature: _____ Stance: _____ Fractures: _____
 Abnormalities: _____ X-Rays Available: _____ From: _____
 Size: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____
 Size for Age: Small Average Large

Identifying Features: Complexion: _____ Scars: _____ Birth Marks: _____
 Tattoos: _____ Right/Left Handed: _____ Pierced Ears: _____
 Hearing Impaired: _____ Speech Impaired: Accent: _____
 Other Features: _____

General Description of Subject:

Clothing: (Describe clothing available or usually worn)

Item Type	Style	Size	Color	Description/Comments
Coat/Jacket				
Pants/Skirt				
Shirt/Blouse				
Sweater				
Other (Shoes, Socks, Hat, Belt)				

Unusual Clothing With Subject:

Purse/Wallet: _____ Jewelry: _____

Additional Information: Religion: _____ Nontraditional Religious Activity: _____
 Gang Member: _____ Gang Name: _____
 Hobbies: _____ Occupation: _____
 Place of Employment: _____ Trade License: _____
 Supervisor Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Identification: Driver's License No: _____ State: _____ Immigration No: _____
Military ID No: _____ Passport/Visa No: _____

Available Funds: Cash: _____ Checks: _____
Credit-Card Issuer: _____ Card-Holder Name: _____ Account Number: _____
Name of Bank/Account Holder: _____ Account Number: _____ Balance: _____

Medical: Medication: _____ Prescribed for: _____ Prescription Expires: _____
Disability: _____ Blood Type: _____ Pregnant: _____

Uses Illegal Drugs: _____ Type: _____ Uses Alcohol: _____ Extent: _____
Doctor: _____ Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Mental Condition: Depressed: _____ Despondent: _____ Changes in Behavior: _____

Peer Relationships: _____ Family Problems: _____

Other: _____

Prior Episodes: Missing Before (Y/N) Where Recovered: _____

Identification Methods: Footprints Available: _____ Date Taken: _____

Fingerprints Available: _____ Date Taken: _____
Fingerprint Class (NCIC): _____
Photograph Available: _____ Date Taken: _____

Vehicle: Owner: _____ Relationship: _____ Address: _____
Make: _____ Model: _____ Year: _____ Type/Style: _____ Color: _____

Condition: _____ Tag Number: _____ State: _____ VIN #: _____

Other Information: History of Custody Orders: _____
History of Court Involvement (such as arrests) _____
Knowledge of Survival Skills: _____
Possible Destination: _____
Why: _____



Interview friends



Interview the child's teachers.

Last Seen By: Name: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____ Address: _____
Telephone #: _____ Relationship/Circumstances: _____

Date Last Seen: _____ Location Last Seen: _____
In the Company of: _____

Acquaintances/Boyfriends/Girlfriends:

Name: _____ DOB: _____ Age: _____ Relationship: _____
Telephone No: _____ Address: _____
Comments: _____

Name: DOB: Age: Relationship:
Telephone No: Address:
Comments:

Name: DOB: Age: Relationship:
Telephone No: Address:
Comments:

Name: DOB: Age: Relationship:
Telephone No: Address:
Comments:

The Family Tree

Guardians: Current Address: _____ Telephone:
Prior Address: Telephone:

Mother: Name: DOB: Age:
Address: Telephone:
SSN: D.L. #: Passport #:
Occupation/Employer:
Biological/Step/Adoptive:
Other Information:

Father: Name: DOB: Age:
Address: Telephone:
SSN: D.L. #: Passport #:
Occupation/Employer:
Biological/Step/Adoptive:
Other Information:

Sister: Name: DOB: Age:
Address: Telephone:
SSN: D.L. #: Passport #:
Occupation/Employer:
Other Information:

Brother: Name: DOB: Age:
Address: Telephone:
SSN: D.L. #: Passport #:
Occupation/Employer:
Other Information:

Mother's Side of Family

Grandmother: Name: DOB: Age:
Address: Telephone:
SSN: D.L. #: Passport #:
Occupation/Employer:
Other Information:

Grandfather: Name: DOB: Age:
Address: Telephone:
SSN: D.L. #: Passport #:
Occupation/Employer:
Other Information:

Appendix E: STATE CLEARINGHOUSES

Following is the list of state missing children's clearinghouses and their respective telephone numbers as of this print date. **Please call the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)** to request any updated information on missing children's clearinghouses.

Alabama Department of Public Safety
Alabama Center for Missing and
Exploited Children
334-260-1172
1-800-228-7688

Alaska State Troopers
Missing Persons Clearinghouse
907-269-5497
1-800-478-9333 (AK only)

Arizona Department of Public Safety
Criminal Investigations Research Unit
602-223-2158

**Arkansas Office of the Attorney
General**
Missing Children Services Program
501-682-1323
1-800-448-3014 (AR only)

California Department of Justice
Missing/Unidentified Persons Unit
916-227-3290
1-800-222-3463 (CA only)

Colorado Bureau of Investigation
Missing Children Project
303-239-4251

Connecticut State Police
Research and Planning/Missing Persons
860-685-8260
1-800-367-5678 (CT only)

Delaware State Police
State Bureau of Identification
302-739-5883

**District of Columbia Metro Police
Department**
Missing Persons/Youth Division
202-576-6771

**Florida Department of Law
Enforcement**
Missing Children Information
Clearinghouse
850-410-8585
1-888-356-4774

Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Intelligence Unit
404-244-2554
1-800-282-6564

Hawaii Missing Child Center
808-586-1449

**Idaho Bureau of Criminal
Identification**
Missing Persons Clearinghouse
208-884-7130
1-888-777-3922

Illinois State Police
I-SEARCH
217-785-0656
1-800-843-5763

Indiana State Police
Indiana Missing Children Clearinghouse
317-232-8310
1-800-831-8953

Iowa Missing Person Information Clearinghouse
515-281-7958
1-800-346-5507

Kansas Bureau of Investigation
Missing Persons Clearinghouse
785-296-8200
1-800-572-7463

Kentucky State Police
502-227-8799
1-800-543-7723

Louisiana Department of Social Services
Clearinghouse for Missing & Exploited Children
225-342-4011

Maine State Police
Missing Children Clearinghouse
207-624-8705

Maryland Center for Missing Children
Maryland State Police-Computer Crimes Unit
410-290-1620
1-800-637-5437

Massachusetts State Police
Missing Persons Unit
508-820-2130
1-800-622-5999 (MA only)

Michigan State Police
Prevention Services Unit
517-336-6100

Minnesota State Clearinghouse
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
651-642-0627

Mississippi Highway Patrol
601-987-1592

Missouri State Highway Patrol
Division of Drug and Crime Control
573-751-3452
1-800-877-3452

Montana Department of Justice
Missing/Unidentified Persons
406-444-0689

Nebraska State Patrol
Criminal Records and Identification Division
402-479-4019
402-479-4938

Nevada Office of the Attorney General
Missing Children Clearinghouse
702-486-3539
1-800-992-0900 (NV only)

New Hampshire State Police
Major Crimes Unit/Missing Children
603-271-2663
1-800-852-3411 (NH only)

New Jersey State Police
Missing Persons Unit/Child Exploitation
609-882-2000
1-800-709-7090

New Mexico Department of Public Safety
Communications
505-827-9191

New York Division of Criminal Justice Service
Missing and Exploited Children
518-457-6326
1-800-346-3543

North Carolina Center for Missing Persons
919-733-3914
1-800-522-5437

North Dakota Clearinghouse for Missing Children

North Dakota Radio Communication
701-328-2121
1-800-472-2121 (ND only)

Ohio Missing Children Clearinghouse

Office of the Attorney General
614-644-8066
1-800-325-5604

Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation

Criminal Information Unit
405-879-2645

Oregon State Police

Missing Children Clearinghouse
503-378-3720
1-800-282-7155 (OR only)

Pennsylvania State Police

Bureau of Criminal Investigation
717-783-5524

Rhode Island State Police

Missing & Exploited Children Unit
401-444-1125
1-800-546-8066 (RI only)

South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

Missing Person Information Center
803-737-9000
1-800-322-4453

South Dakota Attorney General's Office

Division of Criminal Investigation
605-773-3331

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation

Criminal Intelligence Unit
615-741-0430

**Texas Department of Public Safety
Special Crimes Services/Missing
Persons Clearinghouse**

512-424-2810
1-800-346-3243 (TX only)

Utah Department of Public Safety

Bureau of Criminal Identification
1-888-770-6477

Vermont State Police

802-875-2112

Virginia State Police Department

Missing Children's Clearinghouse
804-674-2026
1-800-822-4453 (VA only)

Washington State Patrol

Missing Children Clearinghouse
360-586-0030
1-800-543-5678

West Virginia State Police

Missing Children Clearinghouse
304-558-1467
1-800-352-0927

Wisconsin Department of Justice

Division of Criminal Investigation
608-266-1671
1-800-THE-HOPE (WI only)

**Wyoming Office of the Attorney
General**

Division of Criminal Investigation
307-777-7537

**National and Territorial
Clearinghouses**

Canada

Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Missing Children's Registry
613-993-1525

1-877-318-3576 (toll free in North America)

Puerto Rico

Missing Children Program

787-729-2000

787-729-2697 (24 hours)

1-800-995-NINO (limited calling area)

United States

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

703-274-3900

1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

Netherlands Police

National Criminal Intelligence Service

001-31-79-345-8880

To obtain updated information on State or International Clearing Houses, call NCMEC at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

Appendix F

Nonprofit Missing Child Organizations

Vanished Children's Alliance (VCA) Formed in 1980, this national non-profit organization provides credible, effective and compassionate assistance in the location and recovery of missing and abducted children. They provide casework management, outreach, training, and public relations (including legislative advocacy) services throughout the country and internationally.

The author would like to publicly thank Ms. Georgia K. Hilgeman, Executive Director of VCA, for her permission to use the *Reunification of Abducted Children: A Guide for Law Enforcement*, (Appendix G) and *Reunification of Abducted Children: A Guide for Parents and Guardians* (Appendix H) for this project.

Vanished Children's Alliance

2095 Park Avenue

San Jose, CA 95126

Phone: (408) 296-1113 Fax: (408) 296-1117

Website: www.vca.org

Operation Lookout Founded in 1984, Operation Lookout National Center for Missing Youth is a private non-profit organization which provides free services to families whose children are missing prior to age 18. Operation Lookout works both on the domestic and international fronts with other child-search and law enforcement offices involved with missing and abducted children. They have a 24-hour Missing Child Helpline staffed by skilled case workers.

Operation Lookout
National Center for Missing Youth
6320 Evergreen Way, Suite 201
Everett, WA 98203

Phone: 425-782-7335 Fax: 425-348-4411
Website: www.operationlookout.org

The Jacob Wetterling Foundation Established in 1990 after 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted at gunpoint near his home in Minnesota. The Foundation works nationally on the issues of non-family abduction and exploitation, educating, raising awareness, and responding to victim families with the ultimate goals of fewer children being taken, more children being returned home and child molesters and kidnappers being caught and not allowed to (further) exploit children. The Foundation provides: victim assistance directly to families and communities experiencing the trauma of a missing or abducted child and assisting in the search; a 24-hour crisis hotline and recording leads on missing children; a distribution center sending tens of thousands of missing child posters to various locations; a resource library with videotapes and printed materials concerning the issue of non-family abductions, sexual exploitation and child safety; and finally, education to a variety of groups and organizations.

Jacob Wetterling Foundation
32 First Avenue Northwest
P.O. Box 639
St. Joseph, MN 56374-0639

Phone: 320-363-0470 Hotline: 1-800-325-HOPE Fax: 320-363-0437
Website: www.jwf.org

Child Find Of America, Inc. Founded in 1980 by the mother of a missing child, Child Find of America is a national non-profit charity whose mission is to locate missing, abducted and runaway children through active investigation, prevent child abduction through education, and resolve incidents of parental abduction through mediation. Child Find provides location, prevention, support services, mediation, public information and referrals to appropriate resources.

Child Find of America
243 Main Street, Suite 260
P.O. Box 277
New Paltz, NY 12561-0277
Phone: 914-255-1848 Hotline(s) 800-I-AM-LOST, 800-A-WAY-OUT
Website: www.childfindofamerica.org

Child Quest International, Inc. (CQI) is a non-profit organization based in California devoted to the protection and recovery of missing, abused and exploited children and at-risk adults. Services they provide include education, prevention, family

reunification counseling, casework and investigation. They have a 24-hour hotline, distribute photos and posters, and assist law-enforcement in a variety of ways.

Child Quest International
1625 The Alameda, Suite 400
San Jose, CA 95126

Phone: (408) 287-4673 Fax (408) 287-4676 Hotline: 1-888-818-HOPE(4673)
Website: www.childquest.org

Federal Parent Locator Service This Child Support Enforcement Program is usually run by State and local human services agencies, often with the help of prosecuting attorneys and other law enforcement officials. The Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) is a computer matching system that locates missing non-custodial parents who owe child support. It is operated by the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. While primarily used for child support enforcement cases, *the FPLS can be used in certain circumstances to make or enforce a child custody and visitation determination and in parental kidnapping cases.*

All requests for information from the FPLS must go through a State Parent Locator Service, an arm of the State Child Support Enforcement Agency.

For further information, the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement may be contacted by e-mail at: FPLSACCESS@ACF.DHHS.GOV.

Office of Child Support Enforcement
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, DC 20447

Phone : (202) 401-9373 Fax: (202)205-5927
Website: www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/ (This site gives more information as well as your State's Child Support Agency's contact information.)



Vanished Children's Alliance

2095 Park Avenue · San Jose, CA 95126 408/296-1113 1-800-VANISHED

Reunification Tips for Law Enforcement

by Georgia K. Hilgeman, M.A., Agency Founder & Executive Director

The impact of child abductions on children and their families cannot be underestimated or minimized. The ramifications of ineffective and unplanned reunifications are often severe and long-lasting. Therefore, it's imperative that law enforcement and other service providers familiarize themselves with the reactions and consequences of this form of child abuse and victimization. This knowledge can only improve the effective and timely location, recovery, and reunification of abducted children with their legal guardians.

Consider the Following Suggestions to Facilitate the Successful Recovery and Reunification of Children.

- Establish and implement a community-based, multidisciplinary team approach and plan for responding to recoveries and reunifications of abducted children.
- Obtain training on effective recovery and reunification methods for all team members and necessary staff. The utilization of experts as trainers is essential.
- Have all necessary legal documents.
- The recovering parent may also be served with legal documents, thereby creating a jurisdictional issue which may result in lengthy and costly litigation.
- Bring a notarized, written consent from the parent authorizing the child to receive medical treatment if necessary.
- If the recovering parent is not present and it's believed the child might remember this parent, take a video or audio tape of the child interacting with that parent so law enforcement can better facilitate the recovery. This may help reduce the child's fear. Past photographs of the child with the searching parent along with several of the child's favorite toys might also help calm the child.
- If this is a long distance recovery, consider calling the left-behind parent so the child can talk to that parent. Tell the child what is happening.
- When feasible, recoveries and reunifications should not occur in the presence of the abductor or the accomplice.
- If the recovery takes place at school, the officer should consider having a neutral person present, such as the child's teacher or principal. If the child is old enough, give the child the option of having a support person. This may lessen the trauma to the child.
- The recovering parent and family should never be given the actual location of the child prior to recovery. Families are emotionally impacted when their children are missing; when parents inappropriately act on lead information, they place their families and others in danger.
- **Always ensure the child's physical safety.**
- Have a mental health professional trained in reunification techniques available for on-call consultation. This individual should be available to meet with the child and explain what happened and what will happen next. This person should help prepare the child for the reunion and diffuse some of the child's fear and confusion.
- Take the child to a safe place where s/he will be reunited with the recovering parent. The reunions should take place in a private, comfortable setting as opposed to an interrogation room, busy office, or lobby.
- If necessary, contact social services for temporary shelter care until the parent with verified custody or the law enforcement investigator from the originating jurisdiction arrives. Temporary shelter placement should be used only in emergencies. The fewer transitions the child experiences after the recovery, the better.
- Recovered children may act withdrawn, hostile, or out of control. Be sensitive to the



Vanished Children's Alliance

2095 Park Avenue San Jose, CA 95126 408/296-1113 1-800-VANISHED

Appendix G (cont.)

Reunification Tips for Law Enforcement

By Georgia K. Hilgeman, M.A., Agency Founder & Executive Director

- fact that they're probably scared and reacting in the way they know how. However, establish reasonable boundaries.
- It is important to help the child regain a sense of control over his/her life. Whenever possible, give the child the ability to make a choice (i.e. "Would you like to sit in this chair or that chair" or "Would you like something to drink?").
- The recovering parent should plan to be reunited with the child away from other family members and well-wishers. This could be a frightening time so caution needs to be exercised not to overwhelm the child with many people.
- The media should not be invited to the recovery or the reunification. Should they appear on the scene, establish clear boundaries and be prepared to handle the situation. The media's direct involvement at this time could frighten the child. This is a very personal moment for the reunited family and their privacy should be respected.
- Provide parents with a copy of VCA's "**Helpful Suggestions for Parents Recovering Their Abducted Children.**" Discuss these suggestions with the parent(s).
- Prior to the reunion, have the appropriate team member trained in reunification techniques available to meet with the parents. Explain to the parents the details of the child's recovery, the child's living conditions, and what the child was told about the left-behind parent.
- The trained mental health professional should facilitate the reunification between the parent and child. The reunification process should not be rushed. The manner in which this is handled will have a short- and long-term impact on the mental health of both the child and parent.
- Law enforcement should consider the most appropriate manner for debriefing and/or interviewing the child without causing additional trauma to the child. Explain the situation honestly and compassionately to the child.
- Negative comments or judgements about the abductor and/or accomplices(s) should not be made to, or in the presence, of the child.
- Law enforcement investigators from the originating jurisdiction will need to assist the reunited family with referrals to other credible community agencies in their area.
- Law enforcement from the originating jurisdiction should follow-up with the family within 72 hours of their homecoming. The officer should determine the child's progress and obtain any additional information the child may have to share that could enhance the criminal case.
- The multi-disciplinary team should debrief and carefully assess its performance in the recovery /reunification process. Improvements to their plan should be ongoing.
- Keep the parent informed of the progress of any criminal proceedings, releases, or outcome.
- Often disclosures may be made long after the recovery. Without soliciting information, the custodial parent should document statements made by the child.
- Remember your approach and skill in this area can make a difference in a child's life. Be prepared so the difference you make is a positive one.

For additional information on recovery and reunification, contact the Vanished Children's Alliance at 408-296-1113

Or Call: 1 - 800 - VANISHED

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Vanished Children's Alliance

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Initial Reunification Tips for Parents

by Georgia K. Hilgeman, M.A., Agency Founder and Executive Director

A child has been missing and is about to be or has been reunited with his or her parent(s). Below are some suggestions that will assist the family with the changes that they may experience. Keep in mind this is meant to be a guide ~ no two children or families react in the same way.

What to Do When Initially Reunited With Your Abducted Child

1. Prior to the reunion, have an experienced mental health professional assist in meeting the child. Explain what has happened and what will happen next. The therapist should help prepare the child for the reunion.
2. When feasible, reunification should not occur in the presence of the abductor and/or the accomplices.
3. Parents and family members should remain calm as possible, and speak in a soothing voice. Loud, emotional outbursts could further frighten the child.
4. Physical contact with the child should proceed slowly and carefully, as hugs, kisses, or pats on the back might scare the child.
5. Parents should situate themselves so they are on eye level with the child. This puts the child on an equal level with the parent and is a form of empowering the child.
6. Do not belittle or ridicule the abductor in front of the child. Separate the deed of an abduction from the abductor. Focus on how the child is doing and how they feel about the situation.
7. Let the child know what will occur next. Maybe the child and the victim parent will be going home together or law enforcement will speak with the child and the family.
8. If the child asks what is going to happen to the abductor, explain that the abductor is probably going to have to go to court and tell a judge why s/he took the child. Tell the child that right now this person is safe. Parents can then redirect the conversation by saying they are happy to see the child and they will keep the child informed about the abductor's situation as they find out new information.
9. If possible, limit the number of people at the reunification. Avoid extended family, friends, and the media at the initial reunion.
10. The child should be reassured that his/her parent understands that the child might be afraid, but everything will be okay because their parent loves the child and will protect him or her.
11. Bring past photographs of the child pictured with his/her parent(s) and perhaps bring a favorite toy that the child might remember. Make both items available to the child

when the time seems right.

12. Whenever possible, give the child some choices that will improve their sense of control (i.e. "Would you like a soft drink? What kind? In the can or in a glass?")
13. Allow the child to express his/her feelings within certain limits; children should not be allowed to put themselves or others in danger. For example, the child may appear frozen, which usually indicates fright or numbing, or the child may demonstrate one or more of the following behaviors: crying, screaming, laughing, giggling, fighting, hitting, pulling, biting, urinating, defecation, or compliance. Remember, most of these behaviors are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.
14. The child should immediately have a physical examination.

When the Family Goes Home

1. Show the child around the house and explain where s/he will sleep and where important articles can be found.
2. Shield the child from numerous people. Try to spend some individual, special time with the child so s/he will adjust to the new situation with greater ease.
3. Parents should be careful about what they say to the child or in the presence of the child (i.e. on the phone or to someone else) about the events surrounding the abduction or the abductor.
4. When well-wishers are allowed, set boundaries and time limits for them; also establish acceptable statements that can be made in the presence of the child so s/he does not become confused or upset.
5. Parents should remember to interact positively with the other children in the family and with their partner or spouse. Unspoken jealousies can begin here.
6. Ensure the child's safety. The child may fear re-abduction so take special precautions when the child is playing in the front yard, going and/or coming home from school, and when the child sees the abductor in court.
7. Respect the child's need for physical or emotional space or child's need for security by following or clinging to the parent.



Ongoing Reunification Tips for Parents

After the Initial Homecoming...

1. The child may be compliant initially, but later will need to Express some independence by acting out and testing limits.
2. Establish clear, loving boundaries.
3. Encourage the child and give him/her positive reinforcement for good behavior.
4. The consequences for inappropriate behavior should be discussed with the child in advance and should not include physical punishment. The consequences might include time out or the removal of toys/privileges for a period of time. Consequences should also be employed in a calm manner and followed through completely. The child should never feel that a parent's love is conditional or that the child's behavior could impact that love.
5. Involve the child and family members in individual or family therapy. Interview therapists and select one who has a positive track record in working with missing or abducted children, abused children, or victims of crime. Check with local Victim Witness program or the Vanished Children's Alliance for referrals. Verify if the victim parent, child, or family qualifies for state victim compensation to cover some or all of the therapy costs.
6. When the child attends school, inform the school of safety concerns. Provide the school with a copy of the custody order if applicable. Determine the school's release policy, adult office check-in policy, and insure that the school has a call-back program.
7. Ask the neighbors to advise the parent(s) or other family members of people or cars that appear to be monitoring the family's residence, the child's school, or play areas.
8. Parents should ensure that the necessary custody orders for the child(ren) are current and that several file-endorsed copies are readily available at all times.
9. Have the child photographed and fingerprinted and keep a current, completed VCA Child Identification Sheet on hand in a safe location at home.
10. It is very likely that at some point the child will have contact with the abducting parent. If it appears that this may occur, seek supervised visitation and/or require the abducting parent to post a sizable bond.
11. Make sure the child knows his/her correct name, address, telephone number, their parent's full name and who they can go to for help when they are not in their parent's care.
12. Parents can communicate their feelings of anger about the situation in many different ways, especially through verbal communication (tone of voice) and body language. Be aware, however, that young children are naturally self-centered; they are the center of their universe, so they may feel responsible for things that happen around them. Consequently, children may assume the blame for what has happened to them; and they may also feel that they have caused their parent's/family's anger or pain.
13. Many parents live day to day hoping and dreaming of the recovery of their child(ren). This fantasy often includes a scenario where the family lives happily ever after once they are reunited. However, the reality is that most children do not come back the same child. Just as the parent has been changed by the experience, so has the abducted child - perhaps even more. Although the child is now home, the clock cannot be turned back. Instead, a "new normal" must be established.
14. It is difficult to assess the long-term ramifications of the abduction on children. Each case is different, spanning the entire spectrum of recovery scenarios. Some children and families may experience positive reconstruction of their lives; while others suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Consequently, parents are encouraged to acquire the appropriate family intervention services early in the reunification process so the likelihood of long-term negative consequences can be reduced.
15. Allow children to speak about their ordeal and encourage them to share both positive and negative experiences they had while missing. Remember, that if the child expresses a positive feeling or experience about the abductor, it's not a reflection on the reunited family. In the long run, by allowing open and honest communication, parents will serve as a catalyst to the child's healing.
16. Develop a support system for the parent and family members even after the child returns home. Parenting is a big job and no one is superhuman! It's not selfish for parents to take care of themselves. On the contrary, by modeling self-care and self-respect, the child may also develop these characteristics. If parents model victim or martyr-like behavior, children are also likely to view themselves as victims. Parents must remember they cannot change the past, but they can change how they view the situation, thus creating a brighter, more optimistic future.

*For additional information, contact VCA at
(408) 296-1113.*

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Appendix I

My Child is Missing (MCIM) Lesson Plan

Instructional Unit: Missing and Abducted Child Case Investigations

Level of Class: New Recruits/Staff, Annual In-Service Training-- Patrol through Command, Child Protective Service Workers, Emergency Medical Staff, Other Helping Professionals

Time Allotted: (Ideally) between one and one half - two hours (90-120 minutes)

Method of Presentation: MCIM Video, Class Discussion

Reference and Training Aids:

Distribute copies of:

- A. Two-page (double-sided) Handout of Video's Graphics (**Appendix J**)
- B. Reunification Tips for Law Enforcement (**Appendix G**)
- C. Reunification Tips for Parents (**Appendix H**)

Class Objectives:

- A. To identify the roles of law enforcement in each stage of the investigatory process of a missing child case.
- B. To review investigatory procedures for each type of the five ways children can be reported as missing (voluntary missing / runaway, family / parental abduction, non-family abduction, throwaway, lost / hurt / otherwise missing).
- C. Examine the roles other agencies play in missing and abducted child cases.
- D. Review signs & symptoms of child abuse.
- E. Discuss your agency's policies and procedures

MCIM Class/Workshop Overview

Introduction/Overview of Topic	15 min
Introduction of MCIM videotape, pass out Handout of Video Graphics (Appendix J)	5 min
Play Section 1 of videotape (Role of Law Enforcement Personnel in Case Investigations)	20 min
Stop Tape. Discuss Roles and Duties	20 min
Play Section 2 of videotape (Investigational Considerations for the Different Types of Missing Child Cases). Pass out and review materials: ⇒ Reunification Tips for Law Enforcement ⇒ Reunification Tips for Parents”	20 min
Stop Tape. Discuss Investigational Considerations	20 min
Play Section 3 of Videotape (Roles Other Agencies Play, Signs of Child Abuse, Conclusion)	5 min
Discuss Roles of Other Agencies, signs and symptoms of child abuse, review	5 min
Wrap Up, Concluding Remarks	10 min
	<hr/> 110-120 min
Administer test	

Appendix J

Handout of Video Graphics

VIEWER ADVISORY

As the first responder to a missing child case, please be aware that this video contains material that may not be applicable in every situation. **Let the facts dictate your actions.**

VIEWER ADVISORY

This video contains an overview of the book *Missing and Abducted Children: Enforcement Guide to Case Investigation and Program Management* (2nd edition)

To order your own copy, call NCMEC at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)

VIEWER ADVISORY

Every aspect covered in the book has not been covered in this video. To order your own copy, call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

1-800-THE-LOST
(1-800-843-5678)

VIDEO SECTIONS

1. The roles of law enforcement personnel in case investigations.
2. The investigation considerations for the different types of missing child cases.
3. The roles other agencies play in investigating missing child cases.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Note name, address, home and business telephone number of each person.
- Determine each person's relationship to the missing child.
- Note information that each person may have about the child's disappearance.
- Determine when and where each person last saw the child.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Ask each one, "What do you think happened to the child?"
- Obtain names, addresses and telephone numbers of the child's friends and associates, other relatives and friends of the family.
- Compile a list of known sex offenders.
- Enter the child into the National Crime Information Center's (NCIC) "Missing Persons" file.

THE AMBER PLAN

- The police will alert the media.
- The media will stop broadcasts and relay the information.
- A TIPS hotline will then take calls from the community.

NOTIFY ADDITIONAL HELP

- Broadcast the BOLO bulletin right away.
- For local and state agencies, use the Interagency Law Enforcement System such as MILES.
- Utilize the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS).

REUNIFICATION

For more helpful suggestions,
The Vanished Children's Alliance
call **1-800-VANISHED**
or
NCMEC
1-800-THE-LOST
(1-800-843-5678)

Determine the nature of the Family Abduction case: Civil or Criminal

Investigate:

- Look for prior reports of abuse or neglect.
- Interview the child's friends and siblings, school personnel.

Investigate:

- Check for leads at the school.
- Interview teachers and other school personnel.
- Talk to the child's classmates.
- Check the contents of their school locker.
- Determine if child was depressed or suicidal.
- Determine if child was drug or alcohol dependent or user.

DEVELOP AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF THE CHILD.

A copy of the Victim/Family Data Collection Questionnaire can be found in Appendix D of the workshop manual.

Update the NCIC

Consider upgrading the NCIC entry to "Endangered" by using the **unusual or critical missing child factors**:

- The missing child is 13 years of age or younger.
- The missing child is believed to be out of the zone of safety for his or her age and developmental stage.
- The missing child is mentally incapacitated.
- The missing child is drug dependent, including prescribed medication and/or illegal substances, and the dependency is potentially life threatening.
- The missing child has been absent from home for more than 24 hours before being reported to the police.
- Based on available information it is determined that the missing child is in a life-threatening situation.
- Based on available information it is believed that the missing child is in the company of adults who could endanger his or her welfare.
- The absence is inconsistent with his or her established patterns of behavior and the deviation cannot be readily explained

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why did the child leave?
- Where did the child go?
- How did the child survive?
- Who helped the child during their absence?
- Will the child leave again?

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

1-800-THE-LOST
1-800-843-5678

NCIC Flags

Use "Child Abduction" flag when entering the child into either the "Endangered" or "Involuntary Missing Person" category.

UFAP Warrant

Obtain an "Unauthorized Flight to Avoid Prosecution" Warrant.

HUMAN SERVICES AGENCIES CAN HELP!

- FBI
- NCMEC
- State Center for Missing Children

Physical or behavioral indicators of sexual abuse:

- Difficulty in sitting or walking.
- Presence of a sexually transmitted disease, such as gonorrhea, syphilis, and human immune deficiency virus (HIV).
- Pregnancy.
- Repeated symptoms of medical problems to the genitals or digestive system.
- Unusual bruising on areas such as the inner thighs or covering the mouth.

LOCATING THE SUSPECT PARENT

- Employment records
- Educational records
- Credit records and bureaus
- Social Security information
- Change of address information through the Postal Service
- Drivers license information
- Past and current girl or boyfriends, spouses, acquaintances, parents

Child behavioral indicators of sexual abuse:

- Unusual sexual behavior or knowledge in a young child.
- Nightmares.
- Repeated runaway incidents.

Parental behavioral indicators of sexual abuse:

- Parents exhibit extreme over-protectiveness.
- Overly interested in a child's social and sexual life.
- Parents see the child as highly sexualized.
- High degree of jealousy toward the child.

Child neglect warning signs:

- Poor hygiene.
- Inappropriate clothing for weather conditions.
- Malnutrition.
- Bloated bellies.
- Small stature for their age.
- Rashes may indicate the presence of ringworm or impetigo.

Signs for physical abuse

- Bruises or marks
- Unusual patterns, e.g., belt buckle, fly swatter, hand-prints, cigarette burns, etc.
- Clustered on one side of the body.
- Burns caused by immersion in hot liquid, cigarettes, or hot irons.
- Welts, abrasions, fractures and internal injuries.

VIDEO CAST

VIDEO HOST

John Walsh
Appears Courtesy of:
America's Most Wanted: America Fights Back!

INITIAL RESPONDER SCENE

911 Operator: Liz Hoke
Responding Office: Det. Joe Ripple
Officer: Sharon King
Sergeant-Supervisor: Sgt. Randy Brashears
Detective: Patrick Hammond
Mother: Fabiola C'ardenas
Father: Carlos A. Puerto
Daughter: Pilar Puerto
Evidence Room: Chris Kelly
Chopper Pilot: David McVey
Lieutenant: Minda Foxwell
MCC: Cpl. A.L. Friedman
MCC: Officer Karen Nizer
MCC: Off. Lee C. Ches
PIO: Cpl. Vickie Warehime

STRANGER ABDUCTION SCENE

Missing Child: Ryen Jones
Mother: Thirkield Guy
First Responding Trooper: Tpr. E.J. Krickler
Supervising Trooper: Corporal Eric Fogle
Bloodhound: Angel
Grandmother: Beatrice Wye
Abductor: Clp. Richard Bergin
Detective: T.J. Stetson

Supporting Cast

Joseph Ruff
Lisa Herold
Sheritta Barr Stanley
Jo Duley
James Duley
Carl Traenkner
Rosemary Traenkner
Bradley Traenkner
Jeannette Kasnia
Nicholas Kasni
Beverly Johnson
Dottie Cunningham
Veronica Fair
Shawn Uhler
Kellen Bell
Tim Proudfoot
William Klapka III
Nyquia McDougald
Pasqualina Weems
Justin A. Wilkerson
Caritta Stanley
Lucinda V. Burgess
Samuel A. Stein
Traci Stein
Mary Jo Weave
Tamika Lopez Zhane
Wayne A. Burgess-Dears Jr.

Tina Waganer
Nicholas Waganer
Bill Leach
Sandy Leach
Robert Sheppard
Karen Sheppard
Mathew Sheppard
Jamie Apellaniz
Lisa Apellaniz
David B. Higgins
Angie Haines
William Lee
Justin Fair
Joshua Uhler
Laura Proudfoot
Carla T. Proudfoot
Robert Jones Jr.
Nicholas Jones
Nicole Jones
Carol A. Wilkerson
Carlos Stanley
Ellen F. Davis
Jacob Stein
Jim Proudfoot
C.J. Burgess-Dears
Kristin Coleman
Denise D. Chop

FAMILY ABDUCTION SCENE

Abducted Child: Katherine Worden
Father: John R. Worden

Daycare Supervisor:
Responding Officer:
Left Behind Mom:
Stepdad:
Detective:
Riverdale Sgt:
Central Records:
Counselor:

Supporting Cast

Linda Albright
Charles T. Acree Jr.
Josh Avara
Andrew Baird
Ben Bealmear
Emily Bealmear
Samantha Silverman
Brandon Terwilliger
Mackenzie Campbell
Naomi E. Canter
Dominique' Devron Carter
Dylan J. Cole
Amanda Freed
Jennifer Freed
Michael Gorman
Mairin Gorman
Anna Katherine Gracie
Tevin Gray
Jade Gray
Claire E. Welhoelter-Ward
Regina Harvin

RUNAWAY SCENE

Dad: Manny Uy
Daughter: Christina Uy
Officer: Larry W. Armwood
Physician: Daniel Levy MD
Nurse: Angel Morris
Mother: Joyce Keller-Uy
Counselor: Carla Proudfoot

HOMELESS INJURED TEEN SCENE

Homeless Teen: Lynnea C. Cornish
Nurse: Soraya Sina, RN, SAFE
EMS: W. Seidlich
EMS: R. Van Vugt
Social Worker: Brandy J. Hawkins
Officer: Buzzy Beeler

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Greater Baltimore Medical Center
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Carroll County Parks Department
Child and Teen Wellness Center of Owings Mills
Franklin Elementary School
Play Keepers, Inc.

VIDEOGRAPHER

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