

In Advance - Generally.

If your child becomes lost or is abducted, the immediate availability of the following information is extremely important.



P Keep a complete, up-to-date written description of your child, including:

- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Eye color
- ✓ Hair color/length
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Height
- ✓ Weight
- ✓ Date of birth
- ✓ Specific physical attributes (e.g., braces, scars, tattoos, birthmarks)

P Make it a habit to know what your child is wearing.

P Take color photographs of your child every six months. Head and shoulder portraits from different angles, such as those taken by school photographers, are preferable.

P Make sure your dentist prepares full dental charts on your child and updates them with each exam. If you move, get a copy of these dental records to keep in your files until a new dentist is found.

P Find out from your doctor where your child's medical records are located. All permanent scars, birthmarks, broken bones, and medical needs should be recorded.

P Arrange to have your child fingerprinted by your local police or sheriff's department. They will give you the fingerprint card and will not keep a record of your child's prints.

P Give some thought to how you would react if your child disappeared (e.g., where you would look first, how family members could help).

P Keep a list of names, telephone numbers and addresses of:

- ✓ Your child's school and teacher(s).
- ✓ The school transportation coordinator.
- ✓ All of your child's friends and their parents.
- ✓ Your child's workplace, if applicable.
- ✓ All family members and relatives.
- ✓ Babysitters.
- ✓ Non-custodial parent or birth parent, if applicable.

P Secure and store a scent article. The success of a search by trained dogs is very much dependent upon the scent article.

✓ Have your child remove a piece of clothing that he or she has been wearing all day and have the child place it in a clear plastic bag.

✓ Use a "zip lock" bag and tightly zip the edges so that no air escapes. Do not allow anyone but the child who wore the article of clothing to touch it or the bag.

✓ The bag should be labeled "scent article enclosed". The name of the child and the date of receipt should also be included.

✓ The bag should be stored in a location in the home where it is easily accessible to parents, but not in the reach of children.

✓ The article will be effective for an extended period of time if the bag is properly sealed. Do not allow the bag to be punctured or opened. If this occurs for any reason, repeat the process.

Actions to be taken when a child is missing - No immediate indication of an abduction or attempt.

P Organize your thoughts and a plan of action. The sooner the search begins, the better the chances for recovery.

P Conduct a brief, but thorough search of all out-of-the-way places, including:

- ✓ Closets
- ✓ Attics
- ✓ Crawl spaces
- ✓ Basements
- ✓ Vehicles (even if locked; include trunks)
- ✓ Appliances (include unused refrigerators)
- ✓ Swimming pools
- ✓ Garages/Sheds
- ✓ Streams/Ponds
- ✓ Trees/Bushes

P Call the people on your list.

P Promptly call the police if you are unable to locate your child within a short period of time.

✓ Provide the police communications specialist with all available details upon calling.

P Gather previously mentioned information while waiting for the police to arrive and present it to them when they arrive.

- ✓ Photographs.
- ✓ Lists of names, telephone numbers and addresses.

P Secure the child's bedroom (after searching it for your child).

✓ Let no one in; good "scent articles" may be needed.

P Continue to contact neighbors and your child's friends to determine if they have any pertinent information.

Actions to be taken when a child is missing - Abduction suspected or attempted.

P Gather and note all available details and call the police immediately. Provide these details to the police communications specialist during the initial call. This allows the police to react in a much more effective and coordinated manner and increases the likelihood of apprehension dramatically. Details include:

✓ Name and description of the child involved; and the exact location and time when last seen.

✓ If abduction has occurred, provide details regarding your child's:

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Gender
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Build
- ✓ Hair color and length
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Other characteristics

P Description and/or identity (if known) of the abductor.

P Description of the vehicle involved, if applicable.

- ✓ Make
- ✓ License plate (number and state)
- ✓ Unique damage or markings
- ✓ Model
- ✓ Color
- ✓ Age

P Direction of travel and time when last seen.

P Any other details or observations, whether you believe that they are relevant or not.

P Try to keep all witnesses and others with information available, so that they can be interviewed by the police when they arrive. If a person is unable to wait, be sure that you get their name(s), telephone number(s) and all information that they have to offer about the incident.

P Even if an abduction attempt is unsuccessful, call the police immediately. This is very likely not the abductor's first attempt. Apprehension as the result of an unsuccessful attempt may allow police to close previously unsolved cases. It may also preclude the individual from making additional attempts in the future. It may literally save another child's life.

A Message About Child Safety From Governor George E. Pataki



Whenever a child is missing, parents must act decisively and law enforcement not only needs to respond and investigate, but needs to do so in an immediate, thorough and well coordinated manner - always.

It is often impossible to determine the degree to which a child is in danger until after the police have commenced an investigation. This is obviously most critical in cases which involve abduction.

Experiences have consistently shown that prompt and decisive action by parents and law enforcement during the initial stages of a report is the most important factor in bringing children home swiftly and unharmed.

The purpose of this brochure is to provide guidance for preparing for the unlikely disappearance of your child and taking effective action if your child is missing.

The NYS Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse (MECC)

MECC is a strong partner with parents and law enforcement in preventing and investigating child abduction and exploitation.

P *The 1-800-FIND-KID hotline* is maintained 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. Missing child leads and sightings received on the hotline are immediately disseminated to investigating law enforcement agencies.

P *The statewide missing and unidentified person repository* is continually updated by MECC with information submitted by law enforcement agencies.

P *Investigative assistance* is provided to law enforcement agencies and parents. MECC trains law enforcement officers in basic and advanced investigative techniques. To aid in finding missing children, MECC staff members:

- ✓ Offer advice on case management practices.
- ✓ Flag birth and educational records of missing children.
- ✓ Develop missing child flyers and distribute them law enforcement agencies and other entities statewide. Also, the *TRAK (Technology to Recover Abducted Kids)* program allows for rapid dissemination of high-quality photo images and biographical information. When a child is deemed to be “endangered”, information can be sent via broadcast fax to virtually every law enforcement agency in the State in a matter of minutes.
- ✓ Place missing child photographs and biographical information and child safety information on the DCJS web site at www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us.
- ✓ Search employment, credit, motor vehicle and other records for leads.
- ✓ Analyze and enter missing person dental and other anatomical information into New York State and National Crime Information Center files.

P *MECC collaboration* with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, other state clearinghouses, other State agencies, non-profit organizations, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and courts can provide nationwide assistance to law enforcement agencies and family members.

**NEW YORK STATE
MISSING &
EXPLOITED
CHILDREN
CLEARINGHOUSE**



**IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE
INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT:**

**NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services
4 Tower Place
Albany, NY 12203**

1-800-FIND-KID or (518) 457-6326

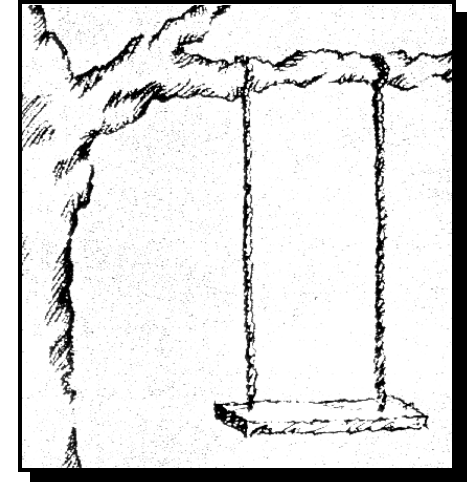
**Missing child photographs and biographical
information and additional child safety information
can be viewed on our website.**

<http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us>

Contributions made to the NYS MECC Fund made reproduction of this brochure possible. Contributions can be forwarded directly to the fund at the address listed above. Also, the NYS Tax Law now allows individuals to donate to the MECC Fund when filing state income tax returns. Every penny of your contribution goes directly to support the work of the Clearinghouse and local efforts statewide.

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“MY CHILD IS MISSING...”



BEING PREPARED.



**State of New York
George E. Pataki, Governor**