

# Missing Children and Adults Guidelines for Families

If your child is missing or has been abducted, it is important to let law enforcement know immediately. The sooner law enforcement begins its investigation, the greater the chances are that your child will be found safe. Here are some tips on what to do if someone you know has gone missing or been abducted.

## 1. Notify law enforcement

Do not delay in reporting the missing person to law enforcement. There is no waiting period to make a missing person report, and there is no limit due to age. Provide the following information, if known:

- The date, time and location where the missing person was last seen.
- Whether they were on foot or, if in a vehicle, any possible vehicle or license plate information.

## 2. Gather information quickly

Gather information about the missing person to provide to the responding law enforcement investigator.

- Date of birth, hair & eye color, height, weight and race.
- Information about eyeglasses, contact lenses, braces, piercings, scars or tattoos, etc.
- Phone numbers of any cell phones used by the missing person.
- Place of employment if applicable.
- A clear, recent color photo or video if available.
- Description of clothing worn when last seen.
- General health and any medical conditions or concerns.
- Recent changes in the missing person's behavior.
- Name(s) of known friends and acquaintances.
- If the missing person is a child, information about anyone who has recently shown unusual attention or interest in your child.

### 3. Gather additional evidence (complete after steps 1 and 2 have been completed)

- **Electronics** - Identify and provide any computers and wireless devices used by the missing person. Do not attempt to search these devices on your own. Ask law enforcement to look for clues in any chat and social networking websites your child has visited or hosts.
- **DNA** - Provide items from the missing person's possessions such as a toothbrush, hair brush or anything else used only by the missing person that could contain a DNA sample.
- **Records** - if possible obtain medical records from your child's doctor and dental records from your child's dentist.

### 4. Assist with the investigation

Stay in regular contact with the investigating law enforcement agency. Update the agency with any new or additional information as it becomes available.

- Obtain the name of and contact information for the primary investigator assigned to the case.
- Verify that information has been entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File. State and federal law requires law enforcement to enter information about a missing person into NCIC no more than two hours after the receipt of the missing person report.
- Ask the responding officer if immediate community notifications will be issued and if a neighborhood canvass will or has been conducted.
- Law enforcement may ask you to fill out a [missing persons bulletin release form](#).
- Notify law enforcement as soon as the missing person is located.