National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Children's Rights

https://www.missingkids.org/theissues/missingfromcare

Campaign and Advocacy

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As the national clearinghouse on missing and exploited children issues, NCMEC is uniquely positioned to provide significant and continuous support to state agencies that are searching for children missing from their care. NCMEC provides an array of resources, including case management, poster distribution, law enforcement technical assistance, and analytical support. Every report of a missing child receives a prompt response from NCMECs case management staff who coordinate directly with all case workers, social workers and/or law enforcement agencies involved to provide resources to help safely locate the missing child.

Reporting all children missing from care to NCMEC is not just a best practice, but also a legal requirement. NCMEC can provide missing child case support, to assist state agencies fulfilling these requirements and ultimately help provide a better response to children in need.

NCMEC takes care to protect and maintain the privacy of information regarding missing children, and consults with the parent/guardian and investigating law enforcement agency before disseminating identifying information publicly. Additionally, NCMEC does not generally make any public reference to the fact that a child is missing from foster care, was in state custody at the time they went missing, or that they are likely the victim of child sex trafficking. Additionally, NCMEC does not generally share any medical or other sensitive information about the child. Finally, any analytical support that NCMEC generates will only be shared with law enforcement for the purpose of locating the missing child.

1. Immediately contact the local law enforcement agency

File a **missing child report** and ask that the child's information be entered into the FBI's National Crime and Information Center database (NCIC).

*There is no waiting period for law enforcement to take a report and enter the child into the NCIC system.

Be prepared to provide all identifying information on the missing child

2. Make a report to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)

Be prepared to provide all identifying information on the missing child:

If you encounter any issues while trying to report a missing child to NCMEC, please contact 1-800-THE-LOST.

NCMEC provides an array of resources, including case management, poster distribution, our long-term missing children initiative, and analytical support, among many others.

NCMEC provides technical assistance to law enforcement and support to parents or guardians of children who are missing under critical circumstances or who have run away from their home or placement.

Our case management staff have specialized skills in locating and recovering these missing children and build strong working relationships with the particular law enforcement officers and social service agencies that interact with the child.

Case Management staff work closely with legal guardians and law enforcement agencies to provide technical assistance and coordinate NCMEC resources, including family support services. They are paired with the **Child Sex Trafficking Team** who provide comprehensive analytical services to law enforcement.

Child Sex Trafficking Recovery Planning and Services

The Child Sex Trafficking Recovery Services Team (RST)provides specialized resources to child welfare professionals who have reported a youth missing from care to NCMEC when a concern for child sex trafficking has been identified. Resource Specialists on this team are available to assist child welfare professionals in the development of intentional, trauma-informed, and victim-centered plans for when the youth returns to placement or is recovered by law enforcement. Case consultation and expert guidance is provided around effective strategies for youth engagement and safety planning, promising practices to address running behavior, and understanding the experiences and needs of youth who have experienced child sex trafficking. Resource Specialists are regionally assigned to provide state-specific guidance and connection to statewide and local specialized child sex trafficking resources.

If you are interested in resources or assistance please email RecoveryServices@ncmec.org.

Children on the autism spectrum go missing under a variety of circumstances. They may seek out small or enclosed spaces, wander toward places of special interest to them, or try to escape overwhelming stimuli. Children missing from care who fall on the autism

spectrum should be identified upon reporting to NCMEC so that appropriate support services and guidance can be provided.

In the event a child missing from care is not recovered soon after they go missing, it is important to have taken steps to prepare for a long-term missing case. In such cases NCMEC can assist through the **Forensic Services Unit**, **Team Adam**, Biometrics Team and Forensic Imaging Team. The Forensic Imaging Team can create age-progressed images of what the child may look like today, which can be helpful in locating the child in a long-term case.

Once a case is reported to NCMEC, and the child has been entered in NCIC, Case Management staff will coordinate the creation and dissemination of a poster, to include on social media platforms, to help generate leads. Analytical support, via NCMECs Analytical Services Division, will forward leads received by NCMEC to the investigating law enforcement agency. When appropriate, referrals are made to NCMECs **Family Advocacy Division** and/or **Team HOPE** for families in crisis and needing emotional support.

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