

# SafeSteps

to Protect Florida's Children

*A Parent's Guide to Online Safety, Child Abduction, and Runaway Issues*



Office of the Attorney General

NATIONAL  
CENTER FOR



**MISSING &  
EXPLOITED**  
CHILDREN®

# Message from the Office of the Attorney General

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Parents and Guardians,

The safety of Florida's citizens, especially our most vulnerable, is a top priority of the Office of the Attorney General. It is for this purpose that we are presenting a new tool that deals with the safety of our children. SAFE STEPS is designed with parents in mind as they pursue their primary responsibility of protecting the youngest members of their family.

Over the past year, we went into elementary schools throughout the state to train children - as well as their parents - on child abduction prevention strategies. They were introduced to the concept of a "bad stranger" based on a person's actions instead of their appearance.

An important area where parents must be involved with their children is the use of the Internet. It is not uncommon for young children to fall prey to Internet predators who have the influence and the ability to lure children into situations and circumstances that are harmful. News reports have detailed instances where a child has been lured out of their home, across state lines, and even across international borders.

SAFE STEPS can assist in minimizing the risks so that families will not suffer a similar fate. This publication contains valuable information and resources that may be of assistance to you and your children. We hope you find this useful.

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# Introduction

Children are routinely told to “stay away from strangers.” Unfortunately, many children are abducted or exploited by people they or their families might know. The term “stranger” can mislead children and cause them to think that they should only be wary of individuals who are unfamiliar. Instead, children must be taught to identify certain dangerous situations or actions, rather than particular individuals.

The Internet, for example, can be a dangerous place for children. Children are often approached by people they don’t know in chat rooms, through instant messaging, and even via E-mail. These “Internet predators,” or offenders, often initiate seemingly innocent contact with their victims, and they might try to befriend them. Because predators use subtle approaches to disarm a child, it is difficult for children to recognize the danger they may face. Therefore, parents and guardians need to be aware of the risks their children face online, and they need to discuss these risks with their children.

Children should be taught that it is okay to say “no” – even to an adult. Parents and guardians should explain to their children that the child’s personal safety is more important than being polite, and that people on the Internet are not always who they seem. Children should also know that there will always be someone who can help them and to tell a trusted adult if they are scared, uncomfortable, or confused.

Remember: it’s easier for a child to understand a clear, calm, and reassuring message about situations and actions than a particular profile or image of a “stranger.” These rules apply to older children as well, as they are also at risk of abduction and online victimization.

The tips in this publication are adapted and reprinted respectively from *Teen Safety on the Information Highway* (c) 2004, *Child Safety on the Information Highway* (c) 2003, *Guidelines in Case You are Considering Daycare* (c) 1989, *No Child Should Be At Risk: Prevention Works* (c) 2003, *New Neighborhood Safety Tips* (c) 1998 and 2004, *Know the Rules: Just in Case You...* (c) 1987, *Know the Rules...General Tips for Parents and Guardians to Help Keep Their Children Safer* (c) 2000, *Personal Safety for Children: A Guide for Parents* (c) 2003, *Just in Case: Guidelines in Case your Child Might Someday be Missing* (c) 1985 and 2004, *Know the Rules...School Safety Tips* (c) 1994, *Your kids can fill in the blanks. Can you?* (c) 2004, *Know the Rules for Going to and From School More Safely* (c) 2001 and 2004, and *Know the Rules* (c) 1998 and 2004 published by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.

Portions of this publication are adapted and reprinted from *Keys to Safety* published by the Office of the Arkansas Attorney General.

# Online Safety

The huge growth on the Internet in recent years means more people are going online. In schools and in many homes, children are logging onto commercial services and private bulletin boards. There are many educational and entertaining benefits to going online. Unfortunately, there are also risks for children who use the Internet.

## Recognizing Risks

Teenagers are particularly at risk because they often use the computer unsupervised and are more likely than younger children to participate in online discussions regarding companionship, relationships, or sexual activity. Some risks are:

- Being exposed to inappropriate material that is sexual, hateful, or violent in nature, or encourages activities that are dangerous or illegal;
- Providing information or arranging an encounter that could risk your child's safety or the safety of other family members;
- Doing something that has negative legal or financial consequences, such as giving out a parent's credit card number.

Although crimes are being committed online, that's not a reason to avoid using the Internet. Instead, learn how to be "cyber smart" to better safeguard your family.

**LEARN HOW TO BE  
"CYBER SMART"  
IN ORDER TO BETTER  
SAFEGUARD YOUR FAMILY.**



# OnLine Guidelines for Parents

While children need a certain amount of privacy, they also need parental involvement and supervision in their daily lives. The same general parenting skills that apply to the “real world” also apply online. By taking responsibility for your children’s online computer use, you can greatly minimize potential risks of being online.

## Make it a family rule to:

- ✓ Never give out identifying or personal information – home address, school name, telephone number, age, marital status, or financial information in chat rooms or bulletin boards;
- ✓ Don’t post photographs of your children on Web sites that are available to the public;
- ✓ Inquire about your Internet Service Provider’s (ISP’s) privacy policies and exercise your options for how your personal information may be used;
- ✓ If you have cause for concern about your children’s online activities, talk to them. Remember – how you respond will determine whether your children confide in you the next time they encounter a problem;
- ✓ Never allow your children to arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they’ve “met” online unless they’ve received your permission;
- ✓ If you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, immediately report this to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children’s CyberTipline at 1-800-843-5678 or [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com);
- ✓ Instruct your children not to click on any links that are contained in email from persons they don’t know. Such links could lead to inappropriate Web sites;
- ✓ Remember that people online may not be who they seem. Someone indicating that “she” is a “12-year old girl” could in reality be a 40-year old male predator;
- ✓ Be careful about offers that involve personally coming to a meeting, having someone visit your house, or sending money or credit card information;
- ✓ Keep the computer in a family room rather than the child’s bedroom;
- ✓ Share an email account with your children to oversee their mail, and consider joining your children when they are in private chat areas;
- ✓ Utilize the filtering features built into the popular Internet browsers and software programs that block areas known to be inappropriate for children. You can find information about filtering programs at [www.getnetwise.org/tools/](http://www.getnetwise.org/tools/);
- ✓ Know the lingo used by teenagers in chat rooms and email correspondence. See Chat Dictionary in back of this booklet.

# Tips for Your Teen's Online Safety

The most important thing to remember is that when your teen is online in any kind of public forum, anyone can read whatever he or she posts. They should never post anything on the Internet that they wouldn't want known to the public. Here are tips to teach your teens to help protect them online.

## KEEP YOUR IDENTITY PRIVATE

If your teen is in any type of public forum, make sure he or she avoids giving out his or her name, mailing address, telephone number, school name, or any other information that could help someone determine identity. The same applies to information about family and friends.

## NEVER GET TOGETHER WITH SOMEONE YOU "MEET" ONLINE

The biggest danger to a teen's safety is getting together with someone he or she "meets" online. Make sure your children know they can never be positive that people they meet online are who they say they are. Teach your teens that if they're unsure whether to meet with someone, they should discuss it with you first.

## NEVER RESPOND TO MESSAGES THAT ARE HOSTILE, BELLIGERENT, OR INAPPROPRIATE

It isn't your children's fault if they get a message that makes them feel uncomfortable. If they get such a message, they shouldn't respond. Instead, teach your teen to show such a message to you or to another trusted adult to see if there is anything that can be done to put a stop to it.

## TALK WITH YOUR PARENTS ABOUT GROUND RULES FOR GOING ONLINE

It's important that parents and teens agree when it comes to their online activities. This includes when they can go online, how long they can stay online, and what activities they can participate in online. Teens should be taught that communicating with parents doesn't mean that they have to give up their privacy. It just means that an agreement based on mutual trust and understanding has been reached.

# Chat Dictionary

Chat rooms have a language of their own. Parents can use this guide to de-code what they may see their kids typing on the computer when chatting with others online.

*poof*	Has Left The Chat
^ 5	High 5
20	Location
73	Best Regards
88	Love And Kisses
100	Nature Calls/Pit Stop
404	I have No Clue (What you get when you enter a wrong URL)
12345	Talk About School
A/S/L?	Age/Sex/Location?
ADN	Any Day Now
AFAIK	As Far As I Know
AFK	Away From Keyboard
ASAP	As Soon As Possible
B4N	Bye For Now
BBL	Be Back Later
BBN	Bye Bye Now
BBS	Be Back Soon
BEG	Big Evil Grin
BF	Boyfriend
BIBO	Beer In, Beer Out
BL	Belly Laugh
BMGWL	Busting My Gut With Laughter
BRB	Be Right Back
BTDT	Been There, Done That
BTW	By The Way
BWL	Bursting With Laughter
C&G	Chuckle And Grin
CICO	Coffee In, Coffee Out
CID	Crying In Disgrace
CNP...	Continued (in my) Next Post
CP	Chat Post (a chat message)
CRBT	Crying Real Big Tears
CSG	Chuckle Snicker Grin
CU	See You
CYA	See You (Seeya)
CYAL8R	See You Later (Seeyalata)
DLTBBS	Don't Let The Bed Bugs Bite
DOM	Dirty Old Man
DOS	Dozing Off Soon
DTRT	Do The Right Thing
DWB	Don't Write Back
DWPKOTL	Deep Wet Passionate Kiss On The Lips
EG	Evil Grin
EMSG	Email Message
ES	Enough Said
F2F	Face To Face
FC	Fingers Crossed
FTBOMH	From The Bottom Of My Heart
FUBAR	Fouled Up Beyond All Recognition
FWIW	For What It's Worth
G	Grin
GAL	Get A Life
GF	Girlfriend
GFN	Gone For Now
GGP	Gotta Go Pee
GL	Good Luck
GM	Good Morning
GMAB	Give Me A Break
GMBO	Giggling My Butt Off
GMTA	Great Minds Think Alike
GN	Good Night

GNSTDLTBBB	Good Night, Sleep Tight, Don't Let The Bed Bugs Bite
GTC	Got To Go
GTSY	Glad To See You
H&K	Hug And Kiss
HABU	Have A Better 'Un
HAGN	Have A Good Night
HAGU	Have A Good 'Un
HAND	Have A Nice Day
HHIS	Hanging Head In Shame
HI	Laughter
HIG	How's It Going
HT	Hi There
HUB	Head Up "Rear"
IAE	In Any Event
IC	I See
IGP	I Gotta Pee
ILY	I Love You
IMNSHO	In My Not So Humble Opinion
IMO	In My Opinion
IMCO	In My Considered Opinion
IMHO	In My Humble Opinion
IMS	I'm Sorry
IOW	In Other Words
IRL	In Real Life
ITIGBS	I Think I'm Gonna Be Sick
IWALU	I Will Always Love You
J4G	Just For Grins
JAM	Just A Minute
JK	Just Kidding
JMO	Just My Opinion
JTYLK	Just To Let You Know
KISS	Keep It Simple, Stupid
KIT	Keep In Touch
KOC	Kiss On Cheek
KOL	Kiss On Lips
KOTC	Kiss On The Cheek
KWIM	Know What I Mean
L	Laugh
L8R	Later
L8R G8R	Later 'Gator
LHM	Lord Help Me
LHO	Laughing Head Off
LHU	Lord Help Us
LMAO	Laughing My "Rear" Off
LMSO	Laughing My Socks Off
LOL	Laugh Out Loud
LSHMBB	Laughing So Hard My Belly Is Bouncing
LSHMBH	Laughing So Hard My Belly Hurts
LSHTTARDML	Laughing So Hard The Tears Are Running Down My Leg
LTNS	Long Time No See
LTS	Laughing To Self
LUWAMH	Love You With All My Heart
LY	Love Ya
LY4E	Love You Forever
MTF	More To Follow
NRN	No Reply Necessary
NADT	Not A Darn Thing
NVNG	Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained
OIC	Oh, I See
OL	Old Lady (significant other)
OM	Old Man (significant other)

OMG	Oh My God
OTOH	On The Other Hand
OTTOMH	Off The Top of My Head
PAW	Parents Are Watching
PDS	Please Don't Shoot
PM	Private Message
PMFJI	Pardon Me For Jumping In
PMP	Peed My Pants
PPL	People
POAHF	Put On A Happy Face
S	Smile
QSL	Reply
QSO	Conversation
QT	Cutie
RL	Real Life
ROFL	Rolling On Floor Laughing
ROFLAPMP	ROFL And Peeing My Pants
ROFLMAO	ROFL My "Rear" Off
ROFLMAOAY	ROFLMAO At You
ROFLMAOPMP	ROFLMAO Peeing My Pants
ROFLMAOWTIME	ROFLMAO With Tears In My Eyes
ROFLUTS	ROFL Unable to Speak
RME	Rolling My Eyes
ROTFL	Rolls On The Floor Laughing
RT	Real Time
RTFM	Read The Freaking Manual!
SETE	Smiling Ear To Ear
SHID	Slaps Head In Disgust
SNERT	Snot-Nosed Egotistical Rude Teenager
S ^ S'UP	What's Up?
SNAFU	Situation Normal; All Fouled UP
SO	Significant Other
SOT	Short Of Time
SOTMG	Short Of Time Must Go
STO	Sticking Out Tongue
SUAKM	Shut Up And Kiss Me
SWAK	Sealed With A Kiss
SWAG	Scientific Wild A** Guess
SWL	Screaming With Laughter
SYS	See You Soon
SYT	Sweet Young Thing
TA	Thanks Again
TCOY	Take Care OF Yourself
TIA	Thanks In Advance
TILII	Tell It Like It Is
TNT	Till Next Time
TNX	Thanks
TOY	Thinking Of You
TTFN	Ta Ta For Now
TTYL	Talk To You Later
TY	Thank You
WAYD	What Are You Doing
WB	Welcome Back
WBS	Write Back Soon
WEG	Wicked Evil Grin
WKF	Well Known Fact
WTG	Way To Go
WTH	What/Who The Heck
YBS	You'll Be Sorry
YG	Young Gentleman
YL	Young Lady
YM	Young Man
YW	You're Welcome

# Basic Rules of Safety for Children

Teach children to look out for certain situations or actions, rather than certain individuals.

It's never too early to start teaching small children about safety. As soon as your children can articulate a sentence, they can begin to learn how to protect themselves against abduction and exploitation. Children should be taught basic rules of safety.

## Here are some general tips for protecting your child:

- ✓ Know where your children are at all times. Be familiar with their friends and daily activities;
- ✓ Be sensitive to changes in your children's behavior; it's a signal that you should talk about the cause of the changes;
- ✓ Be alert to a teenager or adult who is paying an unusual amount of attention to your children or giving them inappropriate or expensive gifts;
- ✓ Teach your children to trust their own feelings; assure them that they have the right to say "no" to anything they sense is wrong;
- ✓ Teach your children that no one should approach them or touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. If someone does, they should tell you or another adult immediately.

## What to teach your children:

- ✓ If your children are separated from you in a public place, make sure they don't wander around looking for you. Instruct them to go to a checkout counter, the security office, or the lost-and-found department. They should quickly tell the person in charge that they have become lost and need help finding you.
- ✓ Tell them not to get into a car or go anywhere with any person unless you have given them permission.
- ✓ Let them know that if someone follows them on foot or in a car, they should run away from him or her.
- ✓ Teach them not to go with someone who asks directions, wants them to help look for a lost puppy, or tells them that you are in trouble.
- ✓ Make sure they know that if someone tries to take them somewhere, they should quickly get away and scream, "This man (woman) is trying to take me away!" or "This person is not my father (mother)!"
- ✓ Instruct them to always use the buddy system – never go places alone.
- ✓ Let them know that if someone wants to take their picture, they should say "no" and tell you or their teacher or a trusted adult.
- ✓ Teach them that no one should touch them on parts of their bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit, nor should they touch anyone else in those areas.
- ✓ Tell them they have the right to say "no" to someone who tries to take them somewhere, touches them, or makes them feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused.



# Daycare Facility Selection Tips:

Recommendations from family, friends, and neighbors are excellent ways to find good day care providers. Lists of licensed daycare providers may also be available from the local department of social services, county daycare licensing offices, local schools, and community resource centers.

## Babysitters

### Finding a babysitter:

- The best sources for locating babysitters are the recommendations of family, friends, and neighbors.
- You may also advertise for a babysitter through your local high school, church, civic organization or other sources you trust.

### Hiring the babysitter:

- Carefully check a potential sitter's references, contacting past employers, teachers, counselors, relatives, friends, or neighbors.
- Interview several prospective sitters personally and observe their interaction with your child.
- Outline the babysitter's duties and responsibilities and discuss how he or she might react to different emergency situations.
- Verify the sitter's contact information, including a home address and telephone number and identifying information such as a driver's license number.

- Visit prospective daycare centers, take tours and interview staffers, observing them with the children;
- Ask about the education and training of all personnel who interact with children;
- Arrange to meet with other individuals who may have contact with your child, such as teachers' assistants, bus drivers, custodians, and relatives of the daycare personnel;
- Make certain that the staff-to-child ratio meets county and state licensing standards;
- Make sure no areas are off-limits to parents;
- Inspect the bathrooms for isolated areas. (Many facilities have half-doors to allow adults to supervise the children, while still providing privacy for children;)
- Make sure that children are properly supervised during naptime;
- Learn the daycare's discipline policy – how it is administered, under what circumstances it is used and what form it takes;
- Visit unannounced;
- After selecting a facility, get to know the staff firsthand by involving yourself in the center's activities;
- Talk to your children each day about what happens at the daycare center.

For more information about Florida's child-care facilities, visit the State of Florida Department of Children and Families web site at:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us./childcare>

# After School

Here are some steps that you and your child can take to help ensure a positive after-school experience and some decisions to make before allowing your child to go home alone.



## Should Your Children Be Left Home Alone?

- Determine if there are community organizations providing after-school programs.
- Ask your children how they feel about being alone.
- Determine if your children have the maturity and initiative to assume the responsibility of being home alone.
- Decide how long your children will be alone, how accessible you or another trusted adult will be in case of an emergency and how safe the neighborhood is.
- Make sure you've set specific rules that your children are to follow while they're alone.
- Provide specific instructions on how to reach you and another trusted adult at all times.
- Remind your children that you're in charge, even if it is from a distance.

## What Should Parents Provide?

- A daily schedule of homework, chores, and the activities for your children to follow.
- A list near the telephone that includes numbers for you, the police, the fire department, an ambulance service, your doctor, a poison control-center, and a trusted adult who's available in case of emergency.
- A plan if you are detained and what to do if your children's plans change.
- Instructions about watching television, using a computer and household appliances, talking on the telephone, and inviting friends over.

## What Should Your Children Know?

- Know their full name, address, and telephone number.
- Know your full name, the exact name of the place where you work, your work telephone number, and mobile phone number.
- Don't walk or play alone on the way home, and never take shortcuts home.
- Stay away from bodies of water, unless they are with an adult.
- Wear reflectors and protective clothing when playing outside after dark.
- Always check out the house when entering. If something doesn't look or seem right, go to a safe place to call for help.
- Always lock the door after entering and make sure that the house is secure.
- Immediately check in with you upon returning home to let you know that they have arrived safely.
- Tell callers that you can't come to the telephone instead of letting people know that they are home alone and offer to take a message.
- Don't open the door for or talk to anyone who comes to the home unless the person is a trusted family friend or relative, and the visit has been pre-approved by you.
- Know how to make an emergency telephone call to request help.

# New Neighborhood

Moving to a new neighborhood represents a big change for everyone in the family. It's an exciting but potentially stressful or confusing time, especially for children. Here are a few rules to reinforce and practice with your children to help ensure a safer and happier new home.



After a move, teach your children their new address and telephone number as soon as possible.

## Safe Shopping

Going shopping with your children can be a safe, enjoyable experience if you follow a few simple rules:

- Make certain your children know to stay with you at all times while shopping and to always *check first* before going anywhere;
- Never leave your children alone at stores, video arcades movie theaters or playgrounds as a convenient “babysitter” while shopping;
- Always accompany young children to the restroom;
- If children become separated from you, teach them to look for someone in the store who can help them (such as a uniformed security officer or store salesperson with a name tag);
- Do not allow your children to wear clothing displaying their names. It can bring unwelcome attention from inappropriate people;
- Teach your children how to use a public telephone, locate adult sources of help within the mall or a store, and practice having them check first with you before going anywhere within a mall or store.

- Teach your children their new address and telephone number;
- Help your children learn the location of their new school and visit before their first day;
- If your children ride the school bus, visit the bus stop and teach them the bus number;
- Remind your children to always stay with other children and report any unusual incidents to you;
- List emergency telephone numbers by your telephone as soon as possible;
- Make certain your children always stay on main roads and determine some public places they can go to for assistance;
- Make a map with your children of the acceptable routes to school, the playground, store, and similar locations;
- Remind your children that they must *check first* before they go anywhere with their new friends.
- Most important, remember to practice these safety rules with your children. Make outings around the new neighborhood a chance to put their skills to the test.

If you become separated from your child while shopping, immediately notify the store's management. Most stores have a plan in place to locate missing children. The “Code Adam” alert program is a response plan used by many retailers.

# Teen Safety

One of the biggest challenges facing teens and their parents is that of running away. Here is some information to help you prevent or deal with a runaway teen.

## Reasons a Child May Run Away

- *Family Crisis* – Divorce, separation, drug or alcohol abuse, a death or physical, mental, or sexual abuse.



- *Freedom* – Some young people think that life without their parents would be easier or “hassle-free.”
- *Fear of Punishment* – Young people may fear the response of a parent to a bad mistake or the response of law enforcement to a crime.
- *Unreasonable Demands* – A child may feel that a parent expects too much or is too strict.
- *Series of Problems* – Running away is often viewed as a last resort to a series of problems at home, school, or even with the law.
- *Being Thrown Out* – Leaving home may not be the young person’s choice, as a parent may force them to leave.

## Signs That a Child May Be Thinking of Running Away

- *Changes in behavior or patterns of daily life* – not eating or overeating; sleeping frequently or not sleeping; increased isolation from family members and/or friends; sudden change of friends or companions; mood swings.
- *Rebellious behavior* – drop in grades, truancy, breaking rules at home and/or school, argumentative.
- *Disclosure of intentions to run away* – hinting, threatening, telling friends, or other adults.
- *Accumulation of money and possessions* – savings or checking account withdrawal (over time or all at once); keeping clothing in a bag or backpack.

## Prevention Tips

- Pay attention when your teenagers are talking to you.
- Be open and honest with your teens. Let them know when you are pleased or displeased with their behavior.
- Provide accurate information about drugs, sex, and alcohol. Answer your teenagers’ questions, but don’t lecture them.
- Help your teens to see all the possible consequences of a particular decision. Encourage responsible decision-making.
- Help build your teen’s self-esteem. Make them feel important by praising them for their effort and accomplishments.
- Encourage your teens to explore their interests before making a decision about college or work. Taking an interest in schoolwork promotes a positive learning experience.
- If necessary, seek professional help.

# Facts to Teach Your Teens About Running Away

Running away can be a frightening experience – for both you and your teenager. A runaway becomes vulnerable as soon as he or she leaves home – potentially falling victim to drugs, drinking, crime, sexual exploitation, pornography, and/or prostitution. The streets are full of people who seek to profit from a child’s vulnerability. Most runaways find problems in locating food, clothing, shelter, and money.

Teach your teens that if they are thinking about running away, don’t. Help them identify people who can assist them. Encourage them to talk about their problems and concerns with you, their friends, teachers, a mental-health professional, a clergy member, or other trusted adult. Help them seek the assistance of a trained counselor or professional.

To identify qualified professionals in your area, contact the Florida Department of Children and Families, or other public or private agencies that help families. Also, members of the clergy, school personnel, or the law enforcement community can direct you to available services and resources.

Once your teen returns home, work together to resolve the problems that prompted him or her to leave in the first place. If you are unable to deal with family or personal problems effectively, seek the assistance of a trained counselor or professional.

A parent’s worst nightmare is learning that his or her child is lost or missing. However, there are some ways to prepare yourself in case it ever occurs. With some planning, you can increase the chances of your child being returned safely.

## There are several ways that you can be prepared in the event that your child is ever lost or missing:

- ✓ Keep a complete written description of your child, including hair and eye color, height, weight, date of birth, and specific physical attributes;
- ✓ Take color photographs of your child every six months. School portraits are preferable;
- ✓ Make sure your dentist prepares full charts on your child and updates them with each exam;
- ✓ 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;
- ✓ Arrange with your local police department to have your child fingerprinted. The police department will give you the fingerprint card; they will not keep a record of your child’s prints;
- ✓ You may also be able to obtain a sample of your child’s DNA, which may be useful for identification purposes. Be certain that you maintain the only record of the DNA sample.



## If your child is lost or missing:

- Immediately call the police.
- Search your home and call neighbors or friends.
- Ask that your child be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) missing- person file.
- Keep a list of all steps taken with a record of names and telephone numbers of the contacts you make.
- Try to gather current photographs and be ready to provide a description of your child, including clothing worn at the time of disappearance, personal items taken, and any identifying marks.
- Contact 911 or your local law enforcement agency first and then call the Florida Missing Children Information Clearinghouse (MCIC) at (850)410-8585 or toll free at 1-888-FL-MISSING (1-888-356-4774).
- Contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (1-800-THE-LOST).



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# Child Information Sheet

Keep this sheet in a safe place.  
 If any child is missing, this information will be  
 critical to law enforcement.  
 Update the information if it changes.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ Blood Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician: \_\_\_\_\_ Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Eye Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses: \_\_\_\_\_ Contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthmarks: \_\_\_\_\_ Piercings: \_\_\_\_\_ Braces: \_\_\_\_\_

Complexion (circle one): Fair Olive Light Brown Dark Brown Albino Other \_\_\_\_\_

Build (circle one): Slight Medium Heavy

Personality (circle one on each line):  
 Outgoing Average Shy  
 Very Independent Average Very Dependent  
 Loud Average Soft Spoken

Hand Preference (right or left): \_\_\_\_\_ Languages Spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Any Physical Handicaps: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the child ever run away for more than 24 hours? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Information (unusual habits, speech defects, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Child's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(printed)

\_\_\_\_\_

(cursive)

Children under the age of 6 should have a new photo taken every six months and annually for older children.

# Resources

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## **Office of the Attorney General**

PL-01, The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050  
[www.myfloridalegal.com](http://www.myfloridalegal.com)

## **Florida Crime Prevention Training Institute**

[www.myfloridalegal.com/cjp](http://www.myfloridalegal.com/cjp)

## **Florida Department of Law Enforcement**

P.O. Box 1489  
Tallahassee, FL 32302-1489  
850-410-7000  
[www.fdle.state.fl.us](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us)

## **FDLE Missing Children Information Clearinghouse**

1-888-356-4774

## **The Florida Department of Children and Families**

Florida Abuse Hotline  
1-800-96ABUSE

## **Florida Network of Youth and Family Services**

2850 Pablo Avenue  
Tallahassee, FL 32308  
850-922-4324

## **Federal Bureau of Investigations**

### **Internet Fraud Complaint Center and FBI Computer Division**

J. Edgar Hoover Building  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20535-0001  
202-324-3000  
[www.ifccfbi.gov](http://www.ifccfbi.gov)

## **The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children Cyber Tipline®**

1-800-843-5678  
[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com) or  
[www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)

## **NetSmartz Workshop**

[www.NetSmartz.org](http://www.NetSmartz.org)

## **Federal Trade Commission**

600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20580  
1-877-382-4357  
[www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)

## **National Crime Prevention Council**

1000 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
13th floor  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-466-6272  
[www.ncpc.org](http://www.ncpc.org)

## **National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth**

P.O. Box 13505  
Silver Spring, MD 20911-3505  
301-608-8098

## **The Jimmy Ryce Center**

908 Coquina Lane  
Vero Beach, FL 32963  
777-492-0200  
[www.jimmy-ryce.org](http://www.jimmy-ryce.org)

## **Child Find of America, Inc.**

1-800-I-AM-LOST  
[www.childfindofamerica.org](http://www.childfindofamerica.org)

## **Child Lures Prevention**

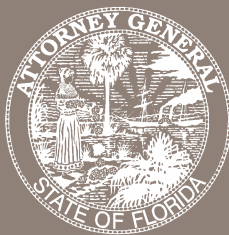
5166 Shelburne Road  
Shelburne, VT 05482  
802-985-8458  
[www.childlures.com](http://www.childlures.com)

## **Klaas Kids Foundation**

P.O. Box 925  
Sausalito, CA 94966  
415-331-6867  
[www.klaaskids.org](http://www.klaaskids.org)

## **GetNetWise**

[www.getnetwise.org](http://www.getnetwise.org)



## Office of the Attorney General

PLO1, The Capitol  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050  
850-245-0140