



MISSING CHILDREN

SOCIETY OF CANADA

...because the search must continue

WHAT DO I DO? INFORMATION SERIES

The Missing Children Society of Canada is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the active search for abducted and missing children.

Since 1986, MCSC has assisted law enforcement and searching families through professional investigations, public awareness and family support programs.

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MY CHILD IS MISSING

IMPORTANT FIRST STEPS

Parents play a vital role in finding a missing child by providing critical information to law enforcement. Here's how you can help:

STAY CALM.

- Contact neighbours, friends, spouse, siblings and anyone who may know where your child may be.
- Invite a friend or acquaintance with a "calm" manner to be with you.

Conduct a telephone search.

- Call family, friends and relatives who may wish to help.
- Encourage them to use their telephones to make inquiry calls so your line will remain free for incoming calls.
- If you have to leave the house, have an answering machine on the line or have a friend or neighbour take incoming calls.

Conduct a basic land search.

- Have friends and relatives conduct a basic land search of the neighbourhood area while you are making a police occurrence report.
- With family and friends, try to recall the present and past few days of family situations and activities (ie. a recent argument or disciplinary action could be the reason for hiding).

PLACES TO CHECK

- Your home and property, including the attic for well hidden children. Do not disturb or move anything in your child's room until police have checked it. If you do, you or your family and friends may disturb valuable evidence. (see our document "The First 48 Hours: Gathering Evidence" for more information)
- Homes of your child's friends, neighbours, and relatives
- Ex-spouse's home, if you are separated
- Past and present baby-sitters
- School and school yard (The child may have after school activities or detention)
- Community centre
- Local sports facility
- Parks or play areas
- Shopping centers and corner stores
- Video arcades
- Hobby shops
- Bicycle shops
- Bus terminals

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- File a missing child report, if the telephone and land search has not been successful.**
 - This report is important as it allows the police to place a description of the child who is missing on the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) computer system so all police forces in Canada will know the child is missing.
 - At the request of the investigating police officer, the child may also be entered on the United States system (NCIC).
- Provide the police with the information in your prepared Child Profile Kit.**
 - This kit should include updates clear photographs, foot and fingerprints, birth certificate, medical history, passport, dental records, X-rays, child's name and description including location of scars, birthmarks and any other identifiable data (glasses, braces, earrings, ect.).
 - A videotape or a recent home video of the child may be made specifically for the kit.
 - Try to keep a mental note of what your child is wearing each day.
 - If you suspect parental or abduction by someone you know, provide the police with a photo of the suspected abductor, an address, telephone number and any other pertinent information about that person.
- Conduct a complete physical search of your area.**
 - Organize a search party of friends and relatives to search areas such as, child's route home from school, community centre, friend's house, favourite hang-out ect.
 - Be on the lookout for articles of clothing, toys, books other personal belongings scattered on the ground. If found, do not disturb. Contact a police officer immediately.
- Leave someone at home at all times to answer the telephone in case your child calls.**
 - Keep the telephone lines FREE at all times.
- Contact the Missing Children Society of Canada (1-800-661-6160) and register the missing child.**
 - MCSC will provide support and give you suggestions regarding steps that can be taken to assist in the search of your child.
- Act quickly.**
 - Try to keep focused on the task at hand that is, locating the missing child.
 - Ask a suitable friend to provide support for you. Each moment that passes is very important and must be used efficiently.
- Solicit media support such as radio, television, local publications and newspapers only at the advice of the police and searching agency involved with the case.**
 - If you solicit the services of a searching agency the telephone service provided will screen and evaluate calls. It is not advisable to leave or publicize your home or work number or address.
 - Calls and mail can mislead investigations and can be very upsetting to the searching family.
- Distribute a photograph of the missing child.**
 - All police and searching agencies have services available to complete this task.
 - It is important to work cooperatively and keep the agencies searching for your child well informed of your personal searching procedures.
 - If you wish to use other agencies check their credibility thoroughly before providing them with information.
- Keep a detailed diary of people and agencies you have contacted and steps you have already taken.**
 - Logging the events lessens the duplication of efforts and allows a review of inquiries.

For more detailed information on what to do or what to expect if your child goes missing, please visit the Missing Children Society of Canada website at www.mcsc.ca.

Sources:

Courtesy of: RCMP, "Our Missing Children", 2008