

Family abduction prevention

Family abductions account for almost 80% of abducted children every year. The motive for most of these kidnappings is anger or revenge against the other parent. Only rarely is it done to protect the child. But whatever the reason, family kidnapping endangers a child. The negative consequences can last a lifetime.

It's sobering to realize that family abductions are much more frequent than kidnapping by a stranger. But because you know who the potential kidnapper may be, there are preventive measures you can take. You'll find some suggestions on the next page, or visit our website: www.PollyKlaas.org for an in-depth discussion of warning signs and prevention measures.

From our files (names used with permission):

As Aja, Syna and Alixander Morse stepped off the school bus one December morning, Eugia Morse, their non-custodial mother, forced them into a car and went on the run for the next 2 years, 3 months and 15 days.

Aja later wrote: Many of you know me as "Katarina or Kat Escada," "Trisha or Trish Wilcox," or "Melissa Bleu," but my real name is Aja Morse. I am almost thirteen.

"My brother and sister and I never went to a doctor, dentist, or to school."

Three years ago my brother, sister and I were abducted. Most people don't realize how many hundreds of thousands of children in America are abducted each year. They think it's a problem parents should work out on their own. That's not true.

At the time I didn't realize how it was going to destroy my life and my brother and sister's. I was always afraid that the police were going to find us or that I'd mess up on one of my new names. My brother and sister and I never went to a doctor, dentist or to school. I was lucky that I was found, but there are thousands of other children still missing. They need help.

The Polly Klaas® Foundation has compassionate and professional caseworkers who can help you prevent family kidnapping or recover a child who has been taken by a family member. If you have any reason to believe your child is in danger of family kidnapping, contact us immediately at 800-587-4357. Or call and request our fact sheet on family abductions.



www.PollyKlaas.org

What you can do

- Begin the custody process immediately if you and your child's other parent are separated.
- Assure your children that should they ever become separated from you they should attempt to contact you because you will always be looking for them.
- Teach your children to be aware of their schedules of visitation with each parent.
- Ensure your children know your phone number, how to reach you and that it is imperative for them to call if their visitation schedule changes.
- Teach your child his or her full name, your name, address, city, state, country and telephone number.
- Consider counseling. As little as ten hours can reduce the risk of abduction.
- Respect your ex-partner's custody and visitation rights.
- Maintain relationships with your ex-partner's family and friends.
- Keep current copies of all court documents and provide them to your children's day care and schools.
- Record and document abduction threats. Report them to the courts or your lawyer immediately.
- Keep lists of identifying information about the other parent. Complete the Child ID folder in this kit and keep it in a safe place.