



**Polly Klaas® Foundation**  
**P. O. Box 800, Petaluma, CA 94953**  
**707 769-1334 or 800 587-4357**

## **GUIDELINES FOR RECOVERY OF MISSING CHILDREN**

### **Family/Parental Abductions**

The following list is not intended to be followed step-by-step. It is intended as a guide in making suggestions to assist parents in recovering their child.

- ☑ Report your child's disappearance to the police. Obtain a case number. Ask who will be handling the investigation and obtain phone number also. Ask that your child be immediately entered into the National Crime Information Computer (NCIC). Obtain this number, which is a nine digit number preceded by the letter "M". It is important to note that no time delay is required for an entry to be accepted in the Missing Persons file. This is mandated by the National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 (attachment A).
- ☑ Provide photographs of child and abducting parent, if possible. Make sure you have several copies of the photograph. If you don't, have copies made immediately at your local photography shop.
- ☑ Keep a notebook recording the calls you make and information you get from agencies, friends, relatives, police, etc. Keep the notebook by the phone at all times. Keep another notebook to record information you receive while out of the house. Make sure to note the caller's full name and phone number in case you have to call them back.
- ☑ Obtain call waiting on your phone. Attempt to have someone by the phone at all times.
  - ⇒ Purchase or borrow an answering machine or sign up for an answering service such as voice mail. Leave a message for the missing child. You might also leave a message on your answering machine saying that you will accept collect calls from your child or leads on the whereabouts of your child.
  - ⇒ If you have a cellular phone, obtain call forwarding and forward calls to your cellular phone when you have to leave the house.

- ⇒ Consider purchasing or renting a pager so you can be reached immediately by law enforcement or others participating in the search.
- ☑ Identify the responsible law enforcement agency (usually District Attorney) and contact them. Ask what must be done to secure assistance.
  - ☑ Provide police with a copy of the custody order. Deal with any custody questions immediately. If custody has not been established, attempt to do so. If the custodial parent has disappeared with the child, the non-custodial parent may initiate a missing person's investigation by the local police by filing a missing person's report. Find out what your rights are and enforce them. You may need to obtain legal advice, as laws differ from state to state.
  - ☑ Request that the District Attorney issue a warrant as quickly as possible. This is very important in obtaining assistance from both law enforcement and child-find agencies.
  - ☑ Ask the law enforcement agency or other authorized person in your state (such as the District Attorney's office) to use the Federal Parent Locator Service to attempt to locate the abducting parent. (Use of FPLS is authorized by the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act of 1980.)
  - ☑ Make sure the law enforcement agency and your attorney are knowledgeable about the laws pertaining to family abduction, Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution (UFAP) warrants, the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act of 1968 and the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act of 1980 (Attachment "B").
  - ☑ Notify law enforcement of any special circumstances that indicate clear risk to your child. This could be special medical or mental conditions of the child, drug abuse or mental problems of the abducting parent, previous documented child abuse or violence by the abducting parent, threats of violence against the child by the abducting parent or other special circumstances. Obtain documentation on any medical condition from an authority such as Child Protective Services to validate your claim.
  - ☑ If you have custody, request assistance from the FBI, either directly or through your reporting law enforcement. Please note that, if a victim is held more than 24 hours, the law creates a reputable presumption that he or she has been taken across state lines. This clause allows the FBI and other federal authorities to investigate, but -- if the facts later show that state lines were not crossed -- will not support federal charges.

- ☑ If abductor's family or friends are suspected of assisting in the abduction, ask law enforcement to advise them of legal (criminal) penalties.
- ☑ Report your child's abduction to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) (800) 843-5678. Ask them to send you a copy of their publication on Family Abductions as quickly as possible. If you suspect the child has been taken out of the country also request any information on International Abduction.
- ☑ List information on your child and the abductor with your State Missing Children's Clearinghouse. Ask for their advice and assistance. Also list the information with clearinghouses in any states to which you believe the abductor and child may have fled.
- ☑ Ask local media to air pictures of missing child and abductor. Ask law enforcement to verify case information for the media.
- ☑ Question all relatives, friends, and co-workers of the abducting parent. Be concerned, but non-threatening, in your approach.
- ☑ Attempt to get a copy of the abductor's phone bills to note and follow up on any out-of-area calls.
- ☑ Check with hospitals, pediatricians and clinics to see if anyone has brought your child in for treatment.
- ☑ Notify border patrols. Ask you local law enforcement agency or child-find agency to provide these numbers.
- ☑ Call the State Department and request that they refuse to issue a passport to your child. Make sure your child's name is entered into the State Department's passport name check system. This will allow notification to you if a request for a passport has been received. They will, however be unable to revoke a passport if it is already issued. (Office of Passport and Advisory Services – 202-663-2662; Office of Children's Issues – 888-407-4747)
- ☑ "Flag" your child's school records and ask to be notified if a new school requests those records from the old school. This might have to be done in writing.
- ☑ "Flag" your child's birth certificate and ask to be notified if anyone requests a copy. Call or go to the records office in the county of your child's birth.
- ☑ "Flag" your child's medical and dental records and ask to be notified if anyone requests a copy.

- ☑ Question the abductor's employer to see if his/her last paycheck has been forwarded and/or if there has been any request for job references.
- ☑ Check with the abductor's bank to see if an account has been closed or transferred. Ask for law enforcement assistance in tracking any cashed checks or ATM withdrawals.
- ☑ Check with the post office to see if mail is being forwarded.
- ☑ Contact credit card companies for change of address or transactions that may indicate whereabouts of the abductor.
- ☑ Check with airline companies and airport police for child's/abductor's name on any passenger manifests.
- ☑ Check at bus and train stations to see if the abductor purchased tickets.
- ☑ Check with state Motor Vehicle Bureaus to inquire about car registration and licenses in the name of the abductor. (Some states are required to notify individuals of such inquiries. Check first to be sure the abductor will not be notified of your inquiry.)
- ☑ If the abductor's automobile is still in financing, check with the finance company to get current address or where payments are being made from.
- ☑ If the abductor is in a union, check to see if he/she has advised them of any change of address or if he/she has applied for union work in another location.
- ☑ If the abductor is a member of any registry (such as registered nurse or technician), check with registry to see if any change of address has been reported or if he/she applied for positions or had information sent anywhere.
- ☑ Check on change of address for any pension funds.
- ☑ "Flag" records which may be requested by the abductor such as court records, insurance policies, passports and visas, college transcripts, military records, voter registration records, medical records, workers' compensation files.
- ☑ Remember the abductor's hobbies and interests for clues to a possible destination. Check on magazine subscriptions, club memberships, etc., for address changes or new memberships.

- Check with utility companies in any location where the abductor might have gone to see if he/she has had utilities connected.
- If the abductor is on public assistance of any kind, check with agencies for forwarding address for mailing of check. Check to see if the abductor has applied for public assistance in a new location.
- Check with the IRS to see if child has been claimed as a dependent.

Some of the items listed above will require the assistance of law enforcement. Credit card companies, for example, may not release information to you. Keep records of all the information you uncover and provide that information to law enforcement.

PUBLIC LAW 101-647 - NOV.29, 1990  
Public Law 101-647  
101st Congress

Attachment "A"

**TITLE XXXVII - NATIONAL CHILD SEARCH ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1990**

**42 USC 5779. SEC 3701. REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**

- (a) In General - Each Federal, State, and local law enforcement agency shall report each case of a missing child under the age of 18 reported to such agency to the National Crime Information Center of the Department of Justice.
- (b) Guidelines - The Attorney General may establish guidelines for the collection of such reports including procedures for carrying out the purposes of this Act.
- (c) Annual Summary - The Attorney General shall publish an annual statistical summary of the reports received under this title.

**SEC 3702 STATE REQUIREMENTS**

**42 USC 5780**

Each State reporting under the provisions of this title shall ---

- (1) Ensure that no law enforcement agency within the State establishes or maintains any policy that requires the observance of any waiting period before accepting a missing child or unidentified person report;
- (2) Provide that each such report and all necessary and available information, which, with respect to each missing child report, shall include ---
  - (A) the name, date of birth, sex, race, height, weight, and eye and hair color of the child;
  - (B) the date and location of the last known contact with the child; and
  - (C) the category under which the child is reported missing; is entered immediately into the State law enforcement system and the National Crime Information Center computer networks and made available to the Missing Children Information Clearinghouse within the State or other agency designated within the State to receive such reports; and
- (3) provide that after receiving reports as provided in paragraph (2), the law enforcement agency that entered the report into the National Crime Information Center shall ---
  - (A) No later than 60 days after the original entry of the records into the State law enforcement system and National Crime Information Center computer networks, verify and update such record with any additional information, including, where available, medical and dental records
  - (B) Institute or assist with appropriate search and investigative procedures; and
  - (C) Maintain close liaison with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children for the exchange of information and technical assistance in the missing children.

Approved November 29, 1990

**LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES IMPACTING FAMILY ABDUCTION**

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Description</b>
Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (UCCJA)	First drafted in 1968, the UCCJA has now been adopted in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The UCCJA determines when a state has jurisdiction to make a custody order and provides procedures for interstate enforcement of order in custody conflicts.
Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (PKPA) of 1980 (P.L. 96-611)	This act requires authorities of every state to enforce and not modify orders made by the state court exercising proper jurisdiction. It also authorizes the use of the Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution (UFAP) warrant and the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) in family abductions.
Missing Children Act of 1982 (28 USC § 534)	Among other provisions this legislation ensures that complete descriptions of missing children can be entered into the National Crime Information Center's computer system, even if the abductor has not been charged with a crime.
National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 (42 USC §§ 5778 and 5780)	This act includes mandates that eliminate waiting periods before taking a missing child report, including family abduction cases; requires immediate entry of information into the NCIC Missing Person File; and requires close liaison with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) on appropriate missing child cases.