

Lost Child Prevention

A survey of parents by the Center to Prevent Lost Children showed that 90 percent of families will experience losing a child in a public place at least once. It is important to try to prevent a child from getting lost but even more important that the child knows what to do. Preparations can make this frightening situation a bit easier for everyone.



Prepare Your Child

- Before you go anywhere, talk to your family about what to do if someone gets lost. Discuss a designated place to go if you get lost or advise children to stay right where they are when they feel they are lost. Tell children to find a security officer, police officer or an employee if you are in a public place, or remind them to ask another mom with kids for help.
- Have a way for a child to identify themselves. For younger children, have their information in their pocket. If they are old enough to speak and can relay the information, practice reciting your phone number with them, and let them know they can always call 911.
- Dress children in bright colored clothing so they can easily be spotted. Lemon yellow and lime green are suggested because they easily attract the eye.
- Take a photo of your child with your phone before you leave home or when you arrive at your destination. This will help police find a lost child because they will be aware of exactly what the child is wearing, and how they look that day.
- Positive reinforcement is the best way to prevent a child from wandering away when you are in public. Speak with your child about stranger danger, and remind them of the importance of staying with you.

If a Child is Lost While at Home

- › If you are at home, search your house first before going outside. Check closets, laundry baskets and piles of clothes, in and under beds, in large appliances, in vehicles and other areas where the child may hide or play.
- › If you can't find the child in the home, call 911 and let them know if you feel the child is in danger. The police would rather be aware of the situation and called back when the child is found. Time is crucial once a child has been separated from you.
- › Stay calm. Screaming the child's name won't help you locate the child any faster if they are not close by. Plus yelling the child's name could lure the wrong type of person to your child who may be screaming back for you.
- › Make sure the phone number your child knows, preferably a cell phone, is on and is receiving a signal. Also have a family member or neighbor near your home phone so that you can stay in the area where the child was last seen.

For more information on preventing a lost child...

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:
www.missingkids.com

Missing Children USA.gov:
www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Missing_Children.shtml



Local Response | National Support