CHILD ABDUCTION: Awareness, Prevention, and Support
BUILDING COLLABORATIONS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS

CHILD ABDUCTION DEFINED

- **Abduction** is defined as taking away a person by persuasion, by fraud, or by open force or violence.

- **Child Abduction** is the offense of wrongfully removing or wrongfully retaining, detaining or concealing a **child** or baby.

Child Abduction Statistics

- Every 40 seconds, a child becomes missing or abducted.
- Family child abduction is the most common form of abduction in the United States.
- Almost half of child abductions are kidnappings by a parent or other family relative.
- More than 25 percent of child abductions are by an acquaintance of the child.
- Less than one quarter of child abductions are by a stranger, with more girls being abducted than boys.
- Approximately 80 percent of child abductions by strangers occur within 1/4 of a mile of the child’s home.
- Roughly 75 percent of abduction murders occur within 3 hours after the child goes missing.
- The overwhelming majority of non-family child abductions (80 percent) are motivated by sexual intentions.
Two Types of Child Abduction

Parental abduction

Abduction by stranger

KEY CONCEPTS

01
Summarize factors that increase risk and drive child abductions.

02
Explain primary strategies you can use to identify those who are at risk for child abductions.

03
Describe interventions that can effectively reduce the risk of trauma with child abduction victims.

Understand warning signs of family abductions

1. Has a criminal record.
2. Has a history of mental, emotional, or behavioral problems.
3. Has previously abducted or threatened to abduct a child.
4. Has a history of domestic violence.
5. Unemployed, rarely works, undergraduate or graduate student.
6. New passport or visa.

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School was one of the biggest factors in the timing of when these incidents occurred. 70% occurred on school days. Younger children were more likely to be walking alone or with a peer, friends, siblings, neighbors, or on school days and to where they were going to or from school. Verbal ploys were used towards elementary and middle school children. Attempted abductions occur more often when a child is going to or from school. Children who got away either ignored, refused them, used their cell phones, fought, screamed, another child or adult intervened, or the child was able to leave the area. Force was most commonly used against younger children and oldest children.

TRUE OR FALSE?

01. Most children are abducted by strangers.

Children taken by strangers or slight acquaintances represent only one-hundredth of 1 percent of all missing children. The last comprehensive study estimated that the number was 115 in a year.

02. More and more children go missing everyday.

03. The internet has made child abduction easier.

04. Prevention starts with teaching children to avoid strangers.
More and more children go missing everyday

Many state missing-children agencies show declining numbers of cases.

Cellphones allow children to summon help and get out of threatening situations.

Over the past decades, we have become more aggressive about finding, prosecuting, incapacitating, supervising, treating and deterring sex offenders.

The internet has made child abduction easier

The internet has changed the way young people take risks. They do it more often at home.

Young people these days socialize and experiment online.

Prevention starts with teaching children to avoid strangers

Children are vastly more likely to come to harm and even abducted by people they know than by people they don’t know.

We should teach children the signs of people (strangers or not) who are behaving badly: touching them inappropriately, being overly personal, trying to get them alone, acting drunk, provoking others or recklessly wielding weapons.

We need to help children practice refusal skills, disengagement skills and how to summon help.
**Preventive Measures**

- **Sex Offenders Registration**
  The 1994 Jacob Wetterling Act requires the States to register individuals convicted of sex crimes against children.

- **Community Notifications**
  Megan’s Law allows the States discretion to establish criteria for disclosure, but compels them to make private and personal information on registered sex offenders available to the public.

**What steps can schools take to avoid child abductions?**

- Child-abduction Prevention Policies
- Meaningful and Regular Training
- Conduct Regular Drills
- Understand Family-law Issues
- Identification Issues
- Training for Students

**What Prevention Policies can Law Enforcement use to help prevent child abductions?**

- 3 strike laws
- Speedy response
- Communications Systems
- Search Protocols
- Amber Alert
Victim Impact

- The child may have a changed identity or a new name.
- The child may go from a single-child family to a new, larger family.
- The child's school or grade level may have changed.
- The abducting parent and searching parent may have different rules, expectations, and ways of parenting.
- The returning child could have a new living environment.
- The abduction can be an ongoing experience that changes the child's whole life.
- The abduction is about the child and the experience.

Victim Impact (continued)

- There may be developmental issues unique to abducted children.
- The child may have been forced to grow up before his/her time.
- The child may have missed out on birthdays, holidays, and school promotions.
- The child may feel like they're starting over.
- There is no continuum—the child may have been forced to assume a new identity.
- This child may be behind emotionally and educationally.
- The child may operate in survival mode.
- The child may lose his childhood.
- Abnormal things may have become normalized.
Presented by: Serving Children and Reaching Families

Why victims refuse help

- Relationship
- Circumstances
- Negative Communication

Trauma/Victim Assessment Tool

ACE’s Adverse Childhood Experiences

Children living through abuse, violence and other traumatic events may unnecessarily suffer the ill effects for the rest of their lives. These life-altering events are called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Research about the lifelong impact of ACEs underscores the urgency of prevention activities to protect children from these and other early traumas.

When children do experience trauma, understanding the impact of ACEs can lead to more trauma-informed interventions that help to lessen negative outcomes. Many communities are now exploring how reducing ACEs can help prevent child maltreatment, and help gain healthier results for children and families.

MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS

- Depression
- Anxiety (Severe)
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

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VICARIOUS TRAUMA

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- The signs of vicarious trauma resemble post-traumatic stress disorder, and can include emotional, behavioral, and physical symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, disturbed sleep, change in appetite, irritability, nightmares, loss of empathy, and numbness.

TREATMENT

- Examine your caseload or the availability of debriefing and grounding strategies. You may also need to assess the level of extraneous trauma images and stories that you are exposing yourself to in your personal life.
- If you have a lot of emotional symptoms, you may consider consulting with a well-trained mental health professional.

Important Community Agencies

- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
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SUPPORT Partners

- Parents
- Stakeholders and Partners
- Media
- Faith Communities
- Everyday Persons
Resources

"Abducted in Plain Sight": Netflix true crime documentary based on the book “Stolen Innocence”.


