

QUICK ACTION GUIDE IN CASE A CHILD IS MISSING

If your child doesn't show up, be certain that you are the key figure to mobilize the resources to find him/her. Therefore, it is very important that you:

- Make an effort to remain calm.
- Try to think clearly reconstructing his/her last steps.
- Assume from the very beginning that you need help and ask for help.
- Don't assume anything or anticipate events, it is very probable that your child is distracted somewhere or has gotten lost. That is why it is important that you center yourself in the search action.

Remember, our team of psychologists, social workers and attorneys are at your disposal 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the in 116000 ANAR telephone helpline for Missing Children Cases.

If the disappearance of your child had been confirmed, the initial hours are crucial for the police investigation and for a successful resolution of the case. Please read carefully the following action guidelines.

Actions to be taken when a child is missing:

- **When your child has disappear from home:**
 - It is highly relevant that you search the house thoroughly; all premises of the house, closets, piles of laundry, underneath beds, inside vehicles, anywhere a child could get into or hide and possibly fell asleep or can't get out.
 - Ask your neighbors and your child's friends.
 - If after this search you still can't find him/her, don't hesitate, and call the police immediately.
- **When your child disappears while being away from home:** (i.e. in the shopping mall, in the movie theater or at the park)
 - Request the assistance of workers and people in the area next to you to look for your child.

- If the place has a security service, notify security immediately.
- If your child is still missing, call the police immediately.
- **If your child returns home alone from school or from extracurricular activities and the return home is delayed longer than usual.**
 - Call his/her cell phone, if they have one.
 - If there is no answer or the phone is disconnected or there is no cell phone available, call the school or the center where the child is coming from to find out if there has been any delays in the departure for home.
 - If the school or the center tells you that the child left on time as usual, try to locate friends/friends' parents that regularly see your child on their way home. Call those relatives/friends your child has regular contact with.
 - If none can give you any information about your child's whereabouts, call immediately the police.
- **When the parents are divorced** it is very important to contact the other parent to find out if the child is with that parent and if not, to alert the parent about the situation and seek his/her assistance.

When calling the police, please ~~keep the~~ stay calm to expedite the process:

- Remember you don't need to wait for any time to lapse before reporting a child's disappearance to the police or to request their assistance. Be aware that the first hours of the disappearance of the minor are crucial in the search and localization of the minor.
- Identify yourself, tell where you are at and request the assistance of the police agents to report the disappearance of a minor.
- Provide the child's full name, date, and place of birth.
- Provide a physical description of the child (height, weight, skin, hair and eyes color).
- Provide other identification details such as use of glasses, orthodontic apparatus, tattoos or any other unique physical characteristics.
- Describe how your child was dressed.
- Explain how you learned about the disappearance, when was the last time you saw your child, where, and with whom was the child going or if the child was alone.
- Provide a list of possible places where the child would have gone before being missing and the people with whom the child contacted a few days before being missing.

- If your child has any disability or mental disorder, indicate this to the police officers.
- Provide information in relation to special risks that discontinuation of any health or mental treatment would have on the child.
- Report any circumstances that could have provoked the voluntary abandonment of the home by your child (family problems or recent arguments). Think carefully as if you were your child, to detect any changes of attitudes in his/her conduct that you would not have perceived but that would anticipate the voluntary departure of home. Be aware that even if the minor left home voluntarily, the minor is in an equally dangerous situation and immediate action is required.
- Provide the police with all relevant details, if you have any reason to believe that your child could be a potential victim of a criminal action or could be with adults that would put the child's wellbeing at risk.
- Report any knowledge of communications via internet your child might have had or any information as to someone the child might have known via internet or if the child has been planning to meet personally that person.
- Provide the police telephone numbers of all your child's friends and any information as to your child's use of social websites.
- Provide the police a recent color photograph of your child.
- Take note of all instructions provided by the police and answer all their questions.
- Don't touch your child's belongings until the police come to your home. Don't clean the room, don't wash the clothes and don't pick up any objects. Avoid that family or friends or acquaintances touch your child's belongings, don't allow any unknown person to enter your house other than the police investigating team.
- Remember that any relevant and unexplained change in your child's daily routine might be important in the investigation, therefore, don't avoid providing any such details to the police officers.
- Be in regular contact with the investigating agents providing any additional information that you think might be relevant. You can ask for confirmation that your child's disappearance has been introduced into the National Inscriptions Database (BDSN acronym in Spanish) so the information is shared with all other Spanish police forces.
- Remember that it is very important to report the police officers of your child's return home, so the investigation to locate the child can be closed.
- Ask the police officers about whether or not to publicize the disappearance, for example taking the case to the mass media to request general cooperation. Be aware that this type of measure is not always

recommended. Careful thought must be given to assess its use to avoid jeopardizing the ongoing investigation.

- **Remember that at 116000 a professional team of psychologists, social workers and attorneys, is available to provide assistance to you 24 hours a day seven days a week.**

**If you want more information please go through our website:
www.anar.org/116000**

FUENTES DE DATOS PARA LA ELABORACIÓN DE ESTA GUÍA:

1.- *Guía de referencia rápida para familias en caso de niños desaparecidos, respuesta a emergencias, elaborado por National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.*