

CHECKLIST FOR SEARCHING PARENTS:

When the Reason for Your Child's Disappearance is Unknown

If this is an emergency, CALL 911.

INITIAL STEP YOU CAN TAKE BEFORE CONTACTING THE POLICE

1. Depending on the situation and your child's history, you may consider calling hospitals, your child's friends, your child's employers, etc., and doing a basic initial search yourself before contacting the police.
2. Attempt to get a hold of your son or daughter through their cell phone or social networking profiles (e.g. Facebook, etc.).
 - Review their social networking profiles and note any activity.
 - Continue to phone and text your child's cell phone — note if the phone continues to ring or appears to be turned off, and tell this information to the police.
3. You may wish to ask one of your child's friends to call or text your child's cell phone to see if they respond.

CONTACT THE POLICE

1. Call or go to your nearest police station. Provide information in a full and frank manner. Have on hand photographs of your child, your child's identification numbers (e.g. birth certificate, passport, etc.) and descriptive information about your child, including who they were last seen with or the location of where they were last seen.
2. When you first contact the police make sure you get the following information:
 - a) The incident number;
 - b) The name of the officer taking the report; and
 - c) A number to call for follow up.
3. Then call 1-866-KID-TIPS or fill out the "A CHILD IS MISSING" form on *MissingKids.ca*. Depending on the circumstances of your child's case, the background and experience that *MissingKids.ca* caseworkers have in searching for missing children may be of assistance to you.

If you suspect foul play, be sure to tell the police. Other factors that may elevate your child's risk of harm and that should be stressed to police include if your child:

- Suffers from a physical or intellectual disability;
- Requires certain prescription medication on a regular basis;
- Is unfamiliar with the area (e.g. recently moved to the region); and/or
- Lives near a body of water, mountains, or other rugged terrain where they could have become lost or injured.

Finally, if you know or suspect that your child engages in a high-risk lifestyle (i.e. drugs, violence, gang affiliations) or has friends or acquaintances that do so, tell the police.

CONTACT OTHER PEOPLE AND GATHER INFORMATION

1. Gather a recent photograph and description of your child:

Recent photograph <input type="checkbox"/>
Eye colour:
Hair colour:
Height:
Weight:
Clothing your child was last seen wearing:
Other physical characteristics (such as braces, glasses, piercings, tattoos, scars, marks, etc.):
Location where your child was last seen:

*If you do not have a recent headshot of your child, *MissingKids.ca* may be able to obtain their most recent school photo from Lifetouch.

2. Follow up with your child's school, friends, employer, and places where they volunteer to see if they have seen or heard anything from your child. Ask your child's friends for other possible people to contact, including their phone numbers, in search of your child.
3. Make a list of your child's favourite places in your community and places where you know they frequent. Provide this information to the police and determine whether or not law enforcement will be following up with these locations in the course of their investigation. If not, have a trusted friend or family member do so.
4. Speak to the parents of your child's friends and inform them of the situation. Ask them to call a designated phone number (for example, the police, *MissingKids.ca*, a new cell phone you have bought just for calls related to your missing child) if they hear or see anything.

5. If your child lives at home, look around the house and your child's room to see if anything is missing. If your child does not live at home, you may not be able to do this kind of search but you can check with their roommate or landlord and see if there is any way to take a look around. Make a list of anything you believe is missing and share it with the police. It is also important for law enforcement to know if nothing is missing.
6. Does your child have a passport? Make sure it is not missing.
 - a) What other types of identification does your child have? Do they carry these pieces of identification around and if so, do you have any record or photocopies of them?
 - b) Do you know if your child possesses fake identification? If so, what details about the fake identification can you remember?
7. Has your child ever mentioned a destination where they would like to go? Is it possible your child has gone there? Can you check?
8. Try to think of anything at all that might help find your child — for example, any new acquaintances or activities they have recently become involved in, or any major changes (e.g. a recent move, parents divorcing, finding out they were adopted, etc.) that may have occurred that may have caused your child to behave in a way that is out of character for them. Explore all possibilities and work through them in your mind. You may be able to think of places where they could have gone or people who they could be with, and that may help to move the investigation forward.

ONLINE AND TECHNOLOGICAL SEARCH

1. Is it possible that you are still the contract owner for your child's cell phone?
 - a) Call your child's cell phone service provider to find out.
 - b) If you are still the contract owner, you may be able to request certain information such as when the phone was last used. Police may be able to request global positioning system (GPS) information.
2. Review your family's and, if possible, your child's home phone bills, caller display logs and cell phone bills for phone numbers you do not recognize and give this information to the police.
3. Ask the police if they wish to examine your child's or your family's computer and do not use it until you know their response. Sometimes valuable evidence can be destroyed just by using the computer.

- 4.** Use another computer, that is neither your child's nor your family's computer to search for your child's social networking pages (e.g. Facebook®, Twitter®, MySpace®, etc.) to check for activity. If you don't know how to do this, *MissingKids.ca* staff may be able to assist you. If you do know, write down your child's username and password to the following:

Facebook username:	Password:
Twitter username:	Password:
MySpace username:	Password:
Email address #1:	Password:
Email address #2:	Password:
Cell phone number:	Service provider:

If you do not know your child's usernames or passwords, the police may be able to gain access to the accounts or obtain information about activity on the accounts through other means.

- 5.** Do you have any sort of access to your child's financial or bank account information? If you have a joint account, you may be able to check online or at your local branch to see if there has been any activity on the joint account.

MANAGE THE PHONES

1. Use the phone log sheet to track everyone who is calling you or your house. Keep a notepad by the phone to write down any additional information such as messages from supports, important contact information, thoughts, concerns, etc. It is also important to consider who is not calling the house that would typically do so.
2. Make sure there's always someone available to answer phone calls. It is a good idea to get a close friend or family member to do this. Some people who call the house may not have good intentions, and may be looking to exploit your situation. Before taking action on any information provided to you, contact law enforcement for guidance.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS LOCATED

1. Think ahead about how you will respond to your child when they are located. It is important that your initial response is one of concern and support as opposed to anger and frustration. Consider if additional supports (e.g. *MissingKids.ca* caseworker, social worker, child psychologist, law enforcement, etc.) are needed to assist.
2. If your child arrives home spontaneously, please contact the police and *MissingKids.ca* to let them know. The police and *MissingKids.ca* staff can assist you in the process of reuniting with your child and connect both of you with important support resources.

