Is this your CHILD?  
If not --  
It may be the NEXT TIME
Our children are the forgotten victims in our justice system

Do you know how many children are missing each year?

There are nearly 800,000 children reported missing each year – that is more than 2,000 per day!¹

Do you know how many children will be sexually victimized before adulthood?

Girls: 1 in 5 and Boys: 1 in 10 will be victimized²

Awareness about crimes committed against children has grown and left many families feeling vulnerable. It is important for parents and guardians to be aware and alert, but you and your child should not be afraid. The possibility that your child will be missing or sexually exploited is remote. Nevertheless, as parents and guardians you should do your best to keep your child safe and be prepared for the unthinkable. The information in this brochure can help you prevent your child from becoming missing or sexually exploited and provides a plan of action if your child does.

TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFER TALK TO THEM EARLY AND REGULARLY ABOUT THEIR SAFETY

What Parents and Guardians Can Do

- **Listen** to your children
- Take the time to **talk** to your children
- **Know** who your children’s friends are
- **Notice** when anyone shows one or all of your children too much attention or begins giving them gifts
- **Teach** your children that they should say **NO** to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others
- **Be sensitive** to any changes in your children’s behavior or attitude
- **Look** and **listen** to small clues that something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings
- If your children do share problems with you, strive to remain **calm, noncritical, and nonjudgmental**
- Be sure to **screen** babysitters and caregivers
- Provide **oversight and supervision** of your children’s online computer use
- **Be involved** in your children’s activities
- **Work** with your children’s school to institute sound child-safety programs as part of their curriculum
- **Practice** basic safety skills with your children, and discuss their safety openly and honestly

There is no substitute for your attention and supervision. Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.

These guidelines are adapted from the brochure *Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Children*. Copyright © 2003 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.
Be Prepared in Case Your Child Becomes Missing

Take the 6 steps listed below to be prepared.

1. Keep a complete description of your child on hand
2. Take color photographs of your child every six months
3. Have your dentist prepare and maintain dental charts for your child, and be sure they are updated each time an examination or dental work is performed
4. Know where your child’s medical records are located
5. Arrange with your local law-enforcement agency to have your child fingerprinted and keep the fingerprints in a safe and easily accessible place
6. Keep a DNA sample from your child, like an old toothbrush in a brown envelope licked closed by your child, at room temperature in a dry, easily accessible place

What To Do If Your Child Is Missing

It is important that you act immediately, because if a murder is to be committed it typically happens within the first 3 hours after abduction.³

1. Search your home and check with relatives, neighbors, and friends to try and locate your child
2. If you cannot find your child, immediately report your child missing to your local law-enforcement officers
3. Limit access to your home until law-enforcement officers arrive and are able to collect evidence
4. Give law-enforcement officers all the information they request about your child, and be sure to give them any information that could help in the search
5. Request that your child’s name and identifying information be immediately entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Missing Person File
6. Call the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) to find out what resources are available to you

These guidelines are adapted from the brochure Just in Case...Parental guidelines in case your child might some-day be missing. Copyright © 1985 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.
