

Questions to Consider When your Child Goes Missing...

Below are questions that may help law enforcement locate your child faster in the event of emergency.

Child's name:

Locative technology: Y/N

Attracted to water: Y/N

Attracted to active highways? Y/N

Attracted to trains/flashing lights/
firetrucks/heavy equipment? Y/N

Responds to name? Y/N

Able to articulate need to stranger
that they are lost and need help?
Y/N

Hides in small spaces? Y/N

Adverse to people in uniforms
(EMS, firefighter, police, etc.)? Y/N

Likes dogs? Y/N

Response to touch:

Response to overstimulation:

Methods to calm child:

Preferred hiding spot type (woods,
drainage pipe, etc.):

Reaction to loud noises:

Favorite actual location:

Specific type of location attracted
(water, woods, park, etc.):

Favorite sound/song/stimuli?

Fears:



For additional information regarding
missing persons, contact:

Florida Department of
Law Enforcement
Missing Endangered Persons
Information Clearinghouse

2331 Phillips Road
Tallahassee, FL 32308

Phone: 1-888-356-4774
Or visit our website at
www.fdle.state.fl.us/MCICsearch/

A Guide to Understanding Law Enforcement Response for Autism & Wandering

The Enhanced Missing Child Alert



Florida Department of
Law Enforcement
(FDLE)

Autism in Children

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disabilities. The disorder refers to a wide range of conditions characterized by challenges with repetitive behaviors, non-verbal communication, social skills, and speech. Children with autism may not understand they are running away or wandering. They may only think they are returning to a favorite place or stimulus.

Children with Autism may...

- ◇ Wander, run away, or bolt from a safe environment
- ◇ Engage in sensory seeking behaviors
- ◇ Engage in high risk behaviors by seeking unsafe environments
- ◇ Exhibit a fascination with lights, vehicles, or other objects in an environment
- ◇ Seek a "favorite place"
- ◇ Have difficulty with verbal and nonverbal communication
- ◇ Not respond to their name being called
- ◇ Hide from search teams
- ◇ Seek small, tightly enclosed spaces to conceal themselves

It is important to inform law enforcement of any unique tendencies a child with autism may have. For example, a child that may not respond to their name, may respond to their favorite sound or song.

What FDLE is doing to support the neurodivergent community...

911 Telecommunicator Awareness Training

Children with autism are more likely to wander or go missing. Due to this, FDLE has proactively created 911 Autism Awareness Telecommunicator Training for first line responders.

Over 6,000 participants have reviewed the training since it's release in January 2022. This training outlines the steps telecommunicators should use, including what questions to ask, when determining whether a reported missing child may have the signs of ASD.

The training emphasizes acquiring a determination of autism immediately as these children may be at an increased risk of endangerment. The risk of death is elevated in people with autism due to drowning and higher rates of incidents within dangerous environments.

The training can be viewed at www.fdle.state.fl.us/FCJEI/Online-Mandatory-Retraining.aspx or by using the QR code.



Enhanced Missing Child Alert

FDLE was one of the first in the nation to create a geolocation alert with strategies to locate children with ASD or other neurodivergent conditions with the implementation of the Enhanced Missing Child Alert (EMCA) in 2019.

The EMCA is most often used for children who wander off and have autism. The alert allows law enforcement to send out a wireless emergency alert (WEA) to a defined geographical or targeted location such as a neighborhood or community, to quickly notify the public of critical information regarding an endangered child.

An EMCA is sent to a pre-defined area in a 5-mile radius. Keywords may be added to the Alert and a link is provided to the missing person flyer.

Only local law enforcement can request an EMCA. Local law enforcement are encouraged to call FDLE's Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse at 1-888-356-4774. **Alerts with WEA notifications can be issued within as little of 5 minutes of a law enforcement call.**

Public safety message

Missing Child Earl
Johnson Park Area
CHECK WATER
<https://www.fdlealerts>

If your child with ASD is missing...
Immediately call 911 and inform the operator that the missing child has autism. Operators will direct this information to local law enforcement who may request an Enhanced Missing Child Alert.

