

What to do if your child goes missing.

- Remain calm. A clear mind is best at this time.
- Think about what might have happened. Is the child hiding, did the child get lost, abducted or was he or she in an accident? Did the child run away?
- If your child was at home, check around the house. Look for small hiding places such as cupboards, piles of laundry, under beds or behind furniture, basements, attics, tool sheds, heating ducts, unlocked vehicles or old refrigerators.
- Check to see whether the child is at someone's house – a neighbor's, family member or friend. Have contact information close at hand.
- If you are in a store notify the manager or an employee quickly. Also notify mall security or ask the store to do so.
- Check to see whether clothing or personal items are missing. Look for clues or messages that could have been left. This could indicate a child has run away.
- If the child cannot immediately be found, contact police through 9-1-1. There is no law in Canada requiring a waiting period before reporting a missing child (anyone 18 years and younger) to police.
- Be prepared with an up-to-date photo of your child and any information such as what he or she was wearing or carrying that day. Also know unique characteristics such as birthmarks, eyeglasses, braces or jewellery for example.
- Call a relative or friend for help.
- If the search garners media attention, be prepared to have someone comment. Ask police for help in this matter.
- In the event the child calls, make sure someone is at home to take the call and that the cell phones of important family members are always charged.
- Once you have contacted police, contact the Missing Children Society of Canada at 1-800-661-6160.