



JUVENILE JUSTICE

Reason To Hope:
On the Front Lines
With John Walsh

Also

- ◆ A Safety Net for the Internet
- ◆ Keeping Children Safe

OJJDP

Journal of the
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

From the Administrator

The poet Carl Sandburg once described children as God's promise that the world will go on. As the bearers of our Nation's future, America's children are critical to its attainment. Simply put, the future of our children is the future of our Nation.

To achieve the promise that heralds the dawn of the 21st century, we must protect our children from physical, social, and emotional harm, while affording them every opportunity to develop into productive adults whose lives are fulfilling and rewarding.

This issue of *Juvenile Justice* describes dangers that children face today and offers practical steps that parents can take to protect their children.

Almost every American can recall the tragic history of young Adam Walsh, who was abducted and murdered in 1981. More Americans should be familiar with the story of Adam's father, **John Walsh**, who transcended his family's personal anguish to help other missing children and give their parents "Reason To Hope." Ronald Laney's interview elicits John's insights on key missing children issues.

Ernest Allen, another contributor to enhancing the system's response when children are missing, has also contributed to this issue ("Keeping Children Safe: Rhetoric and Reality"). Ernie heads the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which has collaborated with OJJDP since 1984 to help missing children and their families.

As a reflection of the "real world," the "virtual world" of cyberspace also poses risks to children. **Daniel Armagh** of the American Prosecutors Research Institute describes the dangers and helps parents construct "A Safety Net for the Internet" to protect their children from cyberpredators.

Few things are more reprehensible than the victimization of innocent children. When tragedy strikes our children, we must—as **Patty Wetterling** reminds us—"Never Forget." After all, our children are our Nation's future, and both deserve the best we can give.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator
Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Volume V • Number 1

May 1998

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Are traditional child safety messages effective, accurate, and complete? Do they adequately warn children about the threats to their safety? Do they unduly frighten children and their parents? Are we giving children information that makes them more vulnerable to victimization rather than less?

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Juvenile Justice is published by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to advance its mandate to disseminate information regarding juvenile delinquency and prevention programs (42 U.S.C. 5652).

Points of view or opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP or the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

Reason To Hope: On the Front Lines With John Walsh

The journal's *On the Front Lines* series features interviews with leading authorities on juvenile justice and related youth issues. These experts have earned their credentials on the front lines in the struggle for a better tomorrow for today's youth and their families.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: John, thanks for taking time from your demanding schedule to share your thoughts on issues affecting missing and exploited children and their families with our readers.

JOHN WALSH: Thank you—and *Juvenile Justice*—for giving me this opportunity. I can't think of a more important issue to discuss—or one that is closer to my heart—than children who are missing, abducted, exploited, or victimized.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: Your book, *Tears of Rage*, which has been on the bestseller list, has been praised by parents and justice professionals alike. What do you think accounts for its success?

JOHN WALSH: I am truly overwhelmed by its reception. In *Tears of Rage*, my wife Revé and I recounted at length—for the first time—the intimate and painful crises, battles, and struggles that our family faced when our son Adam was abducted and murdered. Although words cannot fully describe what a parent goes through during such an ordeal—the pain, the

anguish, the despair—I wrote *Tears of Rage* in the hope that people would not only see and understand the tragedy of a child's abduction and death, but that parents of victims might find reason to hope.

I am sometimes amazed when I think how *America's Most Wanted* led to its 500th arrest in January 1997. The public's response to *America's Most Wanted* vividly proves that people care, that they want to make a difference, and that they are willing to get involved to protect all our citizens—men, women, and children—by helping to take vicious and violent criminals off our streets so that they can no longer prey on the innocent and vulnerable.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: What do you believe are some of the most significant changes that have taken place during the past several years concerning missing and exploited children?

JOHN WALSH: It is incredible to realize how much has happened in the 16 years since Adam was abducted. There have

John Walsh is the father of Adam Walsh, who was abducted and murdered in 1981. Mr. Walsh has been instrumental in changing the way we respond to missing children. This interview was conducted for Juvenile Justice by Ronald Laney, Director of OJJDP's Missing and Exploited Children's Program.

been so many positive changes because so many people have fought to make a difference in the lives of children.

The Missing Children’s Assistance Act opened the doors to progress in protecting children.

When Adam was abducted, there was no system in place for tracking information or leads about abducted children. Law enforcement agencies were not trained or equipped to investigate missing children cases, and even fewer had ever experienced the murder of a child. Many agencies—including the FBI—were reluctant to get involved in missing children cases.

Back then, the few law enforcement information systems that existed contained more data on stolen goods than on stolen children. Hardly anyone heard about

child abduction and no one ever heard about endangered children. Virtually no one even uttered the word “abduction” when a child was missing.

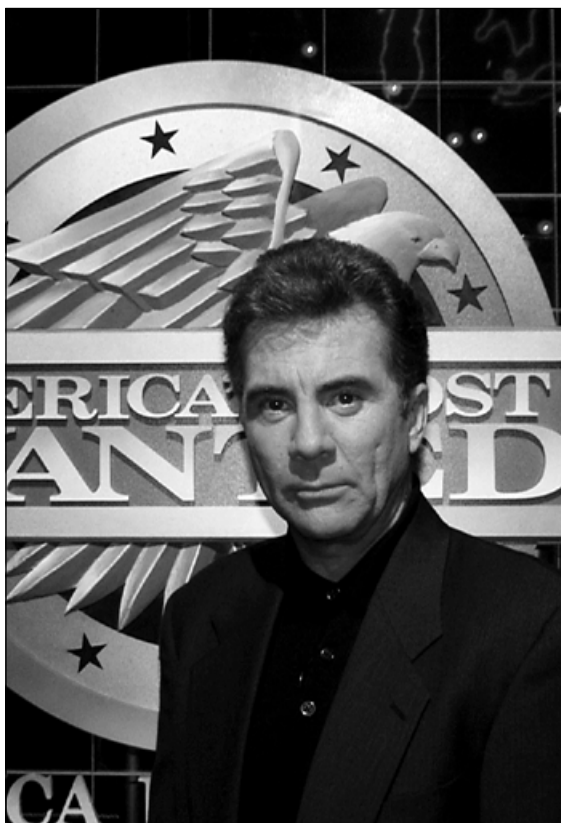
Anxious parents were patronizingly told, “Your child has just run away from home or has simply wandered off,” by those to whom they had gone for help. Distraught parents, wracked with fear, were told to go home, that they had nothing to worry about. After all, everything would be okay when their child returned home in a few hours.

There were few local resources and services for missing or exploited children and their families, and even fewer national resources. Victims’ rights was not even a slogan—in fact, victims had no rights. Up to, and through, the early 1980’s, the system responded to missing and exploited children in a haphazard and even lackadaisical manner, without foresight, purpose, or conviction.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: And today?

JOHN WALSH: Public recognition of the problem has increased tenfold and has inspired better prevention and intervention efforts for all children. When I think about how the system is different today than it was 16 years ago, I think of the enactment of the Missing Children’s Assistance Act in 1984 that opened the doors to progress in protecting our children. I think of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP’s) Missing and Exploited Children’s Program, which provides funds and oversight to a vast array of programs, services, research, and activities; and of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which serves as a focal point for assistance for missing children and their families.

I think about the posting of missing children’s pictures on kiosks at airports, in public buildings, and on the Internet;



and about the dissemination of children's pictures on milk cartons and in the mail. I think about the vast network of services and resources at the local and State levels for missing and exploited children. State missing children clearinghouses are now electronically linked to one another and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. In 1983, there was only one State clearinghouse, which was located at the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. Today, there are missing children clearinghouses in every State.

Sixteen years ago, no one had information about Adam that they could share with other agencies. Today, information about missing and endangered children is collected and disseminated quickly to law enforcement agencies across the Nation.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: And has the response by law enforcement also changed?

JOHN WALSH: The response has changed dramatically since 1981. In those days, most law enforcement agencies did not know what to do when a parent reported a missing child. Today, thanks to extensive training efforts sponsored by OJJDP, front-line officers and administrators know the proper procedures, methods, and techniques for conducting a thorough and effective investigation—and are better equipped to help parents deal with the crisis.

Federal resources for investigating missing and exploited children have increased tenfold in the past several years. The FBI's Child Abduction and Serial Killer Unit, the Hardiman Task Force on Missing and Exploited Children, the Federal Agency Task Force on Missing and Exploited Children, and the Office for Victims of Crime focus much of their attention on child victims. Federal agencies are also working together to coordinate efforts to protect children who have been abducted by their noncustodial

parent and to bring them home. Many of these collaborative efforts are focused on cases involving children who have been abducted internationally.

Many other improvements have been achieved through legislative action at the State and Federal levels. The Jimmy Ryce Law Enforcement Training Center, which is housed at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, provides training to law enforcement officers and administrators. The newly established CyberTipline at the National Center is aimed at reducing crimes against children that occur on—or as a result of—the Internet.

In my judgment, the most significant development is the way in which the justice system has finally started to act as a comprehensive system, not as disjointed, individual components. Federal, State, and local agencies are sharing information and talking with one another.

When a child is missing, no longer is a parent left to his or her own devices to figure out what to do next. Many services and resources are now available to help parents cope with the crisis.

The justice system has finally started to act as a comprehensive system.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: In light of the changes during the past several years and the increased services and support now offered to children and their families, let's talk a bit about OJJDP's latest resource *When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide*. Now that you have had an opportunity to read the *Guide*, could you share your thoughts?

JOHN WALSH: When Adam was abducted and murdered, Revé and I were suddenly thrust into an ordeal we never imagined

we would have to deal with. Never in our wildest dreams—not even our worst nightmare—did we ever imagine that something so horrible could, much less would, happen to Adam. In an instant, our lives were turned completely upside down. The peace and calm of our family life were shattered, and agony and chaos took their place. When we discovered that Adam was missing, we had no idea what to do. We didn't know where to turn for help. We didn't know whom to call. When we finally felt that we were heading in the right direction, we kept running into roadblocks.

Time plays a crucial role in the recovery of a missing child.

As I mentioned earlier, back in 1981 there were few resources for missing and abducted children and their families at the local, State, or national level. There were even fewer people one could ask for advice and assistance.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: You felt that you were on your own?

JOHN WALSH: Absolutely. We were left to our own devices to figure out what to do and where to turn. We felt alone and isolated. We began beating on doors asking for help. We called anyone and everyone. We often felt as if we were in charge of the investigation. While we feared for our son's safety, we were also angry at the system that was supposed to protect our son and help us. In spite of all of our efforts, we couldn't find answers to our questions or people who could help.

Adam's abduction was our private hell—but it was not an isolated incident. On any given day, any number of children are absent from their homes for diverse and numerous reasons. Some have been taken by noncustodial parents, others

have been abducted by nonfamily members—a few even by strangers. On occasion, children may run away from home, but whatever the reason for the child's disappearance, you cannot begin to imagine the fear and anguish that a parent feels when his or her child is missing.

Time plays a critical role in the successful recovery of a missing child. Each passing minute may mean that a child is being moved farther away from home. Each passing minute may mean increasing danger to the child. Each passing minute may mean that a child is being victimized by the perpetrator. Each passing minute may mean that clues and leads to the child's whereabouts are being lost.

When I look back at the events that took place in 1981, several questions come to mind: What could have been done to make our situation better? What can we do to help parents facing a similar crisis today? What have we learned from the tragedies of Adam Walsh, Jimmy Ryce, Jacob Wetterling, and so many others? How can we give parents the information they need to support and aid in the investigation process?

JUVENILE JUSTICE: Tough questions—any answers?

JOHN WALSH: The *Family Survival Guide* is a significant step in the right direction. It provides specific information to parents at the time they need it most. It offers parents solid answers and directs them to those who can help them try to find their missing child. It offers parents concrete ideas and suggestions on what they should expect and what they can do. The *Guide* helps parents understand what steps they can take to preserve evidence and otherwise assist investigators in doing their job. It takes much of the mystery and fear out of the investigation process.

The *Family Survival Guide* is not just another self-help book for parents. It provides

firsthand insight from parents who have faced the loss of a child. It offers parents information, support, and encouragement to help them through the process and offers access to resources to help them find and recover their missing child.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: Your assessment of the *Guide* is encouraging. We want to distribute it widely so it will be readily available to families when they need it. Law enforcement agencies across the country, all missing children clearinghouses, missing children nonprofit agencies and organizations, youth service agencies, schools, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and other State, Federal, and local agencies will be receiving copies so they can give one to a parent when a child is reported missing.

JOHN WALSH: That's great news. Every chapter of the *Family Survival Guide* contains valuable information that parents of missing children need to know as soon as possible—how to work effectively with law enforcement; the nature of the search process; the use of rewards, resources, and volunteers; and the need to take care of themselves.

I know firsthand that it may be difficult for a parent to sit down and read the *Guide* from cover to cover when his or her child is first missing. However, I believe it is critical that someone close to the family—a relative, a friend, a neighbor, clergy—take the time to read the entire *Guide* because it will be of great value to the parents and will facilitate the investigation process.

Another important feature of the *Guide* is that it provides parents with insights and recommendations on how to cope if their child is missing for an extended period. We don't always think about the long-term effect that a missing child has on parents, siblings, and other members of the family. The *Guide* offers families practical ideas on how to survive this



OJJDP's Ronald Laney discusses missing children issues with John Walsh.

ordeal and begin to rebuild their shattered lives.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: As one who has been there, what personal insights would you like to pass on to families who face similar crises?

No one else should pass judgment on how a parent should act if a child is missing.

JOHN WALSH: The abduction of a child is a tragedy. No one can fully understand or appreciate what a parent goes through at such a time, unless they have faced a similar tragedy. Every parent responds differently. Each parent copes with this nightmare in the best way he or she knows how. No one else should pass judgment on how a parent should act or what a parent should do if a child is missing.

What we can—and must—do is show parents through our support that they are not alone. As we have discussed, resources are available to help families when a child is missing. Agencies and organizations—at the Federal, State, and local levels—are ready to give parents support and assistance at a moment’s notice. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, State missing children clearinghouses, and nonprofit organizations are just a phone call away.

I was pleased to learn that OJJDP is funding a family support network that pairs families of missing and exploited children with other parents of victims for support, assistance, and encouragement. These parent volunteers offer emotional support, firsthand knowledge and experience, and guidance to help families cope with the trauma of a missing or exploited child. We have come a long way in the past several years.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: A long way indeed, John, as you have ably shown, and I would like to convey my appreciation for your considerable contributions in this regard. But I am sure you will agree that we still have a way to go. Where do you think we should go from here?

JOHN WALSH: Thanks. Of course, we need to press on. One missing child is one too many. We must continue our efforts to protect children by identifying those who victimize children and increasing our efforts to get perpetrators off the streets and behind bars. We must continue to focus our attention on protecting children from being victimized. I am encouraged by recent Federal efforts to focus on the victimization of children through the Internet.

But a lot more can—and should—be done at the Federal level to help and protect our children. We must assure that both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue make the needs of missing and exploited children and their families a national priority and provide adequate funding for program development, training, and technical assistance for practitioners and law enforcement personnel. They are the front-line troops in the war against criminals who target children. To do any less would be a tragedy.

JUVENILE JUSTICE: Thanks, John, for taking time to share your thoughts on these vital issues.

JOHN WALSH: Thanks for affording me the opportunity to do so.

A Safety Net for the Internet: Protecting Our Children

by Daniel Armagh

It is every parent's nightmare. You turn on your home computer and are shocked to see disturbing images of children being physically abused, sexually molested, tortured, and even murdered. You investigate further and discover sexually explicit, obscene e-mail from a cyberpredator intended for your preteen son or daughter. You race up the stairs to your child's bedroom to discuss what you have discovered, only to find the receipt for a plane ticket to a destination across the country on the dresser and clothes missing from the closet.

Such nightmares are becoming a reality for a small but increasing number of parents as more families go online. While the Internet offers a vast array of helpful information, access often comes with little, if any, warning of the risks it poses to children, who may unwittingly invite dangerous predators into their home.

Responsible parents advise their children never to talk to strangers who approach them in person or over the telephone. Wise parents instruct their children to tell them about any such encounters. Yet the same parents rarely educate their children about the dangers of exchanges with strangers on the Internet, often because they are unaware of the risk to their children or of measures to protect them.

Cyberplayground for Predators

According to authorities, there is unprecedented growth in child pornography in the United States largely because of the Internet, which provides child sexual predators with a virtually undetectable means of sending and receiving illicit images of children (Huycke, 1997). Because of its anonymity, rapid transmission, and unsupervised nature, the Internet has become the venue of choice for predators who transmit and receive child pornography. "The Internet is the ultimate distribution system for child pornography," says Robert Flores, a former attorney in the U.S. Department of Justice's Criminal Division, Child Exploitation and

Daniel Armagh is the director of the American Prosecutors Research Institute's National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse. The Center provides training and technical assistance to prosecutors and other professionals involved in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases.

Obscenity Section (Kaplan, 1997). “Before the Internet, pedophiles and child predators targeted children in parks and playgrounds, offering ice cream or candy to gain the child’s trust.” Today, the virtual playground of cyberspace affords these child sexual predators¹ the opportunity to engage children in anonymous exchanges that often lead to personal questions designed to assess whether the child can be lured into sexual conversations and sexual contact.

The most effective protection against child victimization is an involved and educated parent.

Cleverly adept at communicating with children, child sexual predators hide behind the anonymity of the Internet to become whoever and whatever best serves the ultimate objective of many child sexual predators, face-to-face contact with a child. Once a child is lured into meeting the predator, the realization of the predator’s pornographic fantasies can become the realization of a parent’s greatest fear—the criminal exploitation of one’s child.

Perverse Pattern

Dr. Chris Hatcher, professor of psychology at the University of California, San Francisco, explains that pedophiles who contact children display a specific developmental pattern: “It begins with fantasy, moves to gratification through pornography, then voyeurism, and finally to contact.”² The Internet is a superhighway down the path of that perverse pattern, giving child sexual predators instant access to potential victims and anonymity until a face-to-face meeting can be arranged.

Online predators use an escalating pattern of questions once contact with a child is made. One detective described the pattern in this way:

First, they want to know your age and what you look like—height, weight, and bra size if [you’re] a girl. Then they want you to describe your underwear. From there, they want to know if [you’re] a virgin and the conversations become more explicit. . . . The pattern intensifies when the child predator asks for photographs of the child or begins to send photos via e-mail showing various forms of pornography, usually involving child pornography or cartoon characters familiar to the child which have been altered to depict sexual activity. When the child predator thinks the time is right, he will suggest a face to face meeting.³

Regardless of law enforcement’s ability to detect and arrest child sexual predators using the Internet, the most effective protection against child victimization is an involved and educated parent. If parents are to protect their children against cyberpredators, they must understand the rationale and methodology in using the Internet to approach potential victims. Parents must be aware that the Internet has created an easily accessible source of stimulation for these predators. One pedophile related the following:

You can download pictures in complete anonymity. You do not have to have any human contact. Anonymity is so crucial because your average child molester is not the dirty old man in a trench coat, but a teacher at your local elementary school. The Internet becomes his outlet. Successful pedophiles are better with your children than you are. They give them more attention. They are your swim coach, your Sunday school teacher—people you trust your child to everyday.⁴

Trolling Chat Rooms

Internet chat rooms may provide the greatest opportunity for sexual exploitation of children. Although most child sexual predators are aware that law enforcement is present on the Internet in some capacity, the odds of being caught at any given time are on the side of the predator, who often trolls chat rooms specifically designed for children. Chat rooms featuring subjects that attract children and teenagers, such as music, sports, or fashion, are prime targets of child sexual predators, who often disguise themselves as peers.

Pederasty.com

The risk of direct exploitation by online child predators is not the only danger posed to children by the Internet. On the World Wide Web, where any organization may publish a Web page that promotes its philosophy and offers products catering to its tastes, organizations such as the North American Man/Boy Love Association provide support groups to bolster and empower pedophiles. One site, called Boys in the Real World, features nude and seminude prepubescent boys and teens and has received more than 250,000 “hits” (visitors) in a 3-month period. Another site has a startlingly straightforward mission statement that calls for acceptance of boy lovers who see no need to change a behavior they feel is natural.

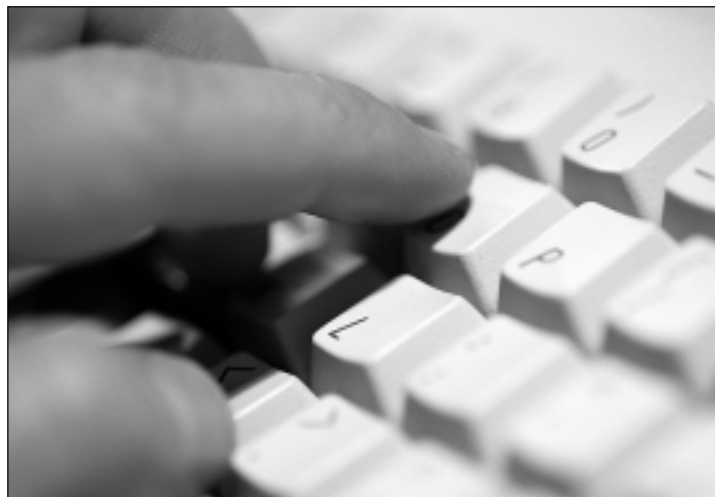
What historically has been an isolated—if not ostracized—population is forming unprecedented numbers of support groups in cyberspace to advance the acceptance of a lifestyle that embraces child sexual exploitation. Leading experts are concerned that such online support groups validate antisocial and even criminal behaviors. According to psychotherapist

Gary Hewitt, who counsels teens with sexual dysfunctions often related to abuse, “The support group sites give pedophiles a real sense of power, and the impetus to go out and molest someone.”⁵

The risk of exploitation by online predators is not the only danger posed to children by the Internet.

Protecting Our Children

The stark truth about the Internet is that it can expose children to vile and degrading materials in the sanctuary of their homes and open the door to dangerous child sexual predators. While law enforcement is doing its best to meet the challenge posed by a technology that changes from day to day, the primary responsibility for protecting children rests with their parents. As John Perry Barlow, cofounder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, points out, “The hard truth is that the burden [of protecting your children on the Internet] ultimately falls where it always has: on the parents. If you don’t want your children fixating on filth, [you] better step up to the tough task of raising them to find it as distasteful as you do yourself” (Elmer-DeWitt, 1995).



The child sexual predator is aware that many parents do not alert their children to the perils of the Internet and generally know far less about computers than their children know. The predator counts on the neglect and ignorance of parents when it comes to their children's access to the Internet. Overtures to children often take place while mom and dad are watching television in the next room and are oblivious to the Internet intruder who is stalking their child.

online with their children as often as possible and help them identify inappropriate communications.⁶ Parents should get to know their children's cyberspace friends, just as they would want to know their real-life friends.

Parents should stress that people encountered in chat rooms are strangers and that the same rules apply to cyberspace strangers as to those encountered in the real world. A recent pamphlet suggests the following rules (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1997):

- ◆ Never give out identifying information in a public message such as one posted to a chat room or bulletin board, and be sure you're dealing with someone that both you and your child know and trust before giving out such information via e-mail. Think carefully before revealing any personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information. Consider using a pseudonym or unlisting your child's name if your Internet service provider (ISP) allows it.
- ◆ Get to know the services available from the ISP that your child uses. Find out what types of information your ISP offers and whether there are ways for parents to block access to objectionable material.

Parents should stress that the same rules apply to cyberspace strangers as to those encountered in the real world.

Protective Measures

Parents should keep the family computer in a central location where the child is not isolated, limit the time the child spends online, set guidelines and rules for computer use, and learn about Internet technology in order to better monitor their child's online activity. Sergeant Nick Battaglia of the San Jose Police Department's Child Exploitation Unit, San Jose, CA, advises parents to go

Reporting Internet Abuse

If you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, notify law enforcement and your online service provider after you have contacted the appropriate local authorities.

On December 1, 1997, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), in conjunction with Senator Judd Gregg (New Hampshire), announced a new CyberTipline to serve as a national resource for tips and leads regarding the sexual exploitation of children. NCMEC encourages families to call this toll-free hotline (800-843-5678) to report incidents involving child sexual exploitation, including online enticement of children for sexual acts.

- ◆ Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer user without parental permission, and then only in a public area with a parent present.
- ◆ Never respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or threatening, or make you feel uncomfortable. Encourage your children to tell you if they encounter such messages. If you or your child receives a message that is harassing, sexual in nature, or threatening, forward a copy of the message to your ISP and ask for their assistance.

Parents also may want to have their child sign an Agreement To Abide by the Rules and post the agreement and the rules near the computer. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (1997) offers the following as appropriate rules:

- ◆ I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parent's work address/telephone number, or the name of my school without my parent's permission.
- ◆ I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.
- ◆ I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.
- ◆ I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.
- ◆ I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do, I will tell my parents right away so they can contact the online service.

- ◆ I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.

Parents may want to have their children sign an Agreement To Abide by the Rules.

Use and Limits of Cyberfilters

Parents should find out what controls are available through their Internet service provider and consider augmenting them with filtering software such as CyberSitter, KidCode, Netnanny, or SurfWatch to block objectionable material. SurfWatch matches a potential Internet destination to a proprietary list of forbidden sites. In addition, the software package looks for



objectionable language and blocks sites containing that language. Microsoft, Netscape, and Progressive Networks have collaborated to develop even more sophisticated protective devices that should be available soon.

Parents should be aware of the policies concerning computer use at the school or public library.

Filtering options are not foolproof—they may not block all objectionable materials and may prevent access to sites approved by parents. They are simply one step in providing a line of defense against cyber-predators. Parents should be aware that the child sexual predator, or even the child, may find ways to bypass blocking software.

Not all children who are victimized via the Internet are innocents who took a wrong turn on the information super-highway. Some have deliberately strayed into the seamy side of the cyberworld. Supervisory Special Agent Kenneth Lanning of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Missing and Exploited Children's Task Force cautions, "Investigators must recognize that many of the



children lured away from their homes after online computer conversations are not complete innocents duped while doing their homework. Most are curious, rebellious, or troubled adolescents seeking sexual information or contact. Nevertheless, they have been seduced and manipulated by a clever offender and do not fully understand or recognize what they are getting into."⁷

Computer Access Outside the Home

Although parents may have installed blocking software on the family computer and set up a system to monitor its use, they also need to be aware of their child's use of the Internet when visiting friends who have computers. Parents should talk to their children about following the same rules for computer use wherever they are—not just at home. Children need to know that they can talk to their parents about anyone whose behavior makes them uncomfortable and that they can and should return home from any situation that violates their sense of appropriate behavior. In addition, parents should be aware of the policies concerning computer use at the school or public library and the kinds of blocking devices used, if any, to filter out sexually explicit material.

Reason for Concern

Research conducted at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA, shows the reason for such concerns. Drawing on computer records of online activity, researchers measured the material being downloaded in comparison with the stated reasons for Internet use. The results were enlightening.

In an 18-month study, the research team reviewed 917,410 images that were

downloaded; 83.5 percent were pornographic. Trading in sexually explicit images is currently one of the largest recreational applications of users of computer networks. At one university, 13 of the 40 most frequently visited newsgroups featured sexually explicit posts. The study demonstrated that these materials go beyond the soft-core pornography on magazine racks. The online market features images of pedophilia (nude photographs of children in various poses), hebephilia (youth/teens), and paraphilia (images of bondage, sado-masochism, urination, defecation, and sex acts with animals) (Rimm, 1995).

The flow of such objectionable material via the Internet into our homes, schools, and libraries—wherever computers may be found—raises reasonable concerns that are too important to ignore, especially when they endanger the future of America's children. Congress made an initial attempt to combat these dangers by enacting the Communications Decency Act. However, this Act was held unconstitutional in Federal court in July 1997.⁸ Nevertheless, concerned parents and citizens have legitimate interests in ensuring that children have the opportunity to benefit from the best the Internet has to offer while being protected from its worst. Common sense, communication with children, and constant vigilance are the best weapons against the cyberpredator. Parental involvement in the cyberlife of children is crucial to safeguarding their future and, perhaps, their real-world lives.

Notes

1. For the purposes of this article, the term "child sexual predator" is used by the author to encompass the terms "pedophile" and "child molester."
2. Dr. Chris Hatcher, professor of psychology, University of California, personal communication, October 1997.
3. Detective Michael Sullivan, e-mail transcripts from 1996–1997, Illinois Internet Child Exploitation Unit, Naperville, IL.
4. Bob Trebilcock, unpublished interview with a convicted pedophile, April 1997.
5. Gary Hewitt, Ph.D., personal communication, December 1997.
6. Sergeant Nick Battaglia, personal communication, November 1997.
7. Kenneth V. Lanning, personal communication, December 1997.
8. *Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union*, 117 U.S. 2329 (1997).

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Keeping Children Safe: Rhetoric and Reality

by Ernest E. Allen

“**D**on’t take candy from strangers.” We all remember our parents passing on these words of wisdom with the hope that they would protect us from harm. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if life were that simple? Unfortunately, children are at risk of abduction and sexual victimization, and most of the individuals who perpetrate these crimes are not perceived as strangers by their victims.

Are traditional child safety messages effective, accurate, and complete? Do they adequately warn children about the threats to their safety? Do they unduly frighten children and parents? Are we giving children information that makes them more vulnerable to victimization rather than less?

To answer these questions, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) reviewed existing research and its own data base of long-term abduction cases that do not involve family members. This review helped test long-standing child-protection messages while providing a basis for creating more effective messages.

An Underreported Problem

Child victimization is a large and underreported problem. Too many times,

problems are not found because no one is looking for them. In recent years, we have finally begun to look:

- ◆ “Considerable evidence exists to show that at least 20% of American women and 5% to 10% of American men experienced some form of sexual abuse as children” (Finkelhor, 1994).
- ◆ “Most sexual abuse is committed by men (90%) and by persons known to the child (70% to 90%), with family members constituting one-third to one-half of the perpetrators against girls and 10% to 20% of the perpetrators against boys” (Finkelhor, 1994).
- ◆ According to the U.S. Department of Justice, teenagers and girls are among the most frequent victims of sexual attacks (Masquire and Pastore, 1997).
- ◆ The U.S. Department of Justice also estimates that the victims of two-thirds

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of imprisoned sexual assault offenders are younger than the age of 18 (Greenfield, 1997).

- ◆ According to the National Victim Center, 29 percent of rape victims are younger than 11, and 32 percent are between 11 and 18 years of age (National Victim Center, 1992).
- ◆ According to the Washington State Attorney General's Office, the average victim of abduction and murder is an 11-year-old girl who is described as a low-risk, "normal" child from a middle-class neighborhood who has a stable family relationship and whose initial contact with an abductor occurs within a quarter of a mile of her home (Hanfland, Keppel, and Weis, 1997).
- ◆ The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP's) National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMAART) found that as many as 114,600 children reported attempted abductions by nonfamily members in 1988. An additional 3,200 to 4,600 successful abductions were reported to police (Finkelhor, Hotaling, and Sedlak, 1990).
- ◆ NISMAART also found that two-thirds of the cases of nonfamily abductions reported to police, most of which were for relatively short periods, involved sexual assault (Finkelhor, Hotaling, and Sedlak, 1990).

“Stranger Danger”

Dr. David Warden, psychologist at the University of Strathclyde in the United Kingdom, evaluated the efficacy of child safety programs. He emphasized that the responsibility to identify a potential assailant cannot be left to the child alone (Kent, 1990):

No matter how intelligent the child, he or she does not see the world through skeptical adult eyes. . . . Children live very much in the present. They can't foresee someone's actions or judge their intentions, certainly not at primary school age. They have a very weak understanding of motives, they simply take someone at face value. The concept of stranger danger is difficult, because it clashes with the social constraints on children to be polite to adults. Research suggests that children don't really know what a stranger is. They feel that once someone tells his name, he ceases to be a stranger.

Twenty-nine percent of rape victims are younger than age 11.

Dr. Ray Wyre, a noted authority on the treatment of sex offenders and director of therapy at the Gracewell Institute in Birmingham, England, cautioned that “the first step in advising ‘never talk to strangers’ is to make sure that the child understands what a stranger is. Children might believe it means a person who looks odd, rather than someone they do not know.” Dr. Wyre further observed that a child's image “of a stranger is different from an adult's. The person trying to ensnare them could seem caring and persuasive and not at all threatening. After ten seconds' chat, they are no longer a stranger to a child” (Rayment, 1991).

On the HBO special “How to Raise a Street Smart Child” (1987), host Daniel J. Travanti asked, “Does your child know what a stranger is? The fact is most children just do not know. They think a stranger is someone threatening and evil. The problem with telling your children, ‘don't talk to strangers’ is that the bad guys don't always look bad.”

On the same cable program, young, elementary schoolchildren provided their definitions of a stranger:

◆ “A stranger sometimes wears a hat . . . sometimes a black or brown jacket and is a guy with a beard . . . some hair and a moustache and some glasses.”

The typical sex offender against children “molests an average of 117 youngsters, most of whom do not report the offense.”

◆ “I think a stranger is like . . . a punk rocker that drinks beer all day and sits around in a vacant lot.”

◆ “A stranger looks mean and ugly . . . a creep.”

◆ “Big . . . bigger than you, bigger than most people.”

The concept is clearly a difficult one for a child to grasp. A neighbor, a familiar face in a child’s daily routine, or someone the child’s parents know well enough to speak to or whose name the child knows is probably not regarded as a stranger.



The Myth of the Stranger

Research on the victim/offender relationship in child abduction/molestation cases is not new. Using a sample of 148 offenders who sexually assaulted youth and were sent for observation to a Massachusetts treatment facility, Groth and colleagues (1978) concluded that only 29 percent of the offenders studied were complete strangers to their child victims. In 71 percent of the cases, the offender and victim knew each other at least casually, and in 14 percent of the cases, the offender was a member of the child’s immediate family.

In 1985, research conducted by Dr. Gene Abel of Emory University in Atlanta examined a group of sex offenders. Funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, Dr. Abel’s research concluded that the typical sexual offender against children is male, begins molesting by age 15, engages in a variety of deviant behavior, and “molests an average of 117 youngsters, most of whom do not report the offense.” Dr. Abel emphasized that offenders seek legitimate access to children, noting that “child molesters seek out jobs to access kids” (Abel, 1985).

Case in Point

OJJDP, in conjunction with NCMEC, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (1990), sponsored the Case in Point series. The series used case studies to profile and analyze the methods of offenders who victimized children. For example, the series reported on a study of 157 abducting and nonabducting child molesters at the Massachusetts Treatment

Center (MTC) in Bridgewater, MA, which was established in 1959 for the evaluation and treatment of sexually dangerous persons. State law provides that a person found guilty of a sexual offense can be committed to MTC for terms of 1 day to life if judged sexually dangerous.

In the MTC study, the term “child molester” was defined as someone whose sexual offenses were against victims under the age of 16. “Sexual offense” was defined as any sexually motivated assault involving physical contact with the victim. When the victim-age criterion was not sufficient (for example, because the offender was young or because of multiple victims of varying ages), several additional guidelines were used. Age discrepancy between offender and victim was considered, as was the predominant age of victims and any other victim age trends.

The study determined whether an offender was an abductor or a nonabductor based on detailed information in the offender’s research file. Each offense was coded in terms of the place in which the offender initially encountered the victim and the place in which the offense actually took place. If the place of encounter and offense differed on 50 percent or more occasions for all known offenses, the offender was coded as an abductor. Offenders were coded as nonabductors when the place of encounter and offense differed on less than 50 percent of all known offenses.

The MTC study examined a number of characteristics of child molesters (table 1). It is particularly significant to note the similarity of the MTC data to Groth and colleagues’ results more than a decade earlier. The MTC study found that 66 percent of abducting child molesters and 80 percent of nonabducting child molesters were known to their victims.



Nonfamily Abductions

In another study, NCMEC reviewed cases of nonfamily abduction (NFA). Because NCMEC serves as a resource center for law enforcement agencies and families in cases of missing and exploited children, its caseload is weighted toward long-term cases. If an abducted child is recovered quickly, the local agency is less likely to ask NCMEC for assistance. Therefore, the sample of cases chosen included the most serious child abduction cases in which there was the greatest threat to the child, including risk of loss of life, and in which the child was missing for a substantial period of time. The composition of this sample was such that it more likely included a higher share of abductions by “strangers.”

A sample of 260 NFA cases was selected. The following definitions were used:

Table 1: Characteristics of Child Molesters Who Abduct Compared With Those Who Do Not Abduct

	<u>Abductors</u>	<u>Nonabductors</u>
Number	97	60
Relationship to victims		
Family member	8%	26%
Acquaintance	58%	54%
Not known by offender	33%	20%
Average age of victims		
Average	10.28	9.69
Standard deviation	3.30	2.91
Average number of victims while offender was still a juvenile		
Average	0.52	0.20
Standard deviation	1.19	0.55
Range	0–6	0–3
Average number of victims in offender's adult years		
Average	3.63	2.92
Standard deviation	3.22	2.41
Range	1–16	1–16
Total number of offenses committed with weapon present, but not used		
Average	0.59	0.19
Standard deviation	0.94	0.44
Total number of offenses committed with weapon		
Average	0.55	0.19
Standard deviation	0.91	0.44

◆ **Stranger:** An individual completely unknown to the child; someone with whom the child has had no prior contact of any kind.

◆ **Acquaintance:** An individual whom the child has seen on a regular basis or with whom the child may have had some contact, but does not necessarily know by name. Examples include babysitters, neighbors, custodians, workers at a school or apartment complex, children’s group leaders or volunteers, teachers, coaches, cashiers at a grocery or drug store, friends of a parent, or other authority figures.

All cases involving infants were eliminated due to the inability of the child to make a judgment about the abductor. Several other cases were eliminated due to subsequent information indicating that the cause of death was an accident or a suicide.

The 260 NFA cases broke down as follows:

- ◆ The child was deceased and the abductor unidentified in 72 cases.
- ◆ The child was deceased and the abductor identified in 54 cases.
- ◆ The child was alive and the abductor unidentified in 34 cases.
- ◆ The child was alive and the abductor identified in 100 cases.

For purposes of further analysis, the 72 cases in which the child was recovered deceased and the abductor remained unknown were eliminated. In another 33 cases, NCMEC was unable to develop information sufficient to make a confident categorization.

Of the 155 NFA cases chosen for final analysis, the child was recovered alive in 106 cases (68.4 percent). In 89 of these

cases (84 percent), the child knew or was acquainted with the abductor to some extent. In 33 of the 49 cases in which the child was recovered deceased (67.3 percent), the child knew or was acquainted with the abductor; in 16 of these cases (32.7 percent), the child did not know the abductor (table 2).

Fueling Fear

Highly publicized cases of child victimization serve to heighten fears among children and parents.

- ◆ A 1987 Roper poll found that 76 percent of children “feared being kidnapped”—their number one concern (Feinberg, 1987).
- ◆ In 1988, Peter Hart found that the second greatest perceived risk of parents regarding their children was “being kidnapped” (37 percent) (Colburn, 1988).
- ◆ In a 1997 survey conducted by the Princeton Survey Research Associates Poll, the top worry of parents is the fear that their child might be kidnaped or become the victim of violent crime. In the same survey, parents’ fear that their child might become a victim of sexual abuse ranked fourth, just behind serious accident or illness (Kantrowitz, 1997).

In 1991, Mayo Clinic pediatricians Gunnar B. Stickler, M.D., Daniel D. Broughton, M.D., and Anthony Alario, M.D., in conjunction with Margery Salter, Ph.D., published an extensive examination in *Clinical Pediatrics* (Stickler et al., 1991:527). The authors reported that 72 percent of parents feared “that their child will be kidnapped by a stranger” but noted that, “as in other violent crimes such as rape, physical abuse, and sexual abuse, a child is more likely to be abducted by someone known to the victim than by a stranger. Anticipatory guidance in these areas needs to be aimed more at interpersonal relationships than at ‘stranger danger.’”

Highly publicized cases of child victimization serve to heighten fears among children and parents.

Although intense media focus on the most extreme cases has led millions of Americans to define the missing and exploited children problem in terms of the rarest cases, some media have performed a public service by focusing national attention on the need for research,

Child Recovered Alive		Child Recovered Deceased	
Abductors	Number of Cases	Abductors	Number of Cases
Neighbors	4	Neighbors	6
Babysitters	12	Babysitters	2
Friend of family	29	Friend of family	12
Child's acquaintance	18	Child's acquaintance	9
Authority figure	7	Authority figure	1
Parents/grandparents of child's playmate	2	Parents/grandparents of child's playmate	2
Former assailant/revictimizing child	7	Babysitter's friend	1

common definitions, and consistent reporting of missing children.

Hidden Victims

Child psychologist Robert L. Geiser (1979) observed in his introduction to *Hidden Victims* that “social problems have an uncanny ability to survive most attempts to remedy them. Their first line of defense is to hide from public awareness and then later to spring onto the scene as full-blown crises.”

Today, America has awakened to the problem of missing and exploited children. As Daniel J. Travanti observed in “How to Raise a Street Smart Child” (1987), “Ignorance scares a child more than knowledge does.” The challenge is to create awareness of the risk faced by children and to avoid incomplete or inaccurate messages.



NISMART provides an important starting point for understanding the full range of the problem. Armed with a more accurate picture of those who victimize children, we can provide more effective information to families to help parents keep their children safe.

Rhetoric Versus Reality

For generations, our fundamental messages to children have contained three basic premises.

◆ **“Don’t take candy from strangers.”** As indicated above, in at least two of three cases, the offender is not a stranger in the mind of the child. Usually, the victim and offender know each other, at least casually. Child molesters often seek legitimate access to children and then victimize them through a process similar to seduction. This reality does not make the message wrong, only grossly inadequate in providing protection for children, who need more comprehensive information about the dangers they are far more likely to face.

◆ **“Don’t be a tattletale.”** One of the most stigmatizing names that a child can be called is tattletale. From their earliest moments, we consciously and subconsciously encourage children not to communicate. Thousands of children are hidden victims, and the key to prevention and detection is communication. Children must be taught that if something is happening in their lives that they do not feel right about or that makes them feel uncomfortable, they must tell somebody they trust.

◆ **“You’re just a kid. Be respectful to adults; they know what they’re doing.”** With this final message, we face a delicate challenge. All parents want their children to be polite and respectful to adults. Our message is not that we want children to

be disrespectful, but that we must empower them to realize that they have the right to say no to those who would abuse their authority as adults. As educational consultant Stephanie Meeghan aptly expresses during many of the training sessions for teachers that she has held since 1988, “We must make children aware that their safety is more important than good manners.”

Combating Fear With Facts

America’s families need not live in fear, but parents need to be fully informed about the dangers their children face and the most effective ways to educate them and guard them from harm. The key to child safety is communication. Children should recognize that “strangers” often do not look strange, and parents should recognize that most abductions and assaults involve an offender and victim who know each other. The exaggerated fears of “stranger danger” generated by lurid tabloid headlines need to be replaced with solid facts garnered from serious research.

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JUSTICE MATTERS

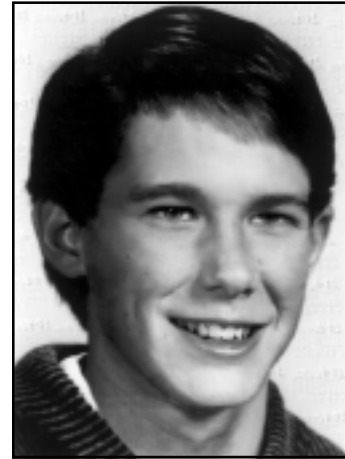
Never Forget

by Patty Wetterling

Jacob Wetterling was kidnaped on October 22, 1989, by a masked gunman while biking home from a convenience store with his brother and his best friend. He is still missing. Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother, has worked to bring together nonprofit organizations that assist families with missing children. Mrs. Wetterling and her husband, Jerry, established the Jacob Wetterling Foundation to promote awareness of missing children.



Jacob Wetterling at age 11.



*Age-enhanced photo of Jacob at age 19.
(Courtesy of NCMEC)*

This is my son—you have to find him! Please help. When children are stolen, it's worse than a nightmare. It never goes away. Your world is turned inside out and upside down. Your relationship with everything and everybody is changed. Some pieces may come back over time, but you are never completely whole again.

I found other parents going through similar tragedies and I'd shake my head in disbelief. This can't be. There can't be two missing children. Then I'd meet another . . . and another. When I found out the real numbers, I shuddered. What has happened to our children? Where are they? Who's doing this? How can we find them? What can we do to stop other families from having to go through this?

Statistics are necessary when evaluating the problem, but we can never get numbed by the numbers. It is vital that we remember that children are not statistics or case files. They are cherished and missed—we search desperately to bring them back to rebuild their little lives, and the

lives of all who were touched by their disappearance.

Most parents of missing children experience a split in their lives, a schism. A "before and after." Before Jacob's abduction I was a stay-at-home mom, contented with the full-time job of parenting four children. When he was stolen, a huge hole was left in my heart, one that never heals because it is constantly reopened. Every anniversary date, every time a child molester is caught, every significant lead or the weeks with no significant leads, we revisit what happened. I hurt all over when another child is taken anywhere in the country because I know the pain and the fear. Though we march forward and try to pick up the pieces, and life goes on all around us, our lives are forever changed.

I remember how I loved birthdays and all the special attention devoted to each of my children on their very

own day. We focused on their favorite food, their friends and their favorite activity. With Jacob's birthday in February, we would take a break from the Minnesota cold and rent a suite at the Holiday Inn. He'd invite all his friends to swim and play basketball, ping-pong, and pool. We'd eat sloppy joes, but we called them sloppy Jakes. I prided myself on my designer cakes with hockey players or a *Dukes of Hazzard* car. He'd make a wish, blow out the candles, and they'd fall asleep watching a movie. It was all so much fun.

Jake's birthday is coming up and now I dread the significance of the day. Instead of celebrating, we have to look at how old he is now and wonder: What's he like? Does he remember? Will we find him? I still bake a cake, but I never blow out a candle without a special wish and a tear.

It's not something that "happened" 8 years ago or however long it's

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been for other parents. It's the day all of our lives changed. Most of us struggle with our marriages or other relationships. We hurt for the other children, who either don't understand or who, all of a sudden, know too much—way beyond their years. We ask questions, we live off support from everyone. We survive what used to be joyous occasions. We pass through periods of depression, anger, excitement, and hope, and we make a promise. We don't become parents for a little while or just until something bad happens. It's a lifetime commitment. We fight many battles for our children; this one is just extremely difficult. We can't quit. We owe them a future.

The very nature of having a missing child leaves many people feeling helpless, and powerless. However, we believe that there is a lot that can be done, and we need everybody to help. We need to share what we

have learned about child safety. We need to talk to our children. We know that kids can come home if we don't give up on them. We need everyday citizens to report suspicious situations involving children, to call the police.

If we're ever going to stop the kidnappings, we are going to have to stop the child molesters. We need citizens to file charges every time. We need every law enforcement agency to have a plan of action in case a child is taken, and we need an across-the-board cooperative effort in studying these cases. Working together with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and with OJJDP law enforcement training programs, we can see the bigger picture of who takes these kids and how to get them back home. We need a commitment from everyone in this country that we are not going to tolerate the victimization of chil-

dren. We can all be the eyes and ears protecting children. We need to remember that we are fighting for the lives of our missing children and there can be no lessening of our commitment, no matter how long it takes.

I received a special poem from a second grader after Jacob's kidnapping. She wrote this on the back of the missing flier we had distributed:

This song is to Jacob and Mom and Dad, it's called I love you. I love you Jacob, but I can't come give you a hug. But one thing I can do is find you in my heart and hold you.

Your friend, Molly

Please hold our missing children in your hearts, until we can hold them in our arms again.

Never forget. Never give up. You are our greatest hope.

National Missing Children's Day Raises Awareness

On May 25, 1979, Etan Patz vanished from the streets of New York City on his way to school. A massive search effort followed, with national media coverage that focused on the lack of information and resources to locate and recover missing children.

The Missing Children Act of 1982 was the first Federal law to address this issue. The Act authorized the entry of missing children reports into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Crime Information Center data base. Two years later, the Missing Children's



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Assistance Act established OJJDP's Missing and Exploited Children's Program.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25 as National Missing Children's Day. In each of the past 15 years, family and friends of missing children have joined together to plan events in commu-

nities across America to raise public awareness about the issue of missing children and the need to address this national problem.

Since May 25, 1979, many more children have disappeared from their homes. However, Federal actions to provide resources, training, and technical assistance to State

and local law enforcement have increased the chances that some of these children will be found and returned home safely. National Missing Children's Day reminds this country not to forget the children who are still missing and not to falter in the effort to reunite them with their families.

International Child Abduction Agreement Is Signed

On January 29, 1998, OJJDP, the U.S. Department of State's Office of Children's Issues, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) entered into an interagency agreement on international child abduction. This agreement marks the third year of cooperation on this vital issue. The agreement enables NCMEC to provide services to assist the U.S. Central Authority (State Department) in carrying out this Nation's responsibilities under the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. (In each country, the agency responsible for international child abductions under the Hague Convention is referred to as the Central Authority.) NCMEC assists in locating and recovering children illegally removed from their families and brought to the United States.

Once the child is located, NCMEC facilitates the return of the child to the custodial parent or facilitates negotiation between parents and/or between parent and child, as appropriate.

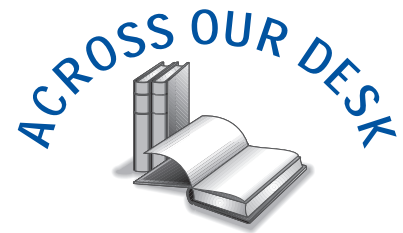
NCMEC, on behalf of the U.S. Central Authority, receives and reviews all potential cases and corresponds with other Central Authorities to update information on incoming cases. It also coordinates with State missing children clearinghouses on international child abduction cases to locate and recover a child who has been wrongfully removed to or kept in the United States. Other NCMEC services include legal technical assistance, parental support, poster creation and dissemination, international contacts, law enforcement liaison, age progression and reconstruction technology, and adminis-

trative support in making the arrangements necessary to secure the safe return of the child. OJJDP oversees and funds NCMEC's international child abduction activities.



International Child Abduction Agreement Signatories John Rabun (NCMEC), Ray Clore (State Department), and Shay Bilchik (OJJDP), January 29, 1998.

When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide



Each year an estimated 900,000 children are reported missing. Most of them have run away or have been abducted by family members. Some of these children return home safely. Others are found murdered. Some never return home.

When a child is missing, the family is suddenly thrust into a life of fear, chaos, confusion, and isolation. Many families do not know where to turn for help. They do not know whom to call, when to call, how to respond, what to do first, or what to expect. Most families feel that they have been left to their own devices.

Earlier this year, OJJDP's Missing and Exploited Children's (MEC) Program¹ convened a working group to address this critical need for information. Parents of missing children, law enforcement professionals, representatives from State missing children clearinghouses, and staff of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children helped compile information families need so that it can be available when they need it most. Written by those who have experienced and witnessed firsthand the trauma of a missing child, *When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide* contains specific guidance to help parents weather the initial crisis and endure the long-term pain.

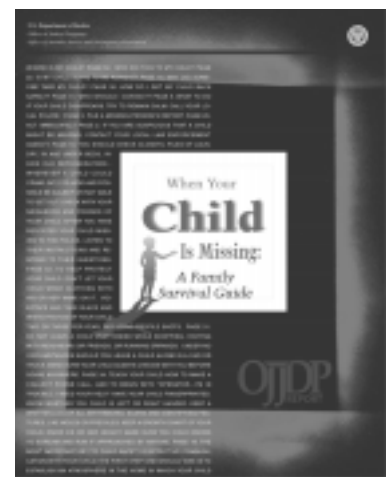
The *Guide* is meant to remove some of the mystery and fear that accompany a child's absence. It tells families what they can expect when their child is missing and how they can build positive, solid working relationships with law enforcement, the media, volunteers, and others. It also gives parents and family members practical ideas and specific recommendations on how to cope during this traumatic time. Each section examines both short-term and long-term issues and includes a checklist and summary for later reference. These features make it easy for the reader to locate or return to material on specific topics.

Because the first 48 hours are the most critical in finding a missing child, the introduction discusses what parents should do immediately after discovering that their child is missing. The next seven sections focus on various aspects of the search for—and recovery of—the missing child. The first two sections describe the different types of searches and stress the need for close cooperation with law enforcement. The next two are devoted to the dissemination of information and photographs of the missing child. The fifth and sixth sections address the role of volunteers and the use of rewards and donations. The final section looks at personal and family consid-

erations. Other helpful features include recommended readings; a list of additional resources, including phone numbers and contact information; and profiles of the parent authors.

Families' lives are turned upside down by the tragic loss of a child. In the *Guide*, parents who have lost a child reach out with both advice and encouragement to help families survive this terrible ordeal. The *Guide* provides parents with essential information and resources at a time of great need and confusion and offers encouragement to families as they continue to search for their missing children.

¹The MEC Program provides leadership and support for programs, activities, and initiatives on behalf of America's missing and exploited children.



New Portable Guides to Investigating Child Abuse



OJJDP developed its award-winning series of Portable Guides to provide guidelines for

investigating child abuse and neglect in a practical, easy-to-use format. The guides use straightforward, uncomplicated language, bulleted lists, tables, charts, checklists, and sample forms to present information useful not only to law enforcement, but to social workers, prosecutors, and all other professionals involved in cases of child victimization. The original 11 guides in the series cover a wide range of topics, including physical abuse and homicide, burn injuries, child neglect and Munchausen syndrome by proxy, sexual abuse and exploitation, sexually transmitted diseases, diagnostic imaging, photodocumentation, and techniques for interviewing children. In response to the demand from the field for the Portable Guides, OJJDP is expanding the series. Two new guides are slated to be published within the next few months: *Use of Computers in the Sexual Exploitation of Children* and *Forming a Multidisciplinary Team To Investigate Child Abuse*.

The first of these guides addresses the challenges of investigating cases of child sexual exploitation that involve computers. The rapid development of computer technology has given sexual offenders who prey on children a new means of access to their intended victims and has complicated the efforts of law enforcement to apprehend these criminals. *Use of Computers in the Sexual Exploitation of Children* begins with a discussion of the behavioral characteristics of sexual exploiters of children and of how these traits manifest

themselves in the use of computers. The next section offers guidelines for investigating these offenders, including advice on handling and analyzing the suspect's computer system. The guide concludes with a detailed discussion of the legal considerations that apply to the search and seizure of computer systems, with particular attention to search warrants.

The importance of using a multidisciplinary team approach when investigating crimes against children is addressed in several of the original

Titles in This Series

To obtain a copy of any of the guides listed below, contact OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse by telephone at 800-638-8736 or through the Internet at askncjrs@ncjrs.org.

Use of Computers in the Sexual Exploitation of Children, NCJ 170021

Forming a Multidisciplinary Team To Investigate Child Abuse, NCJ 170020

Recognizing When a Child's Injury or Illness Is Caused by Abuse, NCJ 160938

Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Child Sexual Abuse, NCJ 160940

Photodocumentation in the Investigation of Child Abuse, NCJ 160939

Diagnostic Imaging of Child Abuse, NCJ 161235

Battered Child Syndrome: Investigating Physical Abuse and Homicide, NCJ 161406

Interviewing Child Witnesses and Victims of Sexual Abuse, NCJ 161623

Child Neglect and Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy, NCJ 161841

Criminal Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse, NCJ 162426

Burn Injuries in Child Abuse, NCJ 162424

Law Enforcement Response to Child Abuse, NCJ 162425

Understanding and Investigating Child Sexual Exploitation, NCJ 162427

Portable Guides. *Forming a Multidisciplinary Team To Investigate Child Abuse* discusses the need for the team approach in greater depth and offers guidelines for establishing and maintaining a multidisciplinary team. This guide covers the process of bringing team members together, developing a mission statement and

investigative protocol, and evaluating the team. It also considers dealing with conflict within the team, promoting teamwork, and preventing burnout.

For more information on the Portable Guides series, see *Portable Guides to Investigating Child Abuse: An Over-*

view. This OJJDP Bulletin describes the series, offers a synopsis of each of the original 11 guides, and provides information on resources for training and technical assistance in handling child maltreatment cases. Use the order form to request a copy of the Bulletin.

Federal Resources on Missing and Exploited Children—Update Available

In February 1998, OJJDP released the revised edition of *Federal Resources on Missing and Exploited Children: A Directory for Law Enforcement and Other Public and Private Agencies*. First published in 1996, the *Directory* is a product of the Federal Agency Task Force for Missing and Exploited Children, composed of representatives from the U.S. Departments of Defense,

Education, Health and Human Services, Justice, State, and Treasury; the U.S. Postal Service; and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The mission of the task force is to coordinate Federal resources and services to effectively address the needs of missing, abducted, and exploited children and their families.

The purpose of the *Directory* is to support practitioners with information on resources, technical assistance, and services available to them in investigating cases involving child sexual exploitation, child pornography, child abductions, and missing children. The *Directory* covers a broad range of topics, ranging from access to specialized forensic resources for a child abduction case to proactive training and prevention programs.

The *Directory* describes the role of each task force agency in the location and recovery of missing and exploited children, and it includes

contact information for accessing the services available from these agencies and from other organizations. The section “Where To Get Help” is organized by types of assistance offered (such as training, technical assistance, and litigation assistance) and by groups to whom assistance is provided (such as missing and exploited youth and their families, Federal prosecutors, State and local prosecutors, nonprofit organizations, and the general public). A particularly useful feature is the inclusion of telephone cards that can be removed and kept onhand for quick reference.

Every agency that works with missing and exploited children cases will find the *Directory* useful in its work to safeguard these young victims. Copies can be obtained from OJJDP’s Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, P.O. Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20849-6000. The toll-free number is 800-638-8736.



PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FREE.

Single copies are available free. There is a nominal fee for bulk orders to cover postage and handling. Contact the Clearinghouse for specific information.

- Adolescent Motherhood: Implications for the Juvenile Justice System* (Fact Sheet). FS 9750.
- Court Appointed Special Advocates: A Voice for Abused and Neglected Children in Court* (Bulletin). NCJ 164512.
- NEW** *Federal Resources on Missing and Exploited Children: A Directory for Law Enforcement and Other Public and Private Agencies*. NCJ 168962.
- NEW** *Forming a Multidisciplinary Team To Investigate Child Abuse* (Portable Guide). NCJ 170020
- In the Wake of Childhood Maltreatment* (Bulletin). NCJ 165257.
- Permanency Planning for Abused and Neglected Children* (Fact Sheet). FS 9765.
- Portable Guides to Investigating Child Abuse: An Overview* (Bulletin). NCJ 165153.
- Responsible Fatherhood* (Fact Sheet). FS 9773.
- Sharing Information: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Participation in Juvenile Justice Programs* (Report). NCJ 163705.
- NEW** *Use of Computers in the Sexual Exploitation of Children* (Portable Guide). NCJ 170021.
- Using Agency Records To Find Missing Children: A Guide for Law Enforcement* (Summary). NCJ 154633.
- NEW** *When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide* (Report). NCJ 170022.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR A FEE.

- NEW** *Protecting Children Online* Satellite Teleconference (Video, VHS format), NCJ 170023. \$17.00 (U.S.), \$21 (Canada and other countries).

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Publications From OJJDP

OJJDP produces a variety of publications that range from Fact Sheets and Bulletins to Summaries, Reports, and the *Juvenile Justice* journal along with videotapes, including broadcasts from the juvenile justice telecommunications initiative. The documents and videotapes are available through a variety of means, including hard copy and online through OJJDP's Web site and the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC). Fact Sheets and Bulletins are also available through Fax-on-Demand. To ensure timely notice of new publications, subscribe to JUVJUST, OJJDP's electronic mailing list. Contact information for the OJJDP Web site, JJC, and instructions for subscribing to JUVJUST are noted below. In addition, JJC, through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), is the repository for tens of thousands of criminal and juvenile justice publications and resources from around the world. They are abstracted and made available through a data base, which is searchable online (www.ncjrs.org/database.htm). You are also welcome to submit materials to JJC for inclusion in the data base.

The following list highlights popular and recently published OJJDP documents and videotapes, grouped by topical area.

Corrections and Detention

Beyond the Walls: Improving Conditions of Confinement for Youth in Custody. 1998, NCJ 164727 (116 pp.).

Boot Camps for Juvenile Offenders. 1997, NCJ 164258 (42 pp.).

Conditions of Confinement Teleconference (Video). 1993, NCJ 147531 (90 min.), \$14.00.

Effective Programs for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders Teleconference (Video). 1996, NCJ 160947 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Juvenile Arrests 1996. 1997, NCJ 167578 (12 pp.).

Juvenile Boot Camps Teleconference (Video). 1996, NCJ 160949 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Courts

Has the Juvenile Court Outlived Its Usefulness? Teleconference (Video). 1996, NCJ 163929 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Offenders in Juvenile Court, 1995. 1997, NCJ 167885 (12 pp.).

RESTTA National Directory of Restitution and Community Service Programs. 1998, NCJ 166365 (500 pp.), \$33.50.

Delinquency Prevention

1996 Report to Congress: Title V Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs. 1997, NCJ 165694 (100 pp.).

Allegheny County, PA: Mobilizing To Reduce Juvenile Crime. 1997, NCJ 165693 (12 pp.).

Combating Violence and Delinquency: The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan (Report). 1996, NCJ 157106 (200 pp.).

Combating Violence and Delinquency: The National Juvenile Justice Action Plan (Summary). 1996, NCJ 157105 (36 pp.).

Communities Working Together Teleconference (Video). 1996, NCJ 160946 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Keeping Young People in School: Community Programs That Work. 1997, NCJ 162783 (12 pp.).

Mentoring—A Proven Delinquency Prevention Strategy. 1997, NCJ 164834 (8 pp.).

Mentoring for Youth in Schools and Communities Teleconference (Video). 1997, NCJ 166376 (120 min.), \$17.00

Mobilizing Communities To Prevent Juvenile Crime. 1997, NCJ 165928 (8 pp.).

Reaching Out to Youth Out of the Education Mainstream. 1997, NCJ 163920 (12 pp.).

Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders. 1998, NCJ 170027 (8 pp.).

Treating Serious Anti-Social Behavior in Youth: The MST Approach. 1997, NCJ 165151 (8 pp.).

Youth Out of the Education Mainstream Teleconference (Video). 1996, NCJ 163386 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Youth-Oriented Community Policing Teleconference (Video). 1996, NCJ 160947 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Gangs

1995 National Youth Gang Survey. 1997, NCJ 164728 (41 pp.).

Gang Members and Delinquent Behavior. 1997, NCJ 165154 (6 pp.).

Youth Gangs in America Teleconference (Video). 1997, NCJ 164937 (120 min.), \$17.00.

General Juvenile Justice

Comprehensive Juvenile Justice in State Legislatures Teleconference (Video). 1998, NCJ 169593 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Guidelines for the Screening of Persons Working With Children, the Elderly, and Individuals With Disabilities in Need of Support. 1998, NCJ 167248 (52 pp.).

Juvenile Justice, Volume III, Number 2. 1997, NCJ 165925 (32 pp.).

Juvenile Justice, Volume IV, Number 2. 1997, NCJ 166823 (28 pp.).

Juvenile Justice, Volume V, Number 1. 1998, NCJ 170025 (32 pp.).

Juvenile Justice Reform Initiatives in the States 1994–1996. 1997, NCJ 165697 (81 pp.).

A Juvenile Justice System for the 21st Century. 1998, NCJ 169726 (8 pp.).

Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1997 Update on Violence. 1997, NCJ 165703 (32 pp.).

Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A National Report. 1995, NCJ 153569 (188 pp.).

Sharing Information: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Participation in Juvenile Justice Programs. 1997, NCJ 163705 (52 pp.).

Missing and Exploited Children

Court Appointed Special Advocates: A Voice for Abused and Neglected Children in Court. 1997, NCJ 164512 (4 pp.).

Federal Resources on Missing and Exploited Children: A Directory for Law Enforcement and Other Public and Private Agencies. 1997, NCJ 168962 (156 pp.).

In the Wake of Childhood Maltreatment. 1997, NCJ 165257 (16 pp.).

Portable Guides to Investigating Child Abuse: An Overview. 1997, NCJ 165153 (8 pp.).

When Your Child Is Missing: A Family Survival Guide. 1998, NCJ 170022 (96 pp.).

Status Offenders

Curfew: An Answer to Juvenile Delinquency and Victimization? 1996, NCJ 159533 (12 pp.).

Truancy: First Step to a Lifetime of Problems. 1996, NCJ 161958 (8 pp.).

Substance Abuse

Beyond the Bench: How Judges Can Help Reduce Juvenile DUI and Alcohol and Other Drug

Violations (Video and discussion guide). 1996, NCJ 162357 (16 min.), \$17.00.

Capacity Building for Juvenile Substance Abuse Treatment. 1997, NCJ 167251 (12 pp.).

Drug Identification and Testing in the Juvenile Justice System. 1998, NCJ 167889 (92 pp.).

Juvenile Offenders and Drug Treatment: Promising Approaches Teleconference (Video). 1997, NCJ 168617 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Preventing Drug Abuse Among Youth Teleconference (Video). 1997, NCJ 165583 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Violence and Victimization

Child Development—Community Policing: Partnership in a Climate of Violence. 1997, NCJ 164380 (8 pp.).

Combating Fear and Restoring Safety in Schools. 1998, NCJ 167888 (16 pp.).

Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth-Serving Organizations, and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings. 1996, NCJ 160935 (134 pp.).

Conflict Resolution for Youth Teleconference (Video). 1996, NCJ 161416 (150 min.), \$17.00.

Developmental Pathways in Boys' Disruptive and Delinquent Behavior. 1997, NCJ 165692 (20 pp.).

Epidemiology of Serious Violence. 1997, NCJ 165152 (12 pp.).

Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders. 1995, NCJ 153571 (6 pp.).

Reducing Youth Gun Violence Teleconference (Video). 1996, NCJ 162421 (120 min.), \$17.00.

Youth in Action

Planning a Successful Crime Prevention Project. 1998, NCJ 170024 (28 pp.).

The *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Brochure* (1996, NCJ 144527 (23 pp.)) offers more information about the agency.

The *OJJDP Publications List* (BC000115) offers a complete list of OJJDP publications and is also available online.

Through OJJDP's Clearinghouse, these publications and other information and resources are as close as your phone, fax, computer, or mailbox.

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Mark Your Calendars

Planning for OJJDP's Second National Conference is under way. The conference will be held at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, D.C., December 10–12, 1998. Check the OJJDP Web site for the latest conference news and details (www.ncjrs.org/nconf98.htm).

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