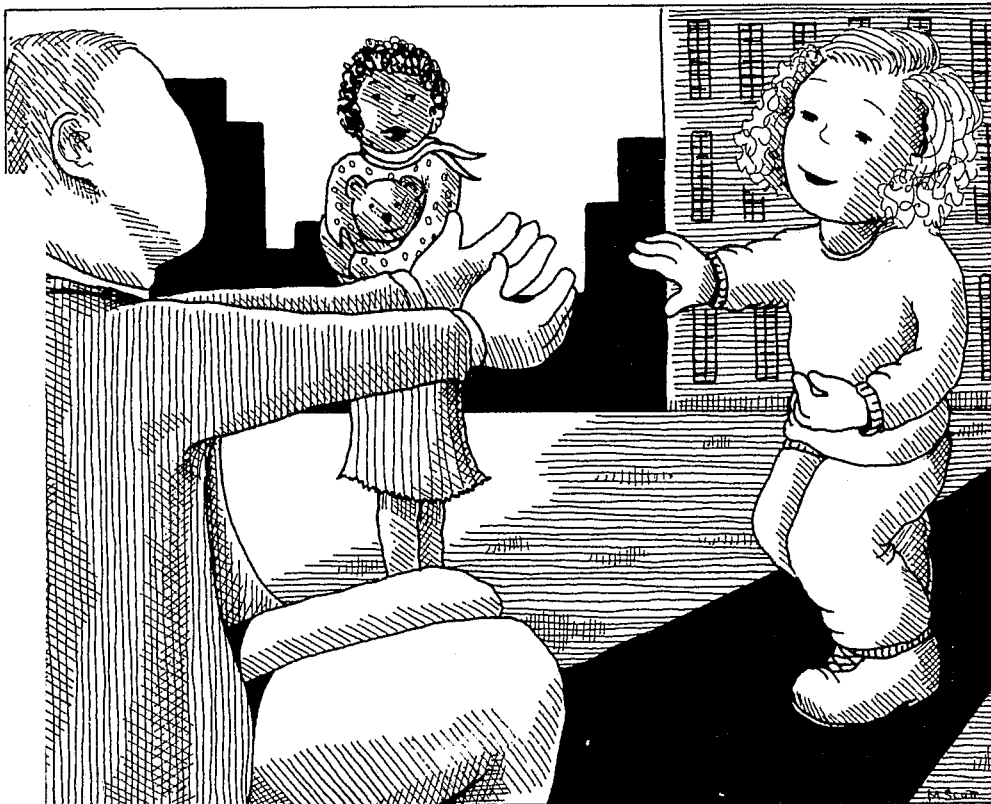


NATIONAL  
CENTER FOR  
**MISSING  
& EXPLOITED**  
CHILDREN

# Nonprofit Service Provider's Handbook

## Building an Effective Organization Serving Missing and Exploited Children and Their Families



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# **Nonprofit Service Provider's Handbook**

**Building an Effective Organization  
Serving Missing and Exploited Children  
and Their Families**

**March 1990**

**NCJRS**  
**FEB 12 1993**  
**ACQUISITIONS**

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# A Message to the Reader

MY CHILD IS MISSING! Possibly the four most frightening words ever spoken by a parent. For with these words comes the unraveling of a family's world. The trauma they will experience is something that will tear at the very fabric of each belief they hold dear. For theirs is the realization that even in a sophisticated society such as ours, children are not spared from the anguish of becoming statistics.

MISSING CHILDREN: Each of us has heard and read these words countless times. Each of us has wondered what our lives would be like if our child were missing, and each of us has been touched by the pain and anguish experienced by the parents of a missing child. We wonder how they survive. How they can face another day without knowing if their child is alive and well. And we wonder who will help them through this crisis—a crisis that for many will last for years. A crisis that many years ago was often endured alone. A crisis that destroyed marriages and created psychological problems for the remaining children in the home. A crisis that for many years was thought to be the problem of the "other person."

There were, however, those individuals who understood early on that child victimization is something that can touch each of us. They were the visionaries—those who knew that with commitment and determination, the missing child issue would be looked upon as a serious one. They knew that their early work would not go unrewarded but would replicate itself through the interest and commitment of others who shared the same vision. These individuals were the first founders of the nonprofit organizations (NPOs) dedicated to providing quality services to the families of missing children. Many of these individuals were parents who had missing children. What each of them brought to this issue is in evidence today as we examine the increased role of both the federal and local governments and witness the hundreds of dedi-

cated volunteers and professionals throughout the country.

It is due to these early efforts that more than one hundred nonprofit missing and exploited child organizations are in existence today. It is to this group of visionaries that the *Nonprofit Service Provider's Handbook* is dedicated.

The *Nonprofit Service Provider's Handbook* is a compilation of the NPOs' vast experience and knowledge. The individual interested in starting a nonprofit missing or exploited child organization will find a complete guide for creating the organization—choosing a Board of Directors, raising funds, working with law-enforcement, legislative advocacy, and much, much more. Those already involved in an organization will find such invaluable information as keeping the organization going, improving services to families and children, and working more effectively with the media.

This handbook is the result of a combined effort of more than a dozen experts in the missing and exploited child issue. It was created to help existing nonprofit organizations survive and continue to expand and improve their services to families of missing and exploited children. It was developed to help budding organizations learn from the experiences of their peers. Further, it provides those committed to protecting children with the information and advice they need to turn their ideas, hopes, wishes, and dreams into reality.

A few notes on the text itself: This handbook is designed as a series of instructive essays by individual experts on the many aspects of building a nonprofit organization serving families of missing or exploited children. Not all their advice and experience will apply to every service provider reading the book. There will undoubtedly be a number of variations based upon the size and location of the nonprofit organi-

zation and the clients served. A current list of nonprofit service providers is available from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

In order to preserve each author's distinctive stamp of individuality, the *Nonprofit Service Provider's Handbook* has retained the authors' terms as much as possible. Hence, there are three different terms, essentially interchangeable, that are used to describe the nonprofit organization: *NPO* (nonprofit organization), *NSP* (nonprofit service provider), and *CBO* (community-based organization). Regardless of the terms used, however, organizations that work

on behalf of missing children and their families are, in the truest sense of the words, missing children service providers. They fulfill the same functions and duties as do their counterparts in the fields serving runaway children and other crisis populations, and they should be credited with a title that acknowledges their place in the human services arena.

Marsha Gilmer, M.S.S.W.  
National Center for  
Missing and Exploited Children

# Introduction

Beginning as early as 1974, organizations have been providing a variety of services to families of missing and exploited children. Created prior to the overwhelming nationwide attention to the issue of missing children with the passage of the Missing Children Act of 1982 and the Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984, these organizations were typically formed by people who were, in some way, personally involved with a missing child. The organizations were most often staffed by dedicated volunteers and operated on a very small budget, and their services were typically limited to one "type" of case. Newspapers, television, and radio soon began carrying the news of missing children, and the general public took the issue to heart; many people responded by deciding to form new nonprofit organizations.

Unfortunately, there was no one place to obtain comprehensive information about starting and operating a nonprofit agency to serve missing and exploited children and their families. Many of the new organizations were formed without regard to the needs of their own communities or states; as a result, some opened and closed in short order. Some operated for a short time but were unable to continue because they lacked the backing of a solid Board of Directors, or they missed fundamental steps in the development of their service or fund-raising plan.

The purpose of the *Nonprofit Service Provider's*

*Handbook* is to aid concerned citizens in forming and operating an effective agency to serve missing and exploited children and their families. It is a collaboration of more than a dozen experts in the United States in the provision of services. Although our services and some of our basic philosophies may differ, we share a common mission: to help find missing children and to help keep children safe.

Those of you who have decided to form an organization have accepted a large responsibility. As the founder, you must take the proper steps to ensure that your organization is the best that it can be. Even more, you must work to guarantee that "your" organization can function just as well without you! The collaborators of this book encourage you to learn from our mistakes . . . we hope you will find this information a worthy template for the work you have ahead.

As founder of Services for the Missing, Inc., an agency providing services since 1984, I appreciate this opportunity to welcome you to the field. There is a new spirit of cooperation in this cause we hold dear, and I look forward to working with you as you develop the services that arise from our common mission.

Nikolette Thoman  
Gibbsboro, New Jersey  
March 1990



# 1. The Nonprofit Service Provider

*Nikolette Thoman  
Services for the Missing, Inc.*

## **A Working Definition**

A *nonprofit service provider (NSP)* is best defined as any nonprofit organization that provides a necessary service to missing or exploited children or on behalf of the families of missing or exploited children, including those agencies that provide education programs to help prevent abduction and sexual exploitation of children.

## **First Steps**

**The Board of Directors** Any organization that forms to provide a human service needs to establish a working Board of Directors. The number of people on a Board may be determined by state law on nonprofit incorporation, so be sure to check your own state statutes. A Board of Directors no smaller than five and no larger than twelve usually works best. The Board of Directors will select and hire a director or executive director for the NSP. Together, the Board and the director will be responsible for developing policies, bylaws, and budgets for the NSP and raising the funds needed to continue providing services. The director of the NSP will determine the specifics of the programs provided and will supervise the day-to-day activities of the organization.

The Board of Directors must be made up of people who are dedicated not only to the issue of missing and exploited children, but also to the development and continued operation of the NSP. They should have some business background and be able to commit sufficient hours per month to work on NSP tasks. It is a good idea to have parents of missing or exploited children (or parents in general) on the Board if possible; they have valid ideas to impart, and they help keep other Board members focused on the organization's mission.

**The Vision Statement** After deciding on a name and, if desired, a logo, the first task of the Board of Directors should be to write down a clear and concise statement of the organization's mission. Often called a *vision statement*, this philosophy will be used in all the NSP's publicity, grant writing, fund raising and, most important, in developing the agency's services. Obviously, a vision statement should be agreed upon by the director and the Board and should be developed as a group exercise. What works best for most organizations is to hold a meeting during which the Board members "brainstorm," and the suggestions of all members are written down. From that long list, the group works together to develop their unique vision statement.

For example, following is the vision statement from Services for the Missing, Inc.: "Services for the Missing . . . Uniting the Divided Family. Services for the Missing, Inc., was established in 1984 to act as a linkage between families of the missing and existing systems, in a cooperative effort to reunite the missing and their families. In addition, the agency is dedicated to the provision of valid information regarding missing adults, parental abductions, stranger abductions, and runaway youth."

**Bylaws** Corporations function by bylaws as provided in state law. After determining the NSP's mission or vision statement, the Board of Directors and the director should work together to develop bylaws for the organization. Bylaws accomplish the following: 1) govern the organization's Board of Directors; 2) state the mission of the organization; 3) set out the composition of the Board; 4) determine the election cycle of the Board; 5) specify the responsibilities and job descriptions of the members; 6) determine how often the Board will meet (a minimum may be set by individual state statutes); and 7) contain a provision for dissolution of the organization. This provision is

required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to gain federal tax exemption.

After the bylaws are completed, the Board should proceed with the incorporation of the NSP and with application to the IRS for federal tax exemption. You may want to get a lawyer to donate services to help you incorporate, draft the bylaws, and make the initial filing.

**Background Research** The Board and the director should work simultaneously on several other tasks. Each of the following must be determined:

1. What is the geographic area to be served by the NSP? Will the organization serve the local community, a portion of a state, the whole of a state, or the nation as a whole?
2. What are the service needs of the people in that area? This is best accomplished by researching back issues of newspapers and speaking to other agencies and police departments. Are there more parental abductions than non-family abductions in that area? Is there a need for prevention programs? The information gathered in this research will determine the service plan.
3. What are the media contacts in that area? The media will be invaluable to the NSP, both in its formation and in its continued success. It is important to make a list of the names and addresses of the key media contacts for newspapers, local television, and radio. As the research is completed, an effort should be made to meet some of these people personally. Ask what they look for in a good story. Further, ask them if they will cover the official opening of the new NSP.
4. How will the organization raise funds to continue its operation? One of the harsh realities of providing services is the constant need for funds. There may be salaries and employer taxes to pay; there will be phone bills, equipment needs, postage, printing, and travel costs. How will the organization raise the money? Will there be a fee for services? Are projected expenses low enough to count on the contributions of local, community fund raisers? Does the Board have access to a grant writer or someone who has experience in large fund-raising efforts? In any case, be sure to check individual state statutes. Many municipalities, counties, and/or states require a state or local ordinance to solicit or raise more than a specified amount of funds in a year.

After these tasks are completed, the NSP is ready to begin planning for actual provision of services. At this point, the Board should also be busy ordering stationery and obtaining the equipment necessary to operate the organization. Fund raising and grant writing should already be underway and should be

recognized as an ongoing part of the Board's work.

## Setting Up the Nonprofit Service Provider

**Service Plan** Typically, the executive director drafts a plan for services and seeks the approval of the Board of Directors. The first step in planning services is an initial evaluation. Keep in mind that the services of the organization will continue to change according to the demand for services. To develop an initial service plan, start with an evaluation of the research that was undertaken as part of the Board's first steps.

Does the research indicate that there are more parental abductions than non-family abductions in the geographic area targeted for services? If so, the NSP should focus on meeting the needs of the parents and victims of parental abduction. Are there fewer abductions but more runaways reported? If so, then the needs of these families and youths should be the focus of services. The group of people the NSP focuses on is called the target population.

After determining the exact service area and the target population, the service plan should detail the specific services that will be provided. Currently, case and other services offered by missing and exploited child service providers across the country include 1) prevention and education; 2) identification; 3) family services; 4) resources/referrals; 5) legislative advocacy; 6) poster/picture dissemination; 7) assistance in sexual abuse and exploitation cases; 8) support groups; 9) emergency funds; and 10) active casework. Active casework may be provided for one or all of the following: non-family abductions, family abductions, and runaways. Active casework services may include search and location guidance, recovery assistance, system guidance, case publicity, aid in enforcement of court orders, counseling, and referrals.

The service plan should state each specific service and include a full explanation of what that service will provide. If search and recovery assistance are part of the NSP's services, the service plan for casework may be a part of the training manual for staff. In any case, a comprehensive service plan is essential in developing the NSP's training manual.

**Case Management Plan** If the NSP will be providing actual case services—*i.e.*, providing search and location assistance to parents of missing children—then a case management plan must also be developed. A case management plan specifically states the way individual cases will be handled. It is useful to compare the handling of sensitive missing or exploited child cases to the handling of emergency room cases at the hospital. The prioritization of cases, a

process called *triage* in the hospital, may be necessary. In other words, in some cases, you may simply intake a case over the phone. In more serious emergencies, you may have to visit the family immediately.

Cases at one NSP are governed by the following plan:

1. *Intaking a case.* Request for aid is made by victim parent or other person. Request is fully detailed on an agency contact sheet. Questionnaire and additional information are sent to caller. When questionnaire is returned, an active case is opened. If questionnaire is not returned within four weeks, make two attempts to contact the caller. If the questionnaire is not returned within an additional two weeks, file the contact sheet as a "service request."
2. *Establishing a case.* When questionnaire is returned, a caseworker is assigned. The case is entered in the agency casebook or other case record and assigned a case number, and then the caseworker evaluates the questionnaire. After the evaluation is reviewed by the supervisor, the case is "worked" according to the service plan.
3. *Working a case.* The case is actively worked on, according to the service plan, at least biweekly, and more often as information is received. Clients are contacted at least monthly to check in and to ask if they have received any additional information. If the client is emotionally distraught, calls or letters should go out more frequently.
4. *Closing a case.* After the missing child is located and recovered, or the case has been otherwise resolved, the case is closed. The case is marked as closed in the casebook, and the file is marked and filed. Any original photographs or other personal effects in the file are returned to the client. A final documentation of services provided is sent to the client as well.
5. *Aftercare.* Callbacks or follow-up letters should be made at the end of the following periods: 30 days, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year. Should re-abduction occur, the case will be reopened and so marked. If the need for counseling arises, the client is referred to a counseling agency or the United Way in the area.

The Vanished Children's Alliance created a handbook in 1988 called *Missing Child Case Protocol*, which provides a suggested procedure for missing children cases and includes the forms reproduced in the Appendix. (For a copy of the entire *Missing Child Case Protocol*, write the Vanished Children's Alliance at 1407 Parkmoor Avenue, Suite 200, San Jose, California 95126.)

**Fees** Whether or not the NSP decides to charge a fee for services, a fee structure should be developed. Very often, clients can afford to pay for services and are willing to do so. One NSP requests a \$50 donation at the inception of a case (the request is included in the initial mailing). The donation is not mandatory, and the work on a case is not affected by the donation. At the closing of each case, or intermittently for long-term cases, Services for the Missing, Inc., sends a detailed list of casework services, making it clear that the listing is not a bill for services. The fee structure often results in donations from clients who can afford them.

The fee structure is also essential for documenting service costs to potential funding sources and for illustrating costs of services in fund-raising drives.

**Documentation** Documentation is an important step in any service organization. The statistics that are developed by evaluating the services provided in a given period will be used by the NSP for a variety of purposes, among them 1) ongoing evaluation of the service needs of the target population; 2) reports to the IRS and other authorities; 3) reports to funding sources; and 4) as a basis for publicity campaigns.

Both for documentation and for ongoing service provision, it will be necessary to develop or otherwise obtain a variety of forms for use in the NSP's work. Comprehensive forms are given in the Appendix. If the NSP chooses not to use these forms, which were developed by the Vanished Children's Alliance, it is recommended that forms from another agency be used as examples.

Each call that comes into the NSP should be recorded on an intake sheet or contact sheet. This sheet should indicate the date of the call; the caseworker's name or initials; the name, address, and telephone number of the caller; and a detailed description of the caller's request. The steps outlined in the case management plan should be followed for each call received.

On a quarterly basis, these contact sheets should be evaluated. A log book should be kept with columns identifying each service provided by the organization. This log book is used to count the requests for each type of service. These quarterly totals are added at the end of the fiscal year and become the basis for the organization's annual report.

## Staffing and Training

Whether the work of the NSP is done by volunteers or by paid employees, the executive director must view the workers as "staff." Staff must be recruited, interviewed, reviewed, retained and, sometimes, terminated. The executive director is typically respon-

sible for handling and supervising all staff-related matters.

The first step in staffing an NSP is to develop staff materials. What will each member of the staff do? What is the line of responsibility? The director and the Board, or a committee of the Board, should develop a personnel manual, which states that the organization is an affirmative action employer, outlines the job descriptions of each staff member, and includes the staff chart.

The personnel manual should also contain the organization's code of ethics. While there is currently no code of ethics that is uniformly adopted by NSPs, individual organizations should establish their own code. It is necessary to state the position of the NSP in many areas, such as referrals to private investigators and attorneys, the confidentiality policy that governs case publicity and the discussion of cases by staff, and the use of materials from other organizations.

After the staff materials are completed, the NSP must recruit workers. Good methods for recruiting staff members for an NSP are through the media and other organizations. If the media research was successfully accomplished, local newspapers and radio stations will most likely publicize the NSP's search for workers. Send announcements to the local Chamber of Commerce, senior citizens' clubs, and all local libraries.

The services of an organization will largely determine the kinds of skills that are required of the staff. An application for employment should be developed that includes space for all current information as well as a list of addresses for the last five years. The application must also include a background review form and a statement that the applicant gives permission to the NSP to conduct a background review to ensure that the applicant has never been convicted of a child-related crime. The form should be mailed to the police department in each city that the applicant resided.

After staff members are retained, it is necessary that they be trained. This training should be as focused and detailed as possible, especially in the area of active casework. It is imperative that a training manual be developed that a staff person can turn to at any time. The training manual should be tailored to the positions that the staff members fill and should include examples and explanations of forms used in the work, any referral lists they may require, copies of pertinent resources and legislation, and an explanation of the various services or organizations they will encounter in doing their work. An outline of the contents of the training packet for Services for the Missing, Inc., follows.

## Sample Training Packet for Casework Staff

- Description of NSP and dedication
- Step-by-step parental abduction casework training sheet
- *Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act of 1980\**
- *Missing Children Act of 1982\**
- *Missing Children's Assistance Act of 1984*
- *Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act*
- *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)\**
- Form for court filing for temporary custody
- Form for public notice of hearing (alternative method of service)
- Example of request/explanation to advocate activity
- Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) letter of explanation\* (Each state has a Parent Locator Service (PLS) that enforces support payments and helps search for abductors.)
- IRS letter-forwarding service (Check into Social Security Administration's letter-forwarding services for search.)
- Congressional committee list/path of legislation chart letter
- Office of Citizens Consular Services information regarding international parental abduction
- Sample poster for a missing child\*
- State-by-state listing of missing person clearinghouses\*\*
- State-by-state listing of related agencies
- State-by-state listing of nonprofit service providers\*\*
- Local listing of media outlets (television, newspaper, and radio)
- Sample intake, questionnaire, direction, and information forms

**One Step Closer to Home** All that remains to be done before opening the doors to the public is the development of information about the NSP. Using the vision statement as a base, the director should develop a fact sheet or other type of handout to describe the organization, its services, and its needs. Information should always include the organization's name, address, and telephone number and a statement that the NSP is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization (assuming the Board has completed these steps). These handouts will serve as the NSP's first introduction to the public.

\* Available in *Parental Kidnapping*, published by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (see \*\*).

\*\* Available by writing the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Publications Department, 2101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 550, Arlington, VA 22201.

## **Publicity**

Now it is time to write a press release to publicize the opening of the NSP. The press release should be typed double-spaced on letter-size stationery bearing the organization's name, address, and telephone number. In the left margin should be the date of release and the contact person's name and telephone number. Centered on the page should appear the headline, followed by the "who, what, where, when, and why" of the press release. The first release of the NSP should announce its opening and describe its services. If you have invited notable guests to an open house or plan to have a ceremony for the parents of missing or exploited children in the area, make that the focus of the press release. Send the release to local television and radio stations and newspapers at least fourteen days before the event. A few days after mailing, make a follow-up phone call and ask if they will carry a story about the event.

At the opening, be sure to take black-and-white pictures and mail them to local newspapers. Include captions and releases from anyone who appears in the photo.

After the initial coverage, the NSP will begin to receive requests for services, and the work begins in earnest. Publicity, however, should remain an ongoing activity. Whenever something noteworthy happens in the organization, the media should be contacted. This could include such milestones as the location of a child, the first one hundred people served, funding received, volunteers needed, or the release of new statistics.

To announce fund raisers or to reach out for volunteers, it is necessary to develop what is called a public service announcement, or PSA. The PSA is short, and should be no longer than sixty seconds in length, or less than two paragraphs, double-spaced. These should be directed to television, radio, and newspapers. The date of release should be stated, as well as the date the publicity for the announcement should cease. The contact name and phone number should be a part of the announcement, which should be brief and factual.

The director should develop a publicity plan, which should include regularly scheduled volunteer drives and updates to local media friends.

## 2. Needs of Missing Children and Their Families

*June Bucy*  
*National Network of Runaway and Youth Services*

Having the bonds of a family broken by a child's disappearance is an emotional experience for both the child and the other family members. If foul play is suspected, or if the child is young, the parents' emotions can be overwhelming and may almost immobilize them as they go about finding their child. Parents will also very likely be amazed at the response, or lack of response, by law-enforcement authorities to their problem. They will soon realize that they need assistance in taking the most effective steps toward recovery of their child.

If the missing child is an adolescent and the parents do not know whether the child has left voluntarily, has had an accident, or is an abduction victim, parents may feel similar emotions. They may find "the system" even less responsive. Police often assume that an adolescent has run away, that he will return on his own within a few hours, and that any listing of the child as a missing person will complicate their records because parents often forget to call back and report to the police when a runaway does return.

At these moments of confusion and uncertainty, the nonprofit organization (NPO) or community-based organization (CBO) may be of most assistance to parents. For parents to effectively use their services, the nonprofit service provider should maintain a public relations effort within the community so that the public, and particularly the professionals, can make appropriate referrals. Chapter 4 discusses the services an agency may wish to provide to assist in the recovery of children or in the prevention of missing children. This chapter deals with the personal needs of the children and their families.

Because the family dynamics are very different depending upon whether a child has been abducted or an adolescent has decided to run away, this chapter will discuss the needs of these groups separately.

### **Missing Children**

A child will most likely be reported missing by a parent or other relative. The parents will be anxious, not only about the safety of their child but about their responsibility for the child's disappearance. A skilled person must get the information from the parent and begin to deal with the emotions of the parent as well as with the requirements of recovery.

**Psychological Issues** People communicate on at least two levels, both of which are important. First is the content of the communication, the actual words and meanings that constitute the subject matter being communicated; second is the affective level, the communication of feelings. If the speaker does not sense that his feelings are being understood and accepted, he may—consciously or unconsciously—express the feelings more strongly. If the feeling is anxiety or fear, as it may well be when a child is missing, the parents must feel that the listener fully appreciates their anxiety and fear. It is not necessary for the listener to share the feeling; in fact, it helps for the listener to stay calm while he assures the parent that he understands the parents' complex mixture of fear, anxiety, and perhaps remorse.

The skill demanded of the helper in these situations is called "active listening." It involves providing reflective feedback to the speaker to let him know his feelings have been understood and are accepted. Active listening avoids admonishing, moralizing, criticizing, or even sympathizing with or praising the speaker while the story is being told. It involves acknowledging the other person's emotions and thoughts and reflecting to him what you understand them to be. In active listening, the listener summarizes in his own words the content and feeling of the speaker in order to be sure that he understands and that the speaker is confident that he is being understood correctly.

For example, if the parent says, "I will never forgive myself for letting Bobby out of my sight," the active listener may reflect back, "I know you are feeling that you could have prevented what has happened to Bobby, and that you very much wish you had acted differently." Having been heard through his anxiety, the parent will be more free to deal with reality.

Active listening is a skill that can be acquired. It may require practice, and all training programs for staff or volunteers who work with parents in missing children's agencies will need to learn and practice the skill until it becomes a natural response.

Another emotion that a parent may be feeling is that of blame toward someone he holds accountable for the missing child. In cases of noncustodial parental abductions, the parent whose child is missing has probably run the gamut of emotions in their relationship with the other parent. At one time there were love and trust and shared joy in the child; later, anger and distrust and perhaps even hate characterized the relationship. These strong feelings do not make it easy to think rationally, to assess options, or to accept and respond appropriately to undesirable situations, such as legal barriers that may impede recovery of the child.

Denial is an emotion that serves to block a feeling that is considered more dangerous and difficult. Denial is a coping mechanism. It may be an indication that a parent is denying his anxiety or anger and may alert the listener to the greater level of stress that is being masked. The parent may have very little affect—that is, show almost no emotion at all—or may be busy thinking up easy solutions to the dilemma or diverting attention away from the child's disappearance to some less threatening event or issue. Unless this diversion is extreme, a good listener can bring the parent back to reality by tuning into the denial and slowly bringing the parent into more active participation in reality. If the denial verges on hysteria, great care must be taken to see that the parent is able to vent the emotion and is not left alone to "come down" into depression.

In summary, the nonprofit service provider needs to be aware of the possible psychological states of a distraught parent, to let the parent know that his feelings are being acknowledged, and to assist in the amelioration of the destructive or distracting effects of those feelings. It is easy for the anxious parent to displace these emotions and to feel that people are angry with him and are blaming him. This may deepen the sense of guilt and cause the parent to turn the rage inward.

A child who has been taken somewhere against his will and away from his parents will experience psychological trauma. The level of trauma will be a function of the age of the child, the circumstances of

the abduction, the length of time the child is away, and the experiences he has during that time. If the child is away for a short period of time and is not physically injured or frightened, the trauma may not be great, and the homecoming may be a joyful reunion. The child may have been gone long enough, however, to have come to terms in some way with a new life situation and new relationships—including, perhaps, false information that the custodial parent no longer wants him or is unable to care for him. For this child the return "home" is likely to be an ambivalent situation. Parents should be prepared for this and should expect to require professional help to get their family dynamics in balance again. Many children have nightmares, periods of depression, recurring fears, and other emotions that they must learn to handle or diffuse. If enough time has passed so that an abducted "child" returns as an adolescent, then the developmental process may have been marred or proceeded unevenly. At the very least, time will cause the young person to be different from the child the parents remember.

**Counseling** The art of counseling is more than listening, assessing a problem, and giving advice, although all these elements may be a part of counseling. *Counseling*, as used here, will be defined as the deliberate and guided relationship of a well-trained person and a person seeking assistance. The client will be assisted in assessing his present situation and finding out what part he would like to change. He or she will then determine options, set goals, and plan action steps that will lead to the accomplishment of those goals. The nonprofit service provider will guide the process by careful listening, questioning, pointing out inconsistencies between a desired goal and present behavior, and providing support to the client as he or she changes some part of the thought or behavior pattern. The effective therapist empowers the client to make decisions and thus rarely sets the agenda or gives advice. The process requires skill on the part of the therapist and work and courage on the part of the client.

When a client is distraught, it may be difficult for him or her to enter a counseling relationship. A nonprofit service provider's role may be to gather information and begin the process of looking for a child or carry out whatever function needs to be done. A disruption in the family, however, brings to the surface memories of experiences from the past and questions about relationships, expectations, and responsibilities. It is the rare family that would not profit from therapeutic counseling assistance when a child is missing.

The parent, or family, should set goals to be met by the counseling. The first goals should be clear and achievable. When they are attained, the relationship

may end, or the family may want to work on new goals with the counselor. A first goal might be to carry out one's ordinary responsibilities while awaiting information about a missing child. The counselor should be able to assist the parents in accepting that they have taken all the possible steps available to them in searching for their child and that they need to use their energies for other tasks. Fears may need to be explored, the steps already taken will need to be rehearsed, and careful planning must be done regarding what activities can normalize the situation so that the parents can meet their vocational or familial responsibilities. When these goals have been achieved, the parents may feel they need no further counseling help, or they may wish to set other goals, such as working on some part of their marital relationship to eliminate arguments or mistrust.

The point is that counseling is a very special relationship. Talking over one's fears with a friend or getting advice from a neighbor who has had a similar experience will not provide the same results in changed attitudes or behavior that can be expected from professional counseling. An effective community nonprofit service provider should have professional counseling available either through its own staff or by referral and will understand why clients need that kind of help. Good counseling is a time-saving and cost-effective way for people experiencing stress to relieve their anxiety and redirect their energies.

**Reunification** When a child is returned to the family, the sudden joy may be almost as traumatic as the trepidation that accompanied the disappearance. The professionals assisting the family need to be sensitive to the feelings that reunification will bring to the surface. Not all these feelings will be positive ones, and even the positive ones may be so strong that the parents may have trouble knowing just what they are "feeling." Relief may release anger. Joy in seeing the child may be marred by questions of why this happened. The emotion of the situation may blind the parent to the need for certain actions, such as planning how to deal with the legalities of the abduction or return of the child. A nonprofit service provider should be available to assist the parent and child in sorting out the emotions and taking the steps necessary to get family life on track again. This is another example of the unique intervention services that NPOs can provide, and NPOs should be prepared to do so. It is particularly important that law-enforcement personnel, the press, and others who have had a part in the recovery be given the appropriate information, acknowledgment, and appreciation. The NPO should also take special care to protect the privacy of the family.

**Long-term Support and Aftercare** Reunification is not the last function that the nonprofit service pro-

vider will perform. Families enduring the trauma of a missing child will need support and comfort after the child has been returned. They may need counseling and assistance in getting their lives back together. If they want to help other families, they will need training and monitoring. The returned child will also need to have access to someone outside the family who can assist with adjustment problems related to the abduction or provide help in returning to the normal developmental process. Families should not feel that their case is closed and they have no access to the services of the nonprofit service provider once their immediate crisis is resolved.

Families whose children are not recovered are in for long periods of incredible suffering, fear, uncertainty, and grief. The stress is never gone, and the pain remains acute. Marital relationships are strained, other children may not receive the parental nurturing they need, and one's job or other interest may be difficult to maintain. The ability to endure does increase, however, and the ability to move on begins to develop in healthy people who have the support of their mate and their family and friends.

Again, the nonprofit service provider has a unique role to play with these families as they assist them in maintaining hope, taking the steps to find the child, and managing their lives under the most difficult of burdens. Many NPOs were initiated by families in grief who wanted to reach out to others. The special compassion involved in this peer-group relationship is of profound help to parents encountering the trauma of forced separation from their child. People do, however, need to be aware that circumstances differ and solutions are not the same for all problems. If an NPO is to be of service to a variety of families and community agencies, great care needs to be given to strive for an appropriate level of objectivity, professionalism, community networking, and good management of resources.

## Runaway Children

The original *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act* defined a runaway as a child under the age of 18 who has left home for a period of 24 hours without the permission of the parent or guardian. While that definition may seem clear, it presents some difficulties. First, in many states a young person does not need to be 18 in order to leave home without the permission of the parent. Parents in those states will find that authorities will be very reluctant to assist them in searching for their teenagers. In other states, running away is not a crime for any child, and the parents or police cannot take such children into custody. They can, however, report runaway children to the Missing Persons File of the National Crime Information Cen-



ter (NCIC) of the FBI and can assist parents in locating them in order to provide protection to the child. When police are not willing to help in this way, nonprofit service providers need to work with the police department policy makers in order to negotiate some sensible solution to the dilemma. Many communities have solved this problem; it is not an unsurmountable obstacle, and there is no federal law or policy that mandates such neglect of a child's safety. (The *Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act* offers financial incentives to states that do not lock children in jails with adults or lock up children for the act of running away. This is a far different mandate than relieving the justice system of all responsibility for the safety of young people!)

When an adolescent is unexpectedly missing, it is difficult to know whether there has been foul play or whether the child chose to leave. Parents often find that law-enforcement officers assume that the child has run away and will soon return. Some police departments do not take information relative to a missing adolescent for 24 or 48 hours. This is a matter of department policy, which can be changed. Community agencies working with tact, wisdom, and persistence can assist parents in their relationships with the police to enable them to get their child's missing status registered with the relevant law-enforcement agencies.

Judging from the research and experience of professionals, it is clear that runaways are not running TO anything. They are running FROM situations with which they cannot cope. In order to prevent future runaway situations, it is important to understand the act of running from the adolescent's perspective as well as from the parents' point of view.

**Runaway Centers** There are runaway centers in almost all the major cities and many of the smaller communities of the nation. They are designed to assist in the reunification of the child with the family—unless that is an impossible or unsafe option. Most often young people come to them voluntarily or are referred to them by community agencies. Sometimes parents refer their own children to a runaway center for prevention services or for a cooling-off period. The centers can usually assist parents in reporting missing children to the authorities and in negotiating relationships and requests with the police. Centers are usually crowded and often have a waiting list of children needing crisis shelter. They have to observe licensing regulations about the use of their staff in caring for the young people under their supervision. For these reasons, runaway center staff seldom have much time to assist in the recovery of a missing child. They may seem to a distraught parent to have little interest in assisting them in the recovery of their run-

away. This is regrettable and is quite likely a misunderstanding.

A few nonprofit organizations and other service agencies have successfully combined services for families with missing children and services for young runaways and their families. That combination seems sensible, particularly for smaller communities.

Runaway centers were designed with the needs of the young people foremost. They were begun in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when many young people had left their homes, congregating on the Boston Commons, in Haight Ashbury, the French Quarter, or Times Square. Concerned citizens of these communities saw that these young people needed help, and they began to find ways to provide food, shelter, and crisis intervention.

The people working in these new programs soon learned what all other runaway programs have learned since—most young people do not run far from home. On the first or second run, they rarely go more than a few blocks or miles from home; even frequent runners often remain in their home communities. Careful research has revealed that 85 percent of the young people coming to runaway centers in New York City are native to New York City. This trend is even more pronounced in smaller communities.

**Psychological Issues** Our society has made adolescence a time of significant emotional, social, and behavioral change. The physical development of an adolescent adds its own changes as cognitive power becomes greater and the body attains sexual maturity. Family roles change to accommodate the emerging abilities of the adolescent and the new challenges and opportunities available to parents whose children no longer need constant supervision. Most parents have learned to expect turmoil where there are adolescents.

Often the expectation of this turmoil and change blinds parents to the mental health problems of their children. Teenagers are allowed to be "crazy" without receiving much attention for unusual behavior. It is difficult and expensive to get mental health care for teenagers, and professionals are often as reluctant as parents to recognize signs of depression, substance abuse, and atypical behavior. Many teenagers, therefore, have unmet psychological needs.

The maturational task of a teenager is to develop a self-identity and self-concept that eventually enable him or her to assume control of life and become a productive adult capable of sustaining relationships and responsibilities. This is not a smooth or uneventful process! Normal behavior of a teenager can involve mood swings, experimentation with drugs and sex, and even risk taking that exceeds the expecta-

tions of parents and breaks the family rules. If the parents themselves are encountering difficulties or changes in their own lives—in marriage, job, or health, for instance—coping with a teenager can be beyond their emotional capacity at times. Parents may become too permissive or too authoritarian or may lash out in anger and frustration. This anger can be directed to the teenager, who may be told, “Get out of my life. I never want to see you again.” Children who leave home under such circumstances are sometimes referred to as “throwaways.”

If the child is a runaway, he or she may contact a runaway hotline or service agency. These agencies have become adept at interviewing adolescents and their parents and sorting through the facts and perceptions that have led to the runaway incident. Running away is a serious step, and it is rare that a young person takes this step without what seems to him or her a very good reason. It is important to determine what that reason may be because if the situation is not addressed, the adolescent will likely run away again.

The data from runaway centers tell us that many of the young people are fleeing from situations that they regard as abusive or that require coping skills they do not possess. In the large majority of cases, the runaway episode has its roots in the dynamics of the family, not in the undisciplined behavior or pathology of the young person. Often, children sense stresses in the family that they do not understand. The family may be in some crisis, such as an impending divorce or financial loss. The adolescent may feel excluded and may run away in hope of reuniting the family around concern about him or her, or in hope of calling attention to his or her need for inclusion.

Many young runaways have been victimized physically and have turned that violence in on themselves, believing they deserve the abuse. If there has been sexual molestation, the young person may be particularly reluctant to reveal the “family secret,” or may have been punished—or at least not believed—by other adults. A sensitive intake process may put these children enough at ease to reveal what is happening. It may take several interviews for the information to be revealed.

For all these reasons, the runaway center is likely to want to interview the adolescent privately and may suggest that the parent not take the child home immediately when he or she is found.

**Counseling** The goal in counseling for runaways and their families is to build on the strengths of the family and assist all family members in adjusting their relationships so that the needs of each person are met and the family can function harmoniously. Many times, parents want the counselor to “fix” their

child—to make him behave as he did when he was younger or as the parents believe he should. If there is a family “secret,” such as sexual molestation, the family often does not want that revealed. Even the young victim may strive to keep the secret, feeling that his safety or well-being is dependent on secrecy. Victims of any sustained abuse or violence tend to internalize this in the form of low self-esteem. They feel they somehow deserve the violence, especially if inflicted by a parent. This prevents them from fully participating in family therapy designed to meet everyone’s needs.

Many young people run away from home after they have confided in a parent that they suspect they are homosexual. Parents are usually shocked by this information and may initially reject the child. Sadly, suicide becomes an attractive option for such young people. Running away is another way they may cope with the rejection. On the streets, they may have exploitative experiences that make them feel even more unworthy of their parents. They may also encounter other young people on the streets who have had similar rejection from their parents and who find acceptance and caring from each other. Having felt that sense of belonging, young people may be reluctant to return home to parents who want them to be something they feel they cannot be.

Rejection by parents because of homosexuality is a difficult issue for all concerned, but it simply must be recognized as a major factor in a large percentage of runaway episodes. Nonprofit service providers and community agencies must have the expertise or the referral sources to work with such families. All staff and volunteers should have training designed to enable them to be comfortable with young people struggling with their sexual identities and with families who have to make some accommodation.

Counseling can also be directed toward assisting families to change rules to allow young people opportunities to become more responsible and to exercise that responsibility in ways that are not destructive to their health or welfare. Active listening skills help parents become more effective disciplinarians and set appropriate limits on their children’s behavior. Parenting skills can be developed in parenting groups as well as in counseling sessions.

In cases in which a family member has been a perpetrator of violence and has left the family, a counselor can assist the family in reuniting. This is difficult, and goals should be set for small incremental steps. If violence has taken place in the family, however, counseling and healing must take place there, too.

**Reunification** Staff and volunteers at crisis intervention services for young people may hear the young

runner's story before they meet the parents. They will have understood the child's feelings of rejection, even though that pain may be masked by bravado or denial. They may have had to wait until the young people could build enough trust to tell them the real reason why they could no longer live in their own homes. They may have worked with families willing to blame their children for family disruption that seemed more the fault of the adult. Nevertheless, workers in runaway centers really believe that most families can change, that most young people want to go home and can if everyone is willing to work for the changes, and that their agency can be a part of the solution to the family difficulty. The goal of all good runaway services is family reunification whenever it is possible and safe for the young person.

Many runaway centers can work with the family after the crisis is resolved and the family is reunited. Others can make good community referrals for additional counseling or support services such as drug abuse prevention or parenting training. Adolescents are old enough to reason and learn. They can play valuable roles in families that are striving for an equilibrium. The nonprofit service provider should strive to empower the young people as part of a healthy family. Running is often a cry for help. It may also be a sign of strength and of wanting life to be productive. Each case is different, and each family deserves the greatest attention and care.

**Long-term Support and Aftercare** Families of adolescent runaways may need more services than are available—or more than they wish to use—immediately after a child has returned to the home. Research indicates that running away tends to be a family trait—the way that family deals with problems. Often the child who runs is copying a parent who ran away as a child or who has deserted the family. Other parents use “running” as a coping mechanism when they turn aside from problems and are not available to the family. Siblings from families where an older child

has run may also run away, usually at a younger age than the original runner.

Families who use “flight or fight” to deal with problems need long-term support to assist them. The community center should have some mechanisms for keeping in touch with them and assuring them that they can return for services whenever they have the need. The community center that had the first experience with the family may be most successful in maintaining a bond, as it was the agency that met the family needs in the crisis. This bond should always be acknowledged and respected, but continuing services from that agency may not be wise or feasible. It is impossible as well as unwise for any agency to try to meet all the needs of a client. A renewed contact, an updating of relationships, and a decision about the next agency to provide services will make the referral more likely to be useful to the client.

If the runaway episode was a result of substance abuse by either a parent or the young person, aftercare work will be needed in that area. If abuse was severe enough that either the perpetrator or the young victim is removed from the home, aftercare is recommended for both the youth and the family.

The needs of children and their families are the focus of nonprofit service providers. Whenever there is a conflict between the best interest of the child and law-enforcement, for example, the NPO should keep its values clear and provide care and nurturance for the child and family. Planning and training in an agency should reinforce these values, and no funds should be accepted that violate it.

The work of an NPO is emotionally draining and difficult, but the knowledge that families and children are being assisted in a time of great need is satisfying. The psychological needs of the staff and volunteers need to be met, and burnout should be avoided, moreover. No agency should ever neglect the celebration of their work and their goals, and careful attention should be paid to nurturing positive ideals.

### 3. Needs of Exploited Children and Their Families

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#### **Psychological Needs**

Sexual abuse and exploitation have been shown to have a serious negative impact on children. Only recently has this fact become widely known. Historically, sexual abuse was thought to be rare because children often did not report and, when they did, they were frequently not believed. It is now established that between a fourth and a third of girls and about one in six boys will be molested or raped by age eighteen. The social climate has changed dramatically so that children are exposed to prevention education, parents talk to their children about the possibility of abuse, and professionals consider sexual abuse as an explanation for behavioral or emotional problems. When children do tell, it is likely that someone will believe them and take action.

**Effects of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation** In the past, there was a belief that except in the most severe or violent cases, there was little harm caused by abuse experiences. Many thought that parental or societal reactions were the source of psychological distress and that children would forget about the experiences if they were handled by downplaying the seriousness and quickly moving on. Our current understanding of the nature of abuse and what has been learned from adult survivors suggests that these experiences are rarely forgotten and that the effects can be very long term.

Clinical experience and research has shown that child victims suffer from a broad range of emotional and behavioral problems following abuse. They may be afraid and anxious, have feelings of guilt, shame, and anger, or engage in inappropriate sexual behavior. These reactions may extend to difficulties in school, with peers, and in the family. Parents and siblings also have psychological distress when they

learn that a child in the family has been sexually assaulted.

The most serious negative impacts of abuse are not seen in young children, however. Problems like substance abuse, depression, thoughts of suicide, running away, self-destructive behavior, and mental health disorders usually do not appear until adolescence or adulthood. Clinical populations of adolescents reveal high rates of prior victimization. Programs for runaways, youth involved in prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse, teenage parenthood, and sexual offenders find that substantially more than half the teenage clients were sexually abused. Similarly, inpatient and outpatient psychiatric clinics for adolescents have discovered that a significant fraction of teenagers who are suicidal, self-mutilate, or have eating disorders have a victimization history. Sexual abuse in childhood has been found to be a major risk factor for mental health disorders and interpersonal problems in adults. Studies show that sexual abuse in childhood significantly increases the risk of receiving a psychiatric diagnosis. Abuse survivors are more likely to remain single or get divorced or be battered in an adult relationship. Although most adult survivors do not exhibit such severe dysfunction, they do experience increased psychological distress and unhappiness related to the abuse. They are more likely to be depressed, anxious, and have sexual difficulties.

We do not know exactly why children may appear relatively unharmed yet at risk for future consequences. This "sleeper" effect may be the result of the way children cope with abuse experiences. The cues that trigger the memory of the assault usually cause anxiety. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is manifested as intrusive thoughts, nightmares, hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response, loss of concentration, and fears. Children may try to handle the

anxiety by avoidance. Pushing the thoughts away, avoiding people or situations, a numbing of emotional responsiveness and, in certain cases, dissociation and even amnesia may help reduce the anxiety associated with remembering what happened.

Children may also explain the abuse to themselves in ways which are unhealthy. In attempting to understand why they were assaulted, they may blame themselves or minimize the intentionality of the offender's behavior. In some cases, offenders create or reinforce these beliefs by telling the victims that they are to blame or will be responsible for the consequences of telling. Child victims may think that their behavior or failing to say no or to tell makes them at least partially responsible. Sometimes these beliefs are adaptive responses to avoid facing the disturbing reality that someone they knew, trusted, or depended on took advantage of and exploited them without regard for their wishes or the impact.

Children who learn to cope with abuse by avoiding the memories and altering the meaning of the experience may appear to have adjusted or have gotten over the abuse. In fact, the experience may simply remain sealed off and intact and emerge at later developmental junctures. These kinds of coping strategies may divert psychological resources from normal developmental tasks or may be maladaptive when applied to other life situations. In severe cases, children's personalities are formed around unhealthy adaptations to abuse, which become a central part of the way they operate in the world. In this case, there may be low self-esteem, a mistrust of others, and a sense of helplessness in the world. This can lead to the more serious problems later on. Research has found that some aspects of the assault experience are associated with more severe impact. Abuse that is violent, involves penetration, is committed by a closer offender, and goes on longer causes greater harm. The most important factor is the family environment. Victims who have a supportive relationship with a non-offending parent and a sibling and who receive support following disclosure are less harmed. Children whose families are dysfunctional are more affected.

**The Nonprofit Service Provider's Role** The implications from our understanding of abuse suggest that it is important for the nonprofit service provider to help families assist their children as well as help provide the victims with therapy. Children need to be helped to remember and talk about their experiences in a supportive environment. Over time this will lessen the emotional impact of the memories so that children will not expend resources trying to avoid recalling what happened. They can be taught effective strategies for handling anxiety, such as relaxation, cognitive restructuring, and increasing the

safety of their situation. Sometimes this means children will be more distressed initially. Parents can learn to recognize this as a necessary phase of successful emotional processing of the abuse experience and provide the needed support.

Families must participate in helping children understand that the assault is not their fault and that any behavior of theirs was a function of being tricked or the limitations of their developmental stage. Even well-meaning parents may communicate blame or disappointment by challenging the victims for not telling. Therapists and parents may contribute to an inaccurate understanding of the offender's behavior by calling the offender sick or by implying that alcoholism, psychological problems, or childhood experiences caused sexual offending. This may make children feel unable to express anger or compelled to feel sorry for offenders. It is particularly difficult when the offender is a family member or a respected member of the community.

The evidence shows that sexual offending is invariably planned, calculated behavior. Sexual deviance may take years to develop and to be expressed in victimization of children. Offenders typically target children for victimization and groom them to accept increasingly inappropriate and sexualized contact as well as persuade them not to tell. Sexual offending is almost never an impulsive act. The circumstances or the offender's justifications, however, may make it seem as though something other than the offender's decision to offend explains the victimization.

Some children develop sexual problems where they behave in sexualized ways, initiate sexual activity with other children or, in extreme cases, become sexually aggressive. The abuse experience can serve as a model of appropriate sexual behavior or may stimulate premature sexual interest or arousal. Young children are most likely to exhibit such problems and require enhanced supervision as well as therapeutic intervention to teach alternative ways of expressing feelings and meeting needs. Older children may engage in premature sexual relationships. This kind of behavior in children may make them more vulnerable to revictimization by serving as a disinhibitor to predisposed adults or offenders. It may also lead to ostracization by others or may be a precursor to adolescent offending behavior.

Teenagers who are raped or sexually exploited frequently come from a background of abuse and neglect. The incidence of date rape among teenagers is extremely high. Drinking or going somewhere with a casual acquaintance has been implicated in a significant proportion of adolescent rape situations. Many teens may consider coercive sex acceptable behavior. Studies have shown that teenagers of both sexes believe that it is all right for a boy to force sex

on a girl if he has spent money on her or she has led him on. Early sexual victimization experiences may set the stage for repeated victimization. In some cases, the teenager does not recognize the exploitive nature of the relationship. Older boys or young men may appeal to the girl's vanity or need to be accepted, and they may easily take advantage. An extreme example occurs in juvenile prostitution in which the youth does not see herself or himself as a victim at all. Most of these children were abused prior to involvement in the lifestyle. These young people are often very resistant to treatment and end up in serious conflict with parents, other adults, or the authorities.

**Child Sex Rings and Daycare Abuse** When children are victimized in a group situation, there are complicating factors. Daycare abuse and sex rings appear to have additional dynamics. In daycare situations, more than one offender may be involved as well as multiple victims. Since the children are very young, it is often difficult to ascertain exactly what happened. Some of these cases involve ritualistic or sadistic elements which may make children's stories seem unbelievable or extreme. These cases are often high profile and create volatile community reactions. Careful coordination and separation of investigative and therapeutic interventions are especially warranted to insure successful case outcome and minimize unnecessary trauma for the children and families. (For more information on daycare abuse, see *Just in Case . . . You Are Considering Daycare*, published by the National Center.)

In sex ring cases, the complication may revolve around children's apparent cooperation with ongoing exploitation. Offenders often use victims to engage other victims. Children may have received monetary or other gifts as a part of gaining compliance and maintaining secrecy. Pornography is frequently used to entice children or may be an element of the criminal activity. Parents and investigators are more prone to blame children in such situations, thereby adding to the victim's burden. Young adolescent boys are particularly likely victim targets who may subsequently experience extreme guilt or shame. (See also *Child Sex Rings*, published by the National Center.)

**Alleged Abuse in Custody Disputes** Another type of case posing significant complications is that in which abuse is alleged in the context of separated parents. Although there appears to be an increase in such reports, the widespread public impression that there is a flood of cases, most of which are unfounded, is inaccurate. A national survey of family courts found that sexual abuse accusations comprise only a small percentage of all disputed custody cases. When such a concern is raised, however, professional responses are often colored by the assumption that these reports should be viewed with skepticism. The

difficulty in sorting out the truth arises from the fact that most of the children are very young and may not be able to provide a coherent or credible history. In addition, the animosity between the parents may overshadow the child's issues.

Unlike most other cases of suspected sexual abuse, child protection cannot be accomplished without making a determination of guilt. Parents who are suspected are usually seeking access to the children. To interrupt parent-child relationships when there has been no abuse would be harmful, as would exposing children to untreated and denying offenders. In many instances, it is impossible to arrive at a definitive conclusion. Unfortunately, one result may mean that judges permit or order contact. Parents who believe their children have been abused and feel that the legal system has not provided protection may choose to flee with the children rather than obey a court order. While it may be understandable, this choice places children in a situation where there are also negative consequences. They must conceal their identity, lose friends and relatives, and maintain a secretive and unstable lifestyle.

Careful and thorough assessment by experienced professionals is the best method of avoiding parental abduction. As soon as suspicion or concern is raised, cases should be referred to experts in custody evaluations who are knowledgeable about abuse. When the evaluation is conducted by professionals who are highly regarded, the necessity for repeat assessments is reduced and the likelihood of favorable resolution enhanced. This is a highly specialized area of clinical practice, and such assessments should not be attempted by inexperienced or nonspecialist evaluators.

## Interviewing

Many children do not spontaneously report their abuse experiences. About a third of the time the story is elicited through questioning by parents or concerned adults. Research shows that in mental health settings, specific questioning about possible abuse experiences dramatically increases the likelihood that clients will report abuse experiences. The chances that certain clinical populations of children and adolescents will have been abused are so great that routine screening is indicated. A large proportion of children who run away are suicidal, self-mutilating, have eating disorders or substance abuse problems, or have been sexually assaulted. They cannot be helped unless the abuse is uncovered.

Interviewing children about abuse has been the subject of great controversy. There is concern that improper interviewing approaches may influence children who have not been abused to say they have been abused. Leading and suggestive questioning or rein-

forcement for disclosing abuse have been implicated in false reports. The evidence shows that children as young as age 5 or 6 are able to accurately report events and are almost as resistant as adults to suggestive questioning. Very young children, however, because of their limited cognitive and language development and their reliance on adults, may be more susceptible to giving unreliable responses.

In order to avoid jeopardizing the acceptance of children's reports of abuse, it is important to insure that properly trained professionals, referred by the nonprofit service provider, conduct interviews. It is usually not necessary for professionals or parents to elicit the complete history of events prior to making a report to the authorities. Child protection professionals and law-enforcement investigators are trained in the proper methods for investigative interviews. The role of professionals and parents is not to gather evidence for legal systems. The primary objective is to provide a supportive environment and assist the children and their families in resolution of the psychological trauma.

Sometimes professionals are asked to render an opinion about abuse or assault based on professional assessment. Although usually not admissible in court, these opinions may carry weight in determinations to go forward with legal interventions. It is important that the involved professional have the training and experience to conduct a thorough and knowledge-based assessment. A poor interview or inadequately supported opinion can become the focus of legal attack. This can result in the child victim not receiving protection or in justice not being carried out. Good supervision, consultation, and documentation are essential ingredients of a competent evaluation process.

## Counseling

Effective counseling for child victims and their families has several important components. When abuse is first discovered, the children and families are in a state of crisis. The children are worried about the reactions of others and what will happen. This may cause them to suppress the distress associated with the victimization and focus on familial and system responses. Parents are usually shocked, upset, and angry. Although the negative feelings may not be directed at the children, children may feel responsible for causing the parents' discomfort. Crisis intervention cannot resolve the emotional consequences of the abuse, but it is very helpful in stabilizing families following disclosure.

In addition to personal reactions to learning about or reporting the victimization, parents and children frequently have concerns and questions about legal and social service systems. As part of the initial

response, counselors and nonprofit service providers can provide accurate information about what to expect. This requires specific knowledge about the practices and procedures in the particular community. Families have many misconceptions and fears about the criminal justice system. A major issue is whether children will be required to testify. Since most cases will not result in an actual trial, this worry can often be allayed or at least deferred until it is established whether it will be necessary. Far more common will be delays in the process which will frustrate and anger the families. Experienced counselors or advocates can help by explaining the steps in criminal prosecution and offering a supportive outlet for these feelings.

Advocacy during the process can be provided by counselors or by system advocates. This may include coordinating and consulting with legal personnel, keeping families apprised of events, or accompanying them to interviews. Counselors and NPOs can also help children and families prepare for involvement by education and by teaching anxiety management strategies. There are books and videotapes available as aids for the therapists. If there is a conviction, victim and family input into sentencing can afford a therapeutic opportunity. Children and families can be helped to write letters to the judge or to attend sentencing. A final way in which counselors can help is to insure that families apply for victims compensation or that restitution is ordered to cover the costs of counseling.

**Therapy** Therapy for the victimization experience usually takes much longer to accomplish. Children are often initially resistant to talking about what happened and may require many sessions to achieve a level of comfort with counselors and with the material before progress is made. Talking, drawing, playing, reenacting, and writing are all methods of assisting children in approaching the anxiety-producing memories. They can also learn to recognize the triggers for the memories, develop and practice anxiety management strategies, and express the related feelings. Individual or group therapy appears to be the best modality for victimization therapy.

Helping children understand why they were exploited is often the most difficult aspect of intervention. Therapists have learned that simply telling children that it was not their fault is usually not effective in getting children to internalize the belief. It is important to explore carefully and sensitively the basis for the children's beliefs to identify the source of the misattribution. Specifically, clarifying inaccurate beliefs and providing meaningful explanations is necessary. This includes helping children understand the process of victimization as well as why sex offenders commit offenses. It is especially important to uncover

any fears about the consequences of telling—consequences that may have been threatened by offenders. Threats to return and get the victim or claims of magical powers of the offender are particularly disturbing. Additionally, children may believe that others knew about their victimization and did nothing to protect them. Often this results in anger toward parents, even when they were unaware. For example, children may think that parents knowingly left them in a dangerous daycare center. Since children may have expressed reluctance to go, parental failure to discover the reason can be interpreted as deliberate indifference. In such a case, explanation from the parents about their ignorance and apology for not understanding is helpful in restoring the parents to a supportive role.

Even when children have resolved the specific symptoms and attained an adequate understanding of the experience, there are additional tasks of therapy. Prevention education should be incorporated into therapy because abused children are at risk for revictimization. Instilling accurate and healthy attitudes about sexuality may reduce the likelihood of sexual problems in the future. Building a large support system of peers and adults, especially consisting of people who know about the abuse, may prevent stigmatization and social isolation. This gives the child a basis for resuming normal developmental tasks and placing the abuse in perspective.

Teenage victims are often the most difficult to treat. In many cases, it is because of maladjustment that the abuse becomes known. The children or their families may not recognize the connection to past abuse, and the focus is simply on ameliorating the problem behavior. A method of engaging the adolescents in therapy is to help them understand how their problems may be related to abuse. The problem behavior can be reinterpreted as a coping strategy which is maladaptive but serves an important function. For example, substance abuse may be a form of avoiding or forgetting painful memories. The consequences of this coping response may be harmful, however. Teenagers may be assisted in confronting and overcoming the aversive aspects of their memories and learning healthier ways of handling internal distress.

Parental involvement in their children's therapy is almost always a necessary component. They need to learn how to assist their children in recovery. Education about the nature and impact of abuse is one component. A more difficult aspect is teaching parents to be available to the children. Many parents find it painful to know exactly what happened and inadvertently communicate that they cannot handle hearing about it from the children. Therapists can facilitate the process by encouraging and assisting children in describing their experiences to the parents. This

can be done through joint sessions, sharing artwork and writings, or videotaping or observing interviews. In addition, the reasons why the children did not feel able to immediately report abuse to parents must be explored. Parents may learn that they missed cues from the child, were too busy or preoccupied to notice, or in some way conveyed to their children that they were not receptive or could not handle the report. In some cases, significant disturbance in the parent-child relationship or in family functioning has created a distance which inhibited the children. Focused family therapy may be required to address these problems.

Parents' responses may be highly influenced by factors other than their relationship with their children which may require separate interventions with them. An unresolved victimization experience may be evoked by their children's assault. They may be unable to tolerate hearing what happened or project their own feelings on the children. When the offender is known, it frequently produces intense ambivalence or guilt. This may be communicated to the victims as disbelief, disappointment, or lack of support. Providing direct assistance to parents is indicated to enhance their capacity to be available to their children. This may mean individual counseling sessions, a parents' group, or referral to other services.

An often neglected component of therapy for victimization is inclusion of siblings. Research has shown that a supportive relationship with a sibling is associated with reduced impact on victims. Other children in the family may be aware of the victimization or be unidentified victims. Disclosure of abuse may precipitate disruption in the family which affects siblings and, in turn, may be negatively directed at victims. Siblings should be told in general terms about the victimization, informed about legal interventions, and offered the opportunity for individual or joint sessions. When all members of the victim's family share a common understanding of what happened, an environment is created that will enhance recovery.

Some cases of sexual assault may be resolved with very limited and brief counseling. Most cases, however, are best served by a fairly extended intervention which lasts on average six to nine months. In more serious cases, it may take much longer. Much of the focus is on establishing an accurate and satisfactory understanding of victimization that is internalized by all family members. The purpose is to avoid the development of maladaptive coping and distorted beliefs about sexuality, self, and relationships with others. The goal is to place the victimization in perspective as a bad but specific experience which need not have permanent negative effects.

**Long-term Support and Aftercare** It may not be possible to address completely all the important is-



sues for child victims shortly after the assault. Some concerns may simply not be developmentally relevant and will not emerge until a later point. For example, establishing positive healthy sexual relationships is not salient for young children. At adolescence, victims may become anxious and confused about their own feelings. A "dental" model of intervention has been suggested whereby checkups occur at certain points to determine whether the victim is experiencing abuse-related reactions. Parents may decide to take the children for periodic assessments to provide an age-appropriate opportunity to reexamine thoughts and feelings. Certainly if children develop problems and are taken for counseling, therapists ought to be apprised of the prior victimization and consider any possible relationship to current functioning. At the least, parents should not assume that children have forgotten about what happened. By asking children directly how they are feeling or whether they have been thinking about the assault, they create an environment which is conducive to children seeking assistance.

Sexual assault and exploitation are not the only traumatic events which may influence children's growth and development, and it appears that most

victims do not develop severe disturbances as adults. Excessive focus on the abuse may communicate an expectation of negative outcome. The most dangerous is to convey that the children are likely to become offenders. While an increased risk exists, parental or community attitudes might be incorporated by the children and serve to actually promote such a result. Few adults have a completely trouble-free childhood, and difficult experiences—when handled properly—can be a basis for the development of effective coping strategies, the capacity to survive aversive experiences, and finally to emerge stronger and more resilient.

Therapists and advocates can have a major influence on how children and families cope with abusive experiences. Sexual assault continues to be a problem which is surrounded by denial, misconceptions, and fears. Knowledgeable intervenors are necessary to provide families with a framework for understanding and responding. As the social climate changes, we can look forward to a time when children will recognize abusive and exploitive behavior, will report it immediately, and will receive a supportive response. Counseling will always be important, but the job of helping the children recover will be easier.

## 4. Providing Services

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Service providers play a crucial role in assisting the families and the children affected by the missing children experience. To fulfill their role, it is imperative that service providers develop a good understanding of the missing and exploited children's issue, how the "system" works, and how to run a nonprofit organization (NPO).

This chapter is meant as a guide. Each NPO will assist families in its own unique way. See the Appendix for sample copies of all the forms referred to in Chapter 4.

### Intake/Registration Process

The initial contact with the searching parent, whether by phone or in person, is called the *intake process*. At this point, designated and trained staff should ask the searching parent or guardian certain key questions, using an intake form. The intake process is designed to obtain preliminary information, to provide some immediate technical assistance and, if appropriate, to begin the registration process. At no time during the intake process should the NPO search for the reported missing child, since the client's legal status or relationship to the reported missing child is unknown.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children suggests that parents make a report to the National Center's hotline: **1-800-843-5678**. The National Center can help provide media attention and photo distribution on the child and will work with state clearinghouses, other NPOs, and law-enforcement.

Many existing NPOs and the National Center have a protocol for opening or registering cases. Certain criteria must be met before the organization will involve itself with the distribution of missing children photographs, posters, or searches. Some basic re-

quirements might include verifying that 1) a police report was filed and law-enforcement has entered the missing child into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer; 2) the registering parent in parental abduction cases is the custodial parent; 3) the organization's registration forms and releases have been completed, dated, and signed by each registrant; and 4) photographs of the missing child are provided.

Since the person's legal status or relationship to the reported missing child is unknown, caution must be exercised regarding what information is given during this intake stage.

### Technical Assistance

Technical assistance occurs at all stages of involvement with searching families. This assistance may occur at the intake or registration stage (the missing stage), at the location and recovery stage, or at the post-recovery stage. The families' needs will vary depending on the stage and case particulars.

Give basic advice at this stage, since the legitimacy of the case is as yet undetermined. Parents should in all instances be encouraged to file police reports and to keep a case log of all events, all people contacted, and their instructions, including dates and times. If the client is the custodial parent, it is appropriate for him or her to request entry into the NCIC computer. Recommend that parents complete the NPO's registration process, and explain what services the NPO will provide. At this point, give the parents information regarding their legal rights so that they know what to expect from law-enforcement. Since most technical assistants in NPOs are not attorneys, make sure that your NPO is not attempting to practice law without a license. Instead, the NPO might give examples of how other victim parents were able

to achieve certain forms of help in the state from which they are seeking help. No names of other cases should be disclosed when giving examples.

Once the parent completes the registration and release forms, the NPO must go through its protocol checklist. If the protocol is not met, the parents should be notified immediately of the additional information needed. If the case can be opened, again the parent should be immediately informed. When the case is opened, more technical assistance can be given the parent, since at this stage the legitimacy of the case has been verified. Posters can be developed, and the parent can be directed on how to assist in their distribution. Discussions with the parent and law-enforcement about possible warrants for known abductors and search methods might be advisable. Additional assistance may include dealing with the media, protecting the parent from callers soliciting funds, and referral to other agencies.

### **Working with Law-Enforcement**

Law-enforcement is one of the most important agencies in the missing child case. It is imperative that a positive working relationship is established between the missing children NPO and law-enforcement agency. If possible, NPOs should take time to visit police agencies in the surrounding area. NPO leaders can introduce themselves and their agency to officers handling missing juveniles. Keep the visit short, and leave information on the NPO with the officers. Communicate your wish to work with law-enforcement and to be recommended to searching families. Emphasize that all cases coming into the NPO in the officer's jurisdiction will be verified with the agency and, if new information is received or obtained on these cases, it will be immediately turned over to the police. Since many NPOs work on cases nationally, it is impossible to interact with each law-enforcement agency around the country. As a case approaches the registration process, you should make contact with the originating law-enforcement agency. Offer the NPO's assistance in the case and, as a follow-up, mail the officer an information packet on the NPO.

If the NPO receives a lead or sighting on a missing child, the officer handling the investigation should be notified at once. It is not the role of the nonprofit service provider to investigate leads but, rather, to provide the investigative agencies with the information and encourage them to follow up. NPOs should not involve themselves with surveillances or ruses. Such activities could prove detrimental, unprofessional and, in some instances, illegal. The NPO is a liaison between the searching parent and law-enforcement and is there to supplement the work of law-enforcement, not to replace it.

### **Photo Dissemination**

Photo dissemination is an effective technique used to locate missing children. It is the most widely recognized locate tool and, most important, requires the public's involvement. We depend upon businesses and the media to display photographs and descriptive data on missing children. The public is often involved in the distribution and mailing of missing children posters. And, the leads that pour in as a result of photo dissemination are most often from the general public.

It is extremely important that NPOs develop a policy on photo distribution. It is commendable that so many people and businesses are helpful and wish to circulate information on missing children. Most of these truly care about the children, and it can be beneficial to their businesses to show a sense of community participation. It is important, however, to establish the legitimacy of the business. This can be done by requesting copies of previous publications or videos, checking with the Better Business Bureau, and checking references. All photo requests from the NPOs should be made by the businesses in writing. Some visual or written products might have a philosophical difference with the goals of the NPO. For example, an NPO might not wish for missing children's photographs and the agency name to appear in a publication dealing with child exploitation topics or other controversial issues. Inclusion of missing children photographs in the "wrong" publication could affect the credibility of the NPO.

The criteria for those distributing posters need not be as stringent, but some information on these individuals should be obtained. NPOs might request that such individuals complete a volunteer application or sign a log with the person's name, address, and telephone number. The nonprofit service provider should check the person's ID. Sometimes people that are involved in the abduction of children or have some association with the abductors may want to know what progress is being made on the case. Therefore, whenever possible, the NPO should obtain some basic details about who wants to help and why.

### **Location Assistance**

There are many ways to assist in the location of missing children. Each NPO will define location assistance in its own way. First and foremost, the location and recovery of every missing child usually requires the interaction and cooperation of more than one agency or individual. Thus, it is most difficult to credit only one source. From the beginning of a case until its conclusion, a great deal of information and action by many agencies and individuals has taken

place. To attribute one piece of information or action as solely responsible for the location of a child is incorrect. Equally incorrect is to discard any information or action as of little or no value if even in a small way it assisted parents in their search. The NPO's role in location assistance usually falls into the categories described below.

**Providing Emotional Support** Providing emotional support to parents should not be underestimated. After all, no one involved in the search loves the missing child as much as the family. Therefore, one of the responsibilities of the NPO is to help keep the family going. If the family falls apart, who then will provide the impetus to keep the search alive?

**Technical Information** NPOs must provide searching families with information about their legal rights; what they can expect from law-enforcement; what they can do; and how they can obtain information about other people or agencies that can help. Usually, the more help and knowledge that parents have, the greater the likelihood of child recovery.

**Search Assistance** This may mean physically being out in the field looking for the missing child or working out of the office coordinating searches and investigations. Of course, all on-the-scene search activity must be cleared with the appropriate law-enforcement agencies. Search assistance may include distributing photographs or posters of the missing child. It might include looking for patterns in the abductor's (and accomplices') lifestyles or pursuing these individuals' "paper trails." Such searches prove to be the most effective in missing children cases. A lead to the abductor is often a lead to the child. Taking telephone sightings or leads regarding the missing child's whereabouts is another critical tool.

**Working with Law-Enforcement** It is important to keep the originating law-enforcement agency informed on the progress of the case. The NPO should turn over all leads or sighting information to law-enforcement agencies immediately. No determination of the invalidity of any sighting or lead should be made by the NPO. In some instances, NPOs may need to encourage the law-enforcement agencies actually to investigate certain leads or sightings: Law-enforcement personnel are usually extremely busy (as are NPOs) in the missing and exploited children's field. Cooperation can reduce the workload for both; law-enforcement, if they are unaware of your NPO, might be suspicious of you or your group's motives. Do not be angry at this attitude; make sure that you turn the relationship into one of interaction and information exchange. The officer who is initially most suspicious can become one of your best allies.

**The Child's Recovery** Parents and families will have their own ideas on how their child will respond to them once reunited; it is important to prepare

them for what the child's responses might actually be. Give them some pointers on what they might do to increase positive interaction between themselves and the child; this, in turn, will reduce the trauma experienced by the child and parent.

It is essential that parents know what documents to bring with them when traveling to recover their child. The regulations vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some basic information might include three certified and exemplified copies of their custody orders (for parental abduction cases); the child's birth certificate; pictures of the child; and information regarding law-enforcement agencies, warrants, police reports, and NCIC entry. Parents need to know that in some instances before the child is released to their custody, they will be required to make court appearances. They may also need to retain an attorney licensed to practice law in that state.

The goal for all in the child location field is the recovery of each missing child no matter how large or small the role we play. Satisfaction is gained from realizing the important part each of us plays in reuniting families and giving them the opportunity to become whole again.

## Follow-up

Because case variables may change, a follow-up procedure is essential to case management. Changing variables in the child's recovery may include the fact that a parent's custody order has expired or been modified; the searching parents have moved; a child has reached the age of majority; the law-enforcement investigation has ended; or new leads have been developed. Such factors, if not determined in a timely manner, could affect the victims of the case, the credibility of your organization, and the time invested in search activities.

When a case meets the NPO's protocol and is opened, the searching family and law-enforcement are informed immediately. NPOs can use this opportunity to request immediate notification of any changes in the case as well.

Regular, ongoing contact with the registered case families is important. Let the families know what is being done on their case. From time to time, send them samples of publications in which their child's photograph appears. This increases their confidence that the organization is working on their case.

Once information is obtained that a child has been recovered, this information should be verified with law-enforcement. In some instances, a parent might inform an NPO, but not law-enforcement, of the child's recovery. Information exchange saves everyone time and money. Another reason for verifying the recovery is to eliminate any ruse of a recov-

ery by others in order to stop the search activities. Recovery follow-ups should include the mailing of a missing child location-recovery form to the parents that requests more specific details on the child's recovery, the current and past condition of the child, what other people or agencies were of assistance, and how the parent felt about the help received by the NPO.

Follow-up includes not only obtaining current information regarding the validity or the standing of the case but also includes immediate response to leads or sightings.

Within the NPO, a "checks and balances" system must exist. Caseworkers who open or close cases, give technical assistance to searching families, and take leads or sightings should be supervised and monitored by more experienced and knowledgeable staff members. These supervisors should review the paperwork before a case is opened or closed and do random checks for accuracy of the information provided.

Many NPOs intake case information that does not, for a variety of reasons, become a registered case. After an adequate waiting period, attempts should be made to update case status. Simply send a standard form letter to the person making the initial intake report, inquiring about the status of the case and offering assistance. Or, if for some reason parents do not meet the organization's protocol, send a form letter informing them of what specific information or documentation is required in order to open the case.

While case follow-up does require time, the benefit to missing children and their families is indeed well worth it.

## **Working with the Legal System**

Important legal considerations are to make sure that 1) your organization is truly not-for-profit and that all reports and filings are completed in the allocated time; 2) all proper licenses are obtained in the city, county, or state(s); 3) all information given is correct and legal; 4) only verified legitimate cases of missing children are worked; 5) signed registration and release forms are kept on file; 6) law or investigation is not practiced without the proper licenses; 7) all sightings or leads are immediately turned over to the appropriate law-enforcement agencies; 8) all other case information and records are confidential except under subpoena; 9) caution is taken regarding information given over the telephone; 10) you do not misrepresent yourself or your organization or use ruses; 11) appropriate fund-raising policies and contracts are developed and proper financial ethics and responsibilities are exercised; 12) adequate personnel policies and practices exist; and 13) all illegal acts are avoided.

**Prosecutors** NPOs will often work with prosecutors in missing children cases. The primary purpose of the prosecutor is to prosecute criminals and represent the people of the state. Crime has historically been viewed as an offense against society rather than against an individual. The prosecutor is not the attorney for the victim. This at times leaves the victim feeling that his or her needs are not being represented. Therefore, the NPO plays a significant role of support to the victim during the prosecutorial stage.

Prosecutors decide what, if any, charges are filed; make recommendations to the judge regarding bail; participate in plea negotiations; and prosecute or resolve the case. The prosecutor is usually an elected official and may be influenced by public opinion. A common approach for the NPO is to meet with the prosecutor and encourage an aggressive stance from his or her office regarding the prosecution of family and non-family abductions.

In some states and jurisdictions, investigators from the prosecutor's office will actually be involved in the location of missing children. In parental abduction cases, the prosecutor can request assistance from the U.S. Attorney's office. If the case facts merit, the U.S. Attorney will issue an Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution (UFAP) warrant for the abducting parent. Such an agreement can only be reached if the prosecutor has issued a state felony warrant and agrees to extradite and prosecute the abductor after apprehension. If a UFAP warrant is issued, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will become involved in the missing child case in order to locate the absconding parent.

NPOs should encourage victim parents to cooperate with the prosecutor. Parents might be asked to assist in the investigation, help identify the abductor, and act as a witness at a hearing or trial. In turn, prosecutors should keep victims informed regarding case status—including notice of hearings, plea negotiations, verdicts, rights to have input into the probation report and to make a victim impact statement, sentences imposed, paroles, and appeals.

NPO representatives having particular knowledge of specific cases could be called as witnesses for the prosecution. Your files may be subpoenaed. It is therefore imperative that case files are complete, organized, up to date, and easy to understand.

**Judge and Jury** The role of the judge varies depending on the stage of the criminal proceeding. Roles include 1) conducting an initial evaluation of the evidence and deciding whether or not there is sufficient evidence to proceed with a criminal prosecution; 2) when necessary, issuing bench warrants; 3) acting as arbiter of the law, deciding issues of law; and 4) imposing sentences on those convicted of

crimes. Juries, consisting of selected people from the community, are empowered to be the "trier of fact." In other words, the jury decides whether the evidence presented during the trial establishes guilt.

**Witnesses** NPO representatives may be called as witnesses. If called, the following suggestions might prove helpful: 1) listen carefully to the questions; 2) think before answering; 3) give only the information requested; 4) avoid showing anger; 5) avoid glancing at the prosecutor; 6) dress appropriately for court; and 7) most important, tell the truth.

A nonprofit service provider might be called to report specific facts about the case or might be called as an expert witness. Once someone has been qualified in court as an expert witness, future qualifying is relatively automatic. As an expert in the missing and exploited children's field, general questions concerning those issues will be addressed.

**Court Monitors** Court monitors follow selected missing and exploited children cases through the criminal justice process to find the positive aspects or loopholes in the system. They make these findings known to their respective NPOs. The designated NPO representative can make the findings known to the public, keeping in mind at all times that the first priority is to protect each individual victimized child. The court monitor program can involve itself with advocacy for necessary policy change. The presence of court monitors has an effect on case adjudication and dispositions.

Court monitors, usually volunteers from the community, typically have the following responsibilities and qualifications:

1. An empathy for missing and exploited children
2. No criminal convictions in background
3. Average or above-average writing and communication skills
4. A willingness to learn about the criminal justice system
5. Time and transportation to attend court on a regularly scheduled basis
6. Completion of the NPO's court monitoring training program (usually a minimum of 15 hours)

Individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system, such as judges, prosecutors, and law-enforcement officials, should be invited to speak to people going through the court monitoring program so that trainees will develop an understanding of the criminal justice process and policies. Key representatives from the criminal justice community need to learn that court monitors have legitimate goals. Training will include guidelines on acceptable activities and courtroom decorum.

Training should include guidelines on who within the NPO may talk to the press and what information

can or cannot be disclosed. Court monitoring forms and protocols for form completion should be reviewed.

The most crucial part court monitors can play is to accompany the victim or victim's family to court. Because the courtroom appearance involves so many sensitive issues and emotions, proper training is imperative. A trained and qualified court monitor can be an asset to specific victims and their cases as well as assist in creating necessary attitudinal and policy changes.

## Referral and Networking

The missing and exploited children's issue is too vast a problem to work on in isolation. A nonprofit service provider's effectiveness is dependent upon the knowledge and ability to utilize all available resources, refer families to other appropriate agencies, and network with child-serving organizations within the community.

Victimized families often need help on many different levels, in the areas of emotional, technical, legal, and financial support. The most common referrals given to families are to 1) law-enforcement agencies, 2) other missing children assistance programs, 3) attorneys, 4) private investigators, 5) therapists, 6) social service agencies, 7) victim/witness and compensation programs, and 8) support groups.

When making a referral to those who require fees, give families at least three referrals. Care should be taken that those on the NPO's referral list are known to have expertise and good ethics in their areas. If you know of other capable missing children nonprofit service providers, refer them. The more help families can get, the better.

**Building a Referral List** If your NPO serves only local victims, then the referrals will only need to be local. If, on the other hand, services are provided to victims nationwide, a nationwide referral list will be necessary.

A referral list consists of professionals who can provide various levels of service to missing children and their families. Developing standards for referral list inclusion is essential.

Include the following: 1) national, state, and local public agencies; 2) other NPOs; 3) attorneys; 4) therapists; and 5) victim-witness programs. Make sure that the list contains the type of service or expertise provided; the organization's or professional's name, address, and phone number; geographic service area; languages spoken; and fee structure, if any. Referrals can be given without endorsing the credibility or quality of those sources. Victims need to be encouraged to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to use those organizations or individuals.

**Networking** Networking is one of those buzz words that almost everyone uses. In the missing and exploited child field, it is difficult, at times, to assess who is who, what are the different philosophies, and what is the competence level of various groups. With no commonly agreed upon standards, difficulties will continue to exist for some time. Simply, networking develops as people within organizations have opportunities to get to know one another and understand the effectiveness of the services the organizations provide.

Networking is an ongoing process. Interaction between groups in the future will be based more on the competence level of the organizations and less on personalities of the leaders. Victim families truly need all the help they can get, and the goal of every NPO is to insure it is given.

Networking includes some level of information exchange, whether it be major or minor. Networking can take place among the NPO and other NPOs, the state clearinghouses on missing persons, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, law-enforcement agencies, other victim service providers, and many others.

### **Monitoring and Improving Services**

NPOs are often so busy that one may ask why take precious time to review what already has been done. NPOs can hardly keep up with the present. Though this is an understandable position, the significance of organization self-examination cannot be stressed enough.

Your organization's mission statement, approved

by your Board of Directors, should be reviewed annually. Yearly goals and objectives can be extremely helpful in keeping organizations on track. Defining goals and listing measurable objectives for each goal can prevent personnel from spreading themselves too thin and confusing the NPO's public identity. Reviewing organizational activities will provide shortcuts and improve ways of doing things. Maintaining statistics on services provided and clients assisted will clarify additional staff needs and assist with budget planning. When financial resources are needed, clarity and numbers of services provided in the past are essential for proposal requests and allocation of resources.

Organizational self-assessment and planning includes the input of the staff, people served, and the Board of Directors. A team approach offers the greatest likelihood for a successful and continuing NPO.

NPOs should continue to grow and improve. No matter how effective the NPO, new ideas and activities can substantially improve child location, reduce trauma, prevent the victimization of children, and alter public policy. It seems the tasks that can be undertaken are unending. Improved services involve doing a good job, knowing your limits, and letting those you service know what they can expect.

The challenges that NPOs have ahead of them are indeed vast and will not be easy to overcome. NPOs will have to increase their level of professionalism in order to survive long term, work cooperatively with other reputable agencies, and stay focused on the most important part of their work: the protection of the children.

# 5. Prevention, Education, and Public Awareness

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*National Center for Missing and Exploited Children*

## Prevention and Education Programs

In choosing or developing a personal safety program for children, a number of factors need to be considered. A successful program must have the flexibility to generalize to a variety of populations and yet also contain specific components for each group. Another important aspect to consider is the education of parents and school staff.

The ideal prevention program includes instructions for every child, parent, and professional in the school setting. We can teach children to be more aware of their surroundings and to develop assertiveness skills, but we cannot make children fully responsible for their own safety. Thus, the adults in their lives also need to be educated in the areas of child abuse. An effective personal safety program will encourage parent and teacher participation.

A parent or staff workshop will include information in the following areas:

1. Definitions of child abuse (emphasis on sexual abuse and exploitation)
2. Statistics on child abuse (especially in the local area)
3. Myths about abuse
4. Characteristics of an abuser (with an explanation of pedophilia)
5. Indicators of abuse (physical, behavioral, and emotional)
6. Crisis intervention techniques
7. Prevention education
8. Overview of classroom programs
9. Community-based resources and programs

Parent workshops should emphasize communicating basic safety skills which will enhance self-esteem and help prevent abduction and abuse. Staff workshops should emphasize reporting laws and pro-

cedures, identification, crisis intervention, dealing with parents, and referrals. Ideally, the parent and staff workshops are given prior to the children's workshops.

In the children's workshops, the goal is to enhance self-esteem and reduce the vulnerability of children to abuse, exploitation, and abduction. Programs designed to include a high level of student participation, with age-appropriate materials and information, can accomplish this goal. A positive approach with reinforcement from well-informed, supportive adults will help children attain safety skills that are instinctive and habitual.

The basic underlying components of children's programs include those described below.

**Positive Approach** A positive approach builds self-esteem and self-confidence. The goal is to enhance children's self-concept so that they can learn to trust themselves and act assertively in potentially dangerous situations.

**Safety Awareness** The goal is to increase the child's level of awareness about situations and actions that may be dangerous. Teach the children basic safety procedures in a variety of areas of their lives—*i.e.* being home alone, talking to people they do not know well, accepting rides, making phone calls, and handling unwanted attention.

**Personal Safety** The goal is to let the children know that their bodies belong to themselves. Teach the differences among good touches, bad touches, and confusing touches (and what to do about the bad and confusing touches).

**Assertion Skills** The goal is to encourage children to follow safety rules comfortably. Give children permission to say NO to adults. Let them know they can be assertive to help keep themselves safe.

**Reporting Abuse** The goal is to encourage children to say NO, get away, and tell someone they trust.



Teach children that they do not have to keep secrets about touching and that it is never the child's fault. Stress the importance of telling a trusted adult.

**Safety Strategies** The goal is to enhance adoption of safety procedures by encouraging participation in the learning process. This includes open-ended questions for discussion, role plays, and skits to allow children the opportunity to develop their own strategies for safety and practice the skills they have learned.

**Age-Appropriateness** All information needs to be chosen carefully with the age of the children in mind. When developing materials, attention must be paid to the developmental issues and stages for each group.

These components of a basic prevention program are guidelines. Much has been written about, and many programs have been developed for, the prevention of child abuse, exploitation, and abduction. Survey and study as many programs as possible before choosing or developing one that will fit the needs of the children, presenters, and community in any given area.

## School Curricula

The Adam Walsh Child Resource Center, Inc., and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children cooperated in a three-year effort to research and develop a state-of-the-art personal safety curriculum for children. The end product is entitled *KIDS AND COMPANY: Together for Safety* and was produced with the support of the Digital Equipment Corporation.

*KIDS AND COMPANY* is a comprehensive personal safety curriculum for grades K-6 which can be used in both school and community group settings. The program provides children with skills, information, self-confidence, and support that will enhance their self-esteem and help prevent abduction and abuse.

Key highlights of the curriculum are its approach, style, instructional design, and components:

- Presents information in a positive and constructive manner
- Helps children develop commonsense safety habits through role play and practice
- Emphasizes skills needed in personal safety situations and avoids impractical and misleading rules about strangers
- Teaches children how to help each other and how to identify other helping people
- Promotes self-esteem as children's competence and confidence grow
- Invites parental involvement

- Its colorful and appealing art reinforces positive messages
- Engaging activities include puzzles, songs, and games
- Introduces video-based role playing
- Definite scope and sequence of skills
- Easy-to-follow lesson plans
- Clear objectives
- Step-by-step instructions
- Attractive and easy-to-read layout and design
- Teacher's guide (K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5/6)
- Student activity sheets (K, 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Videotape for role playing and discussion (K, 1/2, 3/4, 5/6)
- Parent kit, including introductory letter, parent guide, poster, and stickers
- Ancillaries, including materials for games and activities and visual aids
- Teacher training video

*KIDS AND COMPANY* meets state criteria set by school adoption committees, boards of education, and state legislation.

During the development of *KIDS AND COMPANY*, the Southern California Adam Walsh Child Resource Center used the Safety Education Program (SEP) which evolved from the Orange County CAPP (Child Assault Prevention Program), educating the sector of that county. SEP provides services for the private agencies in Orange County, California.

For further information about safety curricula and programs, please call the National Center.

## Publications

Producing and disseminating publications can be one of your most effective means of outreach to the community. Your publications can take the form of education and prevention guidelines for local schools and libraries; newsletters for parents, including such vital information as what steps to take if their child is missing; brochures for law-enforcement outlining the services of your nonprofit organization and encouraging a network with the criminal justice system; a colorful printed sheet of safety rules for children; or a typeset version of testimony you wish to present to your state legislature.

**Publications Policy and Planning** In addition to your statement of purpose or mission statement for your organization as a whole, you should prepare a short *publications policy statement* for all printed material disseminated to the public. Such a statement should include the following:

- Objectives of your publication program (long-term and short-term)
- Your intended audience

- Your desired image
- Topics of importance you intend to address

Send your publications policy statement to your Board of Directors or Board of Trustees for review.

When you have developed a publications policy for your entire program, write a brief descriptive plan for each individual publication. Such a description should include the following:

- Specific purpose of the publication
- Intended audience
- Format (brochure, book, leaflet)
- Length
- Possible authors
- Number of copies needed

**Finding an Author** If you do not have the time or expertise to write the publication yourself, to whom do you turn? First, turn to the experts in your community—in law-enforcement, social services, legal services, medicine, and so on. Do not leave too much to chance with your writers, however. Provide a detailed outline for them, and include length restrictions, intended audience, reading level, and firm deadlines. Make sure that you have reviewers lined up to examine the material for form and content.

**Scheduling and Budgeting** Once you have written a plan and found an author for your publication, develop a schedule to determine a timeline that extends from the initial assignment to the author to completed distribution to your audience. Depending on the length of your publication, this timeline could encompass anywhere from a few weeks to several months. Your schedule should look like the one on page 28.

The budget on each individual publication can vary greatly, depending upon its length, format, paper stock, number of ink colors used, and number of copies printed. When you have determined these variables, compare prices of various typesetters and printers in your area.

Of course, you may only need a typewriter, a writer, an editor, and a duplicating machine. Several ways to save money on your publication include the following:

- Type the manuscript by hand, but use typeset headlines or headings for a professional look.
- Hire an artist to design a logo or nameplate for your organization.
- Use a desk-top publishing system.
- Obtain advertising from local businesses.

The best way to save money and promote networking and information exchange is to produce a publication in cooperation with another organization—whether it be a law-enforcement agency, another nonprofit service provider, community resource center, or local business.

**Writing the Publication** While it is not the purpose of this section to teach exposition, following are a few tips on good writing that you may have forgotten since high school or college:

1. Before you begin writing, “brainstorm” and take notes on your ideas for the publication. This will develop into a working outline.
2. Write a complete formal outline of your publication.
3. Write a first draft, without spending an inordinate amount of time finding the precise word and exact phrasing.
4. Several hours—or several days—later, reread and revise your first draft. You will find yourself rewriting sentences and paragraphs, adding material to improve the flow, adding transitions, omitting needless words, and rewriting to improve clarity.
5. Write the introduction.
6. “Fine tune” your publication—edit and proofread. Now is the time to determine the precise wording and exact phrasing.
7. Choose an effective title.
8. If you are using photographs, write the captions, keeping them strong and concise.

**Editing** If you are simply editing your author’s writing, make sure that the text is structurally sound, flows well, is grammatically correct, and makes logical sense. Make sure that the text conforms to your organization’s style and usage.

**Design and Typesetting** Once you have completed your manuscript and it has been approved by reviewers, it is time to prepare your manuscript for the typesetter (if you are using a typesetter). Follow these guidelines to prepare the manuscript for the typesetter:

1. For short publications, you need not submit the text on a computer disk. For longer publications, it is less expensive and more accurate to use a computer disk. Check with your typesetter to determine what software they can “read.”
2. Even if you submit a computer disk, enclose a copy of the manuscript.
3. Use 8½ × 11” paper, double-spaced.
4. Type the name of your publication on every page.
5. Distinguish between italic type and underlining.
6. Draw a circle around any directions that are not to be typeset.
7. “Spec” the type, which means that you will indicate on the manuscript 1) what typeface is used, 2) the type size, 3) the space between lines, and 4) the width of the line.

If you are unfamiliar with typefaces and sizes,

**PUBLICATION SCHEDULE**  
(Name of Publication)

	Date Completed
First draft	_____
Manuscript review and approval	_____
Editing and copyfitting	_____
Copy spec'ed and to typesetter	_____
Galleys from typesetter	_____
Galleys proofread	_____
Mock-up of actual pages	_____
Galleys corrected	_____
Paste-ups (page proof)	_____
Paste-ups (page proof) proofread	_____
Paste-ups to printer	_____
Bluelines approved	_____
Printing	_____
Distribution	_____

talk to a designer or typesetter to determine what kind of type is appropriate for your publication. You may want a different kind of type for your headings than the one used in the text. Standard typefaces include Times Roman and Century Schoolbook for text, and Helvetica (a sans serif typeface) for headings. A standard type size for text is 9 points on 10, or 9/10, which means that the type size is 9 points and there is an extra point of space (called *leading*) between the lines—giving you 10 points total. Photo captions are generally set in smaller (8 point) type in boldface (a darker version of the original type). The width of the line, or column width of the type, is generally measured in *picas* (approximately 1/6 of an inch). If you do not have a pica ruler, measure your column in inches, and consult with your typesetter.

*Note:* If you want to know exactly how many lines your publication will run, you will need to ask your typesetter how many characters of type will fit on the line width you have chosen. Then, set the margins on your typewriter or computer so that the number of characters per line matches the typeset line.

In “spec’ing” type, make sure to mark such details as space between paragraphs, paragraph indents, justified or ragged text, etc. Remember that the typesetter will charge you for any alterations you make after the text is set.

The first set of type is usually run on long sheets of paper, called *galleys*. When the type is set and returned to you, *proofread* it carefully. Proofreading is not simply reading closely, it means reading letter for letter, checking every detail of the text for errors

large or small. Some proofreaders go over a text twice—once to catch larger flaws in overall design and spacing, and a second time to proofread letter for letter.

**Final Proofs** The proofreading process may take you through several stages of proof. Once your galleys are exactly as you want them, your typesetter or designer will make a final paste-up of *camera-ready copy* to sent to the printer. The type will be cut up and placed in columns on art boards exactly as it will appear on the printed copy. The final paste-up will also indicate for the printer the placement and size of photographs and artwork and the *color breaks*, which show where different ink colors are placed. Then, all camera-ready copy, artwork, and photographs are sent to the printer.

The final stage of proof you will see is the *blue-line*, which will come from the printer. Look this over carefully for any broken type, covered type, color breaks, and alignment. When you have approved the blue-line, the publication is ready for printing.

**Photographs** Using black-and-white photographs is a fairly inexpensive way to enhance the visual appeal and human interest of your publication. A few guidelines on choosing effective photographs are given below:

1. Choose photos with strong visual appeal that "make a statement."
2. Crop your photos to eliminate unnecessary or uninteresting parts.
3. If possible, send black-and-white photos with a glossy finish to the printer for reproduction.
4. Choose photos with good contrast—strong darks and lights as well as a wide range of grey tones.
5. Choose prints with sharp detail, not blurred.

**Working with Typesetters** The following advice in working with publication production specialists has been taken from the course manual for "Newsletter Editing, Design, and Production," a Promotional Perspectives seminar. (For more information about Promotional Perspectives, their seminars and publications, call (313) 994-0007.)

Teamwork is an important concept to remember when working with typists, typesetters, and printers. Both you and the individual or group that prepares the work have responsibilities that have to be met if the task is to be completed to your satisfaction.

With typists and typesetters, your first duty is to provide clean copy from which to work. When these professionals state that they are "paid to set type, not to unravel dirty copy," they are not being fussy, but practical. Handwritten copy, messy misplaced corrections, and scrambled script can slow the process and cost you money—especially with the more expensive typesetting.

Do everything you can to keep the typesetter from being confused or delayed by your copy. This may mean re-keyboarding sections or pages of copy, but it will help insure a minimum of errors and will help the typesetter stick to the quoted price.

Remember that the quoted price is based, according to a universal code in the profession, on "the receipt of original copy or manuscript clearly typed, double-spaced on 8½ × 11" uncoated stock, one side only. Condition of copy which deviates from this standard is subject to re-estimation and pricing review at time of submission of copy, unless otherwise specified in the estimate."

Another rule to remember is one concerning alterations: "Alterations represent work performed in addition to original specifications. Such additional work shall be charged at current rates and be supported with documentation upon request." Think twice, then think again before you change typeset copy. To avoid costly alteration charges, make sure the copy you submit is exactly what you want in content, form, and style.

In submitting copy to a typesetter, provide a complete spec (specification) sheet that indicates the name of the typefaces, the point sizes for type and leading, and the line width. Include also whether the copy is to be set flush left, flush right, centered, justified, ragged, indented, and so on.

With recent advances in computers and typesetting equipment, new capabilities are available that can minimize headaches in creating typeset copy from typed text. Interfacing enables a word processor operator to capture keystrokes on a floppy disk, then deliver the disk to the typesetter. A typesetting service equipped to interface can insert the disk to produce the typeset galleys, ready for paste-up. Some typesetters have optical character readers that "read" type from an IBM Selectric or certain other typewriters. Typed codes are inserted by the typesetter, converting the manuscript to typesetting. In either of these methods, there is no re-keyboarding by the typesetter and, therefore, less proofreading required and less opportunity for error. Some services can receive the information by telecommunicating manuscripts over telephone lines, thus eliminating the disk delivery.

**Working with Printers** Printing services abound, so find those whose size and capabilities fit your needs. "Quick print" shops offer speedy delivery and adequate quality for many short publications, such as newsletters. Because they often use less sophisticated equipment than a commercial printer, you need to be concerned about maximum paper size, halftone quality, ability to print and register two colors of ink, and paper requirements (some cannot accept coated stocks).

Commercial offset printers have varying capabilities as well. Some stay just one jump ahead of the "quick" printers, while others have huge six-color presses and are totally inappropriate for a 2,000 run of a two-color brochure.

A web press is a possibility for long-run jobs. These are the same presses used for newspapers. Huge rolls of paper, rather than pre-cut sheets, are fed through rollers that print both sides of the paper at once. The continuous paper is cut and folded all on one machine. Some local weekly newspapers like to fill in their schedules with commercial jobs. They often offer very low rates to jobs with press runs as low as 2,000. Usually, however, you cannot specify special paper stocks, and you will have to take whatever newsprint is on the press.

One initial consideration is to avoid relying on one printing service for all your work. The printer that produces your letterhead or invoices may not be the best choice for producing other publications. If the printed quality of your publication has not been satisfactory or if you struggle to communicate with that printer's staff for each issue, get quotes from other firms and talk at length with the key people who would be working on your job. But be sure to give your choice a chance to prove itself, rather than jumping from one firm to another. It takes time to build the rapport and understanding that can lead to effective, efficient production.

Submit your work to the printer in as clean and camera-ready condition as possible. If a designer prepares the artwork, that designer will be responsible for the quality of the submission. If you prepare your own paste-ups, make sure the copy is well secured and that special instructions are noted on the margins of the art boards or on tissue overlays. Measurements of size, folds, photo crops, and photo sizing must be accurate. Avoid surprising the printer with final art that does not follow information supplied for quoting. As for typesetting, provide a complete instruction sheet with specifications for every detail. Stick to your deadlines, and your printer's staff should be able to honor theirs.

As a general policy, typesetters and printers are not responsible for verbal instructions. If it is important enough to mention, put it in writing. Keep a copy of all your instructions. You will feel more at ease, and your supplier will know exactly what you expect.

## Nonprofit Organizations and the Media

"One man awake can waken another. The second can awaken his next door brother. The three awake can rouse the town by turning the whole place upside down. And the many awake make such a fuss they finally awaken the rest of us." [Helen Kromer]

Although the relationship has been an unpredictable one, there can be no doubt that since the early 1980s, issue-oriented organizations and the media, working hand in hand, have played a tremendous role in raising public awareness about crimes against children. More specifically, in hundreds of cases they have together played a direct part in the location and recovery of missing children.

The press has a responsibility to report news of interest to the community, and few subjects touch the hearts of the reading and viewing public more than the victimization of an innocent child. But, for the staff of nonprofit organizations that deal with missing children's issues, it has become clear that the public and the press have much to learn about the complexity of such crimes—that the term *missing child* means much more than the case of the "stranger-abducted" youth—and that it is *our* responsibility to educate them.

**Developing a Media Plan** Working with the press can be a rewarding experience, but it must be a job you take seriously. Take the time to determine what your communications goals are in conjunction with your organization's long-range plan.

- Determine the realistic picture of your NPO's current image and the message you are now delivering.
- Develop a clear vision of the image and message your Board of Directors and management want to project.
- Prepare a flexible one-year plan aimed at addressing the discrepancies between the two and propose a strategy for delivering that message.

**Designating a Spokesperson** Determine who from your organization is both knowledgeable about the child victimization issue and comfortable enough with the press to serve as a spokesperson. It may perhaps be the president or founder of your NPO, chairman of the board, or an experienced staff member—you! Help educate that individual about the local press. Learn print and broadcast media deadlines. Respond as quickly as possible to media inquiries, and gather as much information on their requests as you can. This will be as useful in preparing your spokesperson for the interview as it will be in addressing the needs of the reporter. The more you know about your local press and what they need to cover their story, the easier your job will be. Keep a log of completed interviews for your files.

**Press Materials: Tools of the Trade** Prepare a background information package about the issue and your organization's role in it. Keep the language simple and the message concise. If you have not done so already, consider mailing these packets or scheduling brief meetings to deliver them to introduce yourself

to the appropriate press contacts at your local public affairs or news departments.

1. **Press Release.** Although an often overused medium, the press release *can* be an effective way of delivering your message. Release a media advisory only when you feel you have truly newsworthy information to deliver. Your release should be brief—keep it to one page, if possible, and address the classic “Who, What, When, Where, and Why” details of your chosen topic. Do not forget to date your release, and list a contact name and telephone number, in case the recipient of your advisory needs to contact you for more information.
2. **Public Service Announcement (PSA).** Developing PSA messages for print and broadcast media can prove an ideal communications vehicle for the nonprofit organization on a budget. The Federal Communications Commission requires radio and television stations to designate a portion of air time to broadcast public service messages that are in the community’s interest. Competition for the time is stiff, but it is well worth the time invested to develop a variety of messages and make them available to the local media. Some periodicals (daily and weekly newspapers and magazines) also will print PSA messages as “filler.” Contact the public affairs director of the publication for more information.
3. **News Conference.** Call a news conference only if the subject of the briefing is of *major* importance to your organization, its programs, or the issues you address. Prepare a brief statement which your designated spokesperson, president, or chairman should deliver. Have press packets on hand, including a copy of the written statement, and background information about the issue. Limit the conference to a half hour—leaving plenty of time for a question/answer period.

#### **Building a Working Relationship with the Media**

Many missing children NPOs are organized by victim parents or by community members touched by child victimization personally. Naturally, these individuals can deliver the sincerest perspective on the need for increased public awareness, but knowledgeable child advocates who have never been touched personally by such crimes can also be tremendous resources for the media. If you are uncomfortable addressing certain issues you feel might be better addressed by an expert in the field, refer your local press to your network of other NPO spokespersons or staff at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The more responsive you are in getting your contacts the best information available, the more trust they will place in you, and the higher the likelihood that

they will continue to contact you for your input. Building a strong reputation as a credible and reliable resource should be one of the most important facets of your communications strategy.

#### **Representing the Best Interests of the Missing Child**

Many of the interviews your spokesperson may accept will involve specific cases of abducted children from your community or state. The reporter may also request to interview the parents of the missing youth. Although maximum exposure on the case can prove invaluable to the investigation—as well as raising public awareness about the issue—it is of vital importance to consider the wishes of each victim family. This may mean that, at some point, you serve as broker between press and parent.

Parents of a missing child have an equal right to sensitive treatment by the media, without preempting the public’s right to be accurately informed about the news. As a go-between, it will be your responsibility to remind reporters of the special needs of the family and attempt to ensure that they are adequately addressed.

At the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, we share a policy many NPOs operate by, and we have incorporated it into our Policy Operations Manual. The public affairs director or case manager handling the case in question will contact the parents to determine their interest in participating in an interview each time a request is made by the media. Even in cases in which the parents may be interviewed repeatedly in a short period of time, never assume that they will always want to talk with the press. Arrange for the requested interview just as you would for the spokesperson for your organization, and reconfirm or decline the interview on the family’s behalf as soon as possible. Although many journalists contend that one family’s suffering may be another’s prevention, always remember that it is each parent’s prerogative to decline press coverage for any reason.

**In the Case of a Recovery** In the happy situation that a missing child is safely located and recovered, an interesting dilemma presents itself to the NPO involved in the search for the child. Certainly, recoveries are powerful examples to the press and public that there can be positive resolutions in the missing children issue and that the system in place to assist in their recovery can work successfully. Media coverage of the actual reunification, however, may in some cases cause further trauma to an already victimized family. Work with the parent in such a situation and keep the best interests of the child first and foremost in your plans—most especially in cases where the child may have suffered physical or sexual abuse at the hands of the abductor. Just as an adult victim of rape has the right to anonymity, so does the child victim of abduction and sexual assault. As advocates

for children, we may have to remind reporters—and parents—of the rights of the recovered child.

**When Things Go Wrong: Crisis Communication**

With all your plans in place, and programs in full swing, you can never predict a media crisis—or anticipate the damage it can do to the credibility of the missing children issue or your organization's efforts to address it.

It may be the hotly debated statistics question, a problem with a local fund-raising project, or a misunderstanding locally with a family of a missing child. Whatever the crisis, you must be ready to act quickly and decisively to head off the flow of misinformation and diffuse the controversy.

1. Meet with the principals of your organization—Board of Directors or management team—and determine all the known facts about the situation.
2. Designate one specific staff member to handle incoming press calls, and arrange interviews with the designated spokesperson.
3. Brief your staff on the truth about the situation and make it clear who is to talk with the press and who is not. Then, encourage them to return to their normal job responsibilities.
4. Depending on the nature and degree of emergency of the crisis, plan to release a statement to the media which can be delivered by hand to local press contacts or announced at a news con-

ference. Prepare the statement, making a full disclosure of the situation. Being completely honest about the problem and your plans to address it will help to retain your credibility with the media.

5. *Never say* "Off the record . . ." today unless you are prepared to see it in print tomorrow. *Never say* "No comment. . . ." This often implies wrongdoing and can be easily avoided. It is much better to answer a portion of the question asked, promise to get back with the reporter with more information, and *follow up immediately*.
6. Touch base with your press contacts following the release of your organization's statement and assure them that you are there to answer their questions or address their concerns. Encourage them to visit your organization and meet with your president. The more willing your organization is to cooperate with inquiries, the faster the crisis will be diffused.

**Conclusion** As members of the network of missing children's organizations, we all know too well how much damage one badly handled crisis in this issue can do to the years of our combined dedicated efforts.

Along with working more closely with the media, we need to work more closely with each other. Drawing from each other's strengths, we all stand to benefit from this network and pass the successes of our labors on to the children we are charged to serve.

## 6. Keeping the Nonprofit Organization Going

*Dr. Stephen R. Block  
Institute for Nonprofit Organization Management*

It starts with a great idea: A problem in the community needs addressing, and neighbors and other interested parties pull together in a true American fashion to create an organization to solve it. Shortly, the voluntary efforts necessitate the need for more money, materials, and visibility. Collective problem solving has once again fashioned itself beyond the capabilities of a loose association of individuals into the need to form a new corporate entity—*i.e.*, a nonprofit organization.

Determining the need for a nonprofit organization (NPO) to solve a problem in the community is the simplest part of the collective problem-solving effort. Shaping and maintaining the organization will be the most challenging of responsibilities.

### **The Great Mistakes**

By their nature, nonprofit organizations are formed with intentions to deliver programmatic services to assist individuals in need. Program services may be focused in areas of prevention, education, counseling, and advocacy, among many others. The fact that successful nonprofit services require attention to effective management principles generally escapes the attention of most founders of nonprofit organizations. In fact, organizations that have been in existence for several years often also rely on the strengths of the program to carry the organization forward and lack the proper stewardship that is required to manage a nonprofit organization. Nonprofit organizations may face several types of problems in their attempt to maintain or grow. The problems are actually symptoms of the organization's lack of management skills. The symptoms may include the following:

- Lack of funds
- Reliance on one funding source

- Lack of a clear organizational direction for the future
- Overwhelmed by crisis after crisis
- No ability to recruit volunteers
- No ability to keep active volunteers
- No ability to attract appropriate Board members
- Uninterested or inattentive Board members
- Lack of adequate financial data to make appropriate decisions
- Lack of knowledge and information about whether services are making a difference

### **Beyond Survival**

The leaders in the nonprofit organization should strive towards the development of a strong, vibrant, purposeful entity. The same features that go into creating a strong nonprofit organization are essentially the same elements for maintaining the nonprofit organization. Keeping the nonprofit organization going will require attention to two halves of the nonprofit's world: the inside and the outside. The inside world of the nonprofit organization includes the internal operations, such as finances, program management, staffing, the Board of Directors, the budget, office facilities, and resource development activities. The outside world, on the other hand, represents organizations and individuals that may have some influence over the nonprofit organization, either currently or potentially in the future. They include funding sources, policy makers, the media, and other nonprofit organizations who may be considered competitors or potential collaborators. Often, nonprofit organizations believe they are attending to both their internal and external forces at the same time but, in reality, they are dealing with these elements one at a time rather than in some integrated or planned way.



The following is a brief examination of both the internal and external forces affecting the nonprofit service provider. It will be up to each individual nonprofit organization to examine these elements and determine how best to integrate their own findings and devise what may become part of the organization's plan for continuation, or the *strategic plan*.

## Internal Focus

**The Organization's Foundation** Just as we would not want to build a house on a cracked or eroding foundation, maintenance of the nonprofit organization requires a solid foundation built upon its mission. The *mission* is the focal point of the organization from which all other decisions should be based, including fund raising and program development. The mission is usually represented by a statement that provides a common vision for the Board, staff, and volunteers.

The Board and management staff must periodically review the organization's mission statement and reaffirm its meaning as the driving force for the organization. Indeed, the mission statement may need revision from time to time.

**Corporate Papers** It is the responsibility of the Board's secretary to hold and maintain the corporate papers of the organization, which should be maintained in a safe place. This includes the articles of incorporation, minutes of the organization, annual reports, bylaws, and other documents that are required for the sound management of the organization. It is always a good idea to keep a copy of all these records off premises in the event a fire or theft should occur.

There are several documents that are very important to a nonprofit organization. One of the first steps in becoming recognized as a nonprofit organization is to file a set of articles of incorporation through a state government agency, usually under the auspices of the office of the Secretary of State or state Attorney General. Completing the paperwork and paying the small fee to apply for recognition as a nonprofit corporation is itself an uncomplicated task. Often, an outline is provided by the Secretary of State's office which indicates the type of information needed for completing the articles of incorporation. Usually, articles of incorporation contain the following information:

- Name of the organization
- Purpose of the organization
- How long the organization will exist
- Location of the organization and its registered agent
- Names and addresses of the initial Board of Directors

- A statement that the Board of Directors will not personally gain financially or share in the profits of the organization
- Provisions for dissolving the organization and distributing its assets

Occasionally, management staff and the Board of Directors will find it necessary to amend the articles of incorporation. This is particularly true if the purpose statement requires significant or radical changes. Otherwise, the articles of incorporation, particularly the purpose statement, will serve as the initial guiding force for the organization.

Maintenance of the organization also requires re-examination of the organization bylaws, which serve as the constitution of the organization. They provide the guidelines and rules for running the organization and are necessary for managing its daily affairs. The following provisions are sometimes found in a nonprofit organization's bylaws:

- Organization name
- Principal location
- Description of management requirements—*i.e.*, powers of the Board of Directors
- The number of Board members
- Annual meetings
- Required notice of meetings
- Quorum requirements
- Voting rights
- Proxy requirements
- Board terms of office
- Board powers
- Nominating procedures
- Attendance requirements
- Waivers of notice
- Board liability
- Committee establishment
- Requirements for corporate contracts
- Indemnification
- Requirements for keeping records
- Corporate seal designation
- Fiscal year designation
- Procedures for amending the bylaws

Maintaining the organization also requires keeping a set of records, such as Board minutes, which detail the organization's policy decisions. The minutes, in fact, provide a historical record of the organization's activities, and it is based on this history that the organization may move forward and establish its agenda.

**Tax Exemption** Establishing a set of bylaws and maintaining a set of minutes following the filing of the articles of incorporation does not, by itself, provide a nonprofit organization with a waiver to avoid paying taxes.

The next step in becoming recognized as a tax-exempt organization is to complete Form 1023, obtained from the Internal Revenue Service. Based upon a nonprofit organization's response to the questions found in Form 1023, the Internal Revenue Service will determine whether an organization should be recognized as a tax-exempt entity. The most preferred recognition is a Section 501(c)(3). The 501(c)(3) label not only provides the organization with the exemption from paying taxes on related income, it also allows contributors to the organization to write off a portion of their giving on their own personal tax return. Becoming recognized as a tax-exempt organization increases the opportunities for the organization to receive charitable contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, and other granting institutions. An applicant must demonstrate, through Form 1023, that the intention of the nonprofit organization (which has already filed its articles of incorporation with the state) has a charitable mission generally falling within the categories of education, science, health, human services, or religion.

In addition to determining whether an applicant fits within the definitions of the Internal Revenue Service Code for a nonprofit organization, the Internal Revenue Service may, during the nonprofit organization's existence, examine whether the organization has operated for the benefit of the general public and within the boundaries of the organization's purpose as stated on its Form 1023.

Another form of tax exemption that a nonprofit organization should explore once it has received recognition by the Internal Revenue Service is the exemption of payment of state taxes, both on revenues and on goods purchased. Application for this type of exemption is available through the State Department of the Treasury, sometimes referred to as the Department of Revenue. Recognition by the Internal Revenue Service does not automatically provide for the exemption of paying sales tax to a state or a city. In fact, some states and cities have a more narrow definition of a charitable organization, making tax exemption at a city or state level more difficult to achieve.

Once the nonprofit organization receives recognition as exempt from federal taxes, it does have some obligations in order to maintain this special status. Specifically, the organization is required to file Form 990 no later than five and a half months after the end of the organization's fiscal year. The Form 990 is a vehicle by which the Internal Revenue Service accounts for the organization's income and expenditures. As referred to earlier, the 990 is used to demonstrate that the nonprofit organization has received sufficient support from the general public to meet certain "support tests" required by the Internal Revenue

Service for the nonprofit organization to maintain its tax-exempt status.

Another form of tax that an organization may need to pay and may seek exemption from is personal property tax for items such as desks and furnishings in an office. If a nonprofit can demonstrate that the property is used to further the charitable mission of the organization, then it may be in a position to apply for exemption of payment of personal property taxes. It is best to check with local taxing authorities on this matter.

There are other tax requirements that a nonprofit organization must adhere to in order to stay in business. The nonprofit organization, like other businesses, might have to collect taxes for unemployment programs and for workmen's compensation. The amount that the organization is required to pay into such funds may depend on the number of employees and the level of salary and wages that are paid. Nonprofit organizations are not exempt from paying this form of levy. In some states, however, a nonprofit organization may put up a bond or letter of credit in lieu of payment of state unemployment taxes. The nonprofit organization would still be responsible for payment of unemployment funds to the state, should a former employee file for unemployment insurance and be granted payments by the state.

One last point about the payment of taxes. Although a nonprofit organization may have been granted tax exemption, it may still be required to pay taxes on unrelated income in the amount of \$1,000 or more earned. If an organization is selling items or earning funds that are not directly connected to the organization's mission, it is always best to check with a tax accountant to determine the organization's liability for the payment of taxes.

**Governance** Organizing and perpetuating a Board of Directors is one of the most difficult of tasks in the ongoing maintenance of an effective nonprofit organization. The nonprofit's Board of Directors has a responsibility for planning, controlling, and evaluating. In the area of planning, the Board is responsible for establishing the mission and program direction for the organization. It is also responsible for reviewing program plans and monitoring the progress of the organization's activities.

The controlling function encompasses the establishment of policies and financial controls. The Board has a fiduciary responsibility in how money is expended as well as collected. The Board also has a responsibility for approving annual budgets and reviewing periodic financial statements. They must insure that there are proper financial controls, such as how checks are handled when they come into the office and that they are deposited in a timely manner.

Policies established by the Board become a set of

guidelines or instructional rules for how activities should be performed in the organization. The evaluation function of the Board is to review the critical components of the organization's programs that determine its success or failure. In addition, the Board is responsible for evaluating the performance of its paid chief executive officer.

Perpetuating the Board of Directors is critical to the life of the nonprofit organization, including recruiting appropriate members. Poor recruitment policy usually results in unmotivated and uncommitted Board members. Nonprofit organizations should take more care in recruiting and nominating members that are reliable in attending meetings, committing to serving on committees, and assisting in resource development. The success of the organization is largely due to a successful Board of Directors.

The individuals invited and chosen for the Board should help to fill gaps of skill and knowledge. It was once said that a Board of Directors should comprise individuals who collectively make up the following three *Ws*: wealth, wisdom, and work. The organization needs workers—individuals who will assist in organizational tasks and events. In the area of wisdom, the Board members should have issue expertise that will contribute to decision making and program development. The notion that Board members should participate in fund-raising activities is often a controversial topic of discussion, but the third *W* does indicate that it is the Board's responsibility to help raise dollars. A Board of Directors should closely examine its own policy about resource development. It is always a sound requirement for a Board member to contribute a certain dollar level, even if it becomes a token amount for those with more modest means. In some arenas, it becomes more difficult to raise dollars unless the organization's Board of Directors has been unanimous in its own financial giving to the organization.

Maintenance and ongoing development of a nonprofit organization also requires a planned educational program for the Board of Directors. Board training and skill development allow members to understand their basic roles and responsibilities of stewardship and their relationship to the organization's staff. Board training is also a mechanism for improving the Board's use of committees, which can be an effective tool for examining and completing some of the work of the organization.

**Liability and Financial Management** Nonprofit organizations often operate in a risk-filled environment characterized by non-quantifiable services which affect people's very lives as well as depend upon a multitude of funding sources. These kinds of risks make NPOs unique—and vulnerable. Proper financial management, effective internal controls, and an ad-

equated accounting system can eliminate or at least mitigate many of these risks and liabilities.

The actual liability for running a nonprofit organization falls into the hands of the Board of Directors. Board members often believe that having the protection of directors and officers liability insurance protects them in their work with the nonprofit organization. This may not be the case. In order to eliminate risk, the Board must act properly in its role as the organization's legal guardian. Board members can limit their liability by attending Board meetings, reviewing the organization's records, and ensuring that Board minutes are accurate and that a full discussion and understanding of policies, programs, contracts, and other areas requiring the Board's decision receive full discussion and examination.

Many states are now passing legislation to protect citizens in their participation as volunteer Board members. These laws are relatively new and untested, however. There is no protection for volunteers who misguide the organization by using "bad judgment."

One of the most important functions of the Board is to control the organization's financial position. Financial management, in many ways, is the cornerstone of any organization. As a basic requirement, all Board members should insist on routinely receiving financial reports that clarify the current fiscal health of the organization. These reports should include a statement of the monthly restricted and unrestricted expenses and revenues and year-to-date reports for the statement of revenues and expenses. A current reading on the organization's assets and liabilities will give further clues to the organization's overall fiscal health. In addition, Board members should insist on cash flow reports and budget variance analyses, which can be used in forecasting the future cash needs of the organization. Financial reports give meaning to the organization's budget, which is a management tool for helping guide the organization's strategic plan, and also reduce the Board's liability.

All but the smallest of organizations should be audited from time to time, and most should be audited once a year. An audit is not an examination of every financial transaction that has been recorded in the organization but is, rather, a test designed to make a judgment on how effectively the records were kept and the degree of reliance one can place on the internal controls of the nonprofit organization. The audit provides credibility for the financial statements, which are used for making important decisions within the organization. Likewise, funders often are further influenced by a solid audit report and "clean opinion" of the nonprofit organization.

**Resource Development** Fund raising is a management function. The determination of how much cash

the organization requires to function and the methods by which the organization will seek those dollars is determined, in part, by the Board of Directors and is tied to the organization's mission.

Unfortunately, for many nonprofit organizations, the ability to succeed in raising dollars is directly linked to today's trends and giving patterns among social causes or particular problem arenas. When the tide falls, the NPO often suffers financially. Nonprofit organizations who have longer-term success in resource development are generally those that approach fund raising as a planning process.

Among the many types of fund-raising activities are the following:

- Special events
- Planned giving
- Earned and venture income
- Big donors
- Acquisition of grants and contracts
- Direct mail

The sources for targeting fund-raising activities include individuals, government agencies, foundations, corporations, and religious institutions. The decision to target a resource development campaign and the goal amount of dollars required is made through the management staff and Board of Directors' resource development plan, which is also a product of the organization's strategic plan. The resource development plan will include a description of the organization's activities and the goals of the organization in dollar terms.

**Grants** Every year the nonprofit sector has witnessed a growth in the amount of dollars given to nonprofit organizations. In 1988, for example, more than \$100 billion was donated to nonprofit organizations from private-sector sources. This amount includes approximately \$12 billion from foundations and corporations, each giving approximately \$6 billion to nonprofit organizations. The balance of the funds comes from individuals.

Despite the fact that individuals give more money to nonprofit organizations, nonprofit organizations spend a great deal of time and energy soliciting funds from foundations and corporations as their main source of dollar-seeking activity. The reason that nonprofit organizations seek support from foundations and corporations is understandable. If they should receive a grant, the dollar amount is usually larger than it would receive from a private individual.

Seeking a grant from a foundation or corporation requires much homework. Nonprofit organizations seeking grants from foundations and corporations must research whether their organization's goals fit within the interest areas of the foundation or corporate giving program. There are directories available

in libraries to assist the grant seeker in this task. The *Foundation Directory*, for example, contains a listing of foundations by geographic region and subject area and allows the grant seeker to determine whether a foundation may be ripe for receiving a grant proposal. In addition to using the information in the *Foundation Directory*, it is always a good idea to write directly to the foundation or corporation and ask for instructions for submitting a proposal. Annual reports from corporations and foundations also are useful as a tool for learning about the amount of giving from the funding source.

The Internal Revenue Service requires foundations to file Form 990. The 990s are available for inspection on microfiche at the Foundation Center in New York City and in their regional depositories throughout the country—often located in major public libraries. The Form 990 completed by the foundation will indicate the amount of dollars given by the foundation and a description of the recipient's program. This will give the reader of the 990 a better clue as to the areas of interest of the foundation. Using the directories, the 990s, and annual reports, one can learn a great deal about the foundation's giving program.

Corporations and foundations may have other "agendas" which will not appear in catalogs and directories. It is always a good idea, therefore, to get to know the funder better. Nothing beats meeting the foundation director or corporate giving director face to face. In fact, if a goal of the nonprofit organization is to survive, stabilize, or move forward, it will require the ongoing cultivation of relationships among funding sources.

Billions of dollars are also given away annually by government agencies. The same principle applies for government funding sources as does for the foundation and corporation. Get to know the requirements of the funding source and the individuals involved in the giving programs. If it is impossible to fly to Washington, D.C., or to meet with state or regional representatives, using the telephone is an alternative. Do your homework. Some useful tools include the *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance*, which covers listings for government grant programs. The *Federal Register*, which is published daily, records rule changes and allocations for grants. The *Commerce Business Daily* is another good source for learning about contract opportunities with federal government agencies. Make sure to follow all grant regulations to the detail.

Some nonprofit organizations are much more capable of generating grant support than others. The reason for this is not just in the organization's ability to write proposals but is a result of a better grasp of the problems at hand and an ability to evaluate pro-

gram limitations and strengths. A strong proposal will usually focus on the following key areas:

1. An introduction to the organization, demonstrating its credibility and capability to get a job done.
2. A problem statement that demonstrates an organization's understanding of a particular problem. The problem usually relates to the reason why the nonprofit organization was formed.
3. A goals and objectives section that addresses the types of solutions and measurable objectives the nonprofit organization seeks.
4. A methods section, which describes in detail how the nonprofit organization will achieve the goals and objectives. It is in this area that you should describe the type of management and staffing that will be required to get the job done and the time lines, charts, and illustrations to support the planned effort.
5. An evaluation tool, which will demonstrate accountability to the funding source as well as the organization's own commitment to learning and growing. The evaluation tool should describe how the organization seeks to monitor its work.
6. Description of future funding sources, as foundations or corporations do not want nonprofit organizations to become too reliant on only them. Describing future funding sources is also a mechanism for the nonprofit organization to scrutinize its future needs.

Nonprofit organizations should seek to find out which federal agencies and divisions may have programs with available grant dollars. Reading directories, attending conferences, using consultants, subscribing to newsletters, and contacting Congressional offices are among a variety of mechanisms for learning about funding opportunities and leads into different governmental agencies. Once the federal agency is identified, the nonprofit should request to be placed

on a mailing list to receive future announcements of requests for proposals and solicitation notices. For example, the Department of Justice has a victim's assistance division that awards grants to nonprofit organizations for specific categorical or demonstration project programs.

## External Focus

**Trends** Nonprofit organizations that not only pay attention to their internal development but also examine outside trends have a better survival rate. Outside the organization there are various individuals, organizations, and changing events that can impact the nonprofit organization. Determining who the individuals and organizations are that can influence your nonprofit organization is a starting point. This can include policy makers, funders, media representatives, client groups, or other nonprofit organizations—your competitors. Cultivate a positive and cooperative relationship among these “key publics” in order to seek advice, support, and opportunities.

**Competitors/Collaborators** Nonprofit organizations indeed compete—for funds, for volunteers, and for visibility. Examining the strengths and weaknesses among the competition can clue your organization into areas it should enter—or avoid. Our competition can also be our “best friend,” and working together can be advantageous. Pooling resources can assist organizations in achieving their mission. Collaboration is viewed positively among funders.

**Conclusion** Solving a problem in the community requires more than a good idea. It requires meeting the challenges of managing the nonprofit organization, which was formed to solve the problem and to fulfill a mission. For an organization to survive, maintain, develop—“keep going”—the management staff and Board of Directors must pay attention not only to quality program services, but also to how they manage both policy and resources.

# 7. Networking

*Cherisse L. Luxa*  
*King County (Seattle) Police Department*

*Martha H. Maxwell*  
*New Jersey State Police*

*Carolyn Zogg*  
*Child Find of America, Inc.*

## Networking with Other Organizations

Because of the complexities of child custody, it is necessary to work with legal, judicial and, in many cases, social service agencies.

**Legal Services** It is most important that the searching parents have competent legal assistance and advice to know how to go about finding the child and returning the child to the legal jurisdiction of their state. In their counseling, nonprofit organizations must guard against giving legal advice, which is considered the unauthorized practice of law when done by a non-lawyer.

Organizations can work with state bar association pro bono committees as well as the American Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the National Organization for Women (NOW), law school clinics, or local women's bar associations to service searching parents in all states. These committees can be contacted through organizational directories, lawyer contacts, or directory assistance. Some state bar associations have a reduced fee program, and some law firms have pro bono committees willing to take custody cases or give advice.

A new organization should contact all its state pro bono legal resources for names and phone numbers of individual attorneys.

**Victims Services** Victims services for parents can be found through local United Way listings, through Volunteer (a national organization with state listings of charitable groups), and the National Victim Center in Fort Worth, Texas.

There are five hundred runaway programs throughout the country. Parents of runaways can telephone the National Runaway Switchboard at 1-800-621-4000. Covenant House, in New York City and

around the world, provides runaways with shelter, food, and other services. Their hotline number is 1-800-999-9999. Children can call Child Find's toll-free 800-1-AM-LOST telephone number, the National Center's hotline—1-800-843-5678—and the local 911 number. Child Find offers support to searching parents through its all-volunteer Friends of Child Find in many states.

**Other Nonprofit Organizations** Some nonprofit organizations specialize in certain services, such as the National Network of Runaway and Youth Services, which works with runaways. Child Find has built a reputation for handling parental abduction cases and has introduced a unique mediation program to encourage the return of parentally abducted children.

Networking with other nonprofit organizations in the field involves finding common ground to build a relationship to exchange ideas and work together toward the common goal of finding missing children. Unfortunately, no common criteria govern the credibility and accountability of charitable organizations that would enable them to work together. Criteria should follow the Better Business Bureau Charitable Solicitation Standards for public accountability, use of funds, solicitation and information materials, fund-raising practices, and governance.

**The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children** The National Center is very helpful to NPOs as a resource for technical assistance and publications, especially in the area of state parental kidnapping legislation and as a training program for law-enforcement on a national level. State clearinghouses are coordinated by the National Center. The National Center can also be helpful in international abductions through the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Defense.

## Networking with Law-Enforcement Agencies

Law-enforcement agencies and nonprofit organizations can effectively work together to resolve cases of missing children.

To establish a good working relationship with the police, it is important that nonprofit service providers become aware of local laws and state statutes regarding the handling of missing children cases as well as each police agency's policies, procedures, and manpower constraints that could affect the handling of these cases. Make sure that you understand what police officers can and cannot do.

Trust and communication must be developed between nonprofit organizations and law-enforcement agencies. The nonprofit organization should contact each agency they will be dealing with and determine how they can assist that agency. This must be done before a major case breaks, as it is difficult to do during the heat of the investigation. Guidelines should be developed and agreed upon that will be mutually beneficial to both the nonprofit organization and the police agency. Trust can be easily destroyed by either party breaking the agreed-upon terms. If a problem arises, direct and honest communication is the best solution.

When dealing with a law-enforcement agency, nonprofit service providers must remember that it is a paramilitary organization with a chain of command. If inappropriate action is being taken, concerns should be expressed to the investigating officer. If his or her reply is not satisfactory, then begin the process through the chain of command by speaking with that person's immediate supervisor. Nonprofit service providers should never start at the top by discussing problems with the chief of police or the sheriff, as this will alienate people at the bottom who work with that organization on a regular basis.

Nonprofit service providers should understand that during a missing persons investigation, some facts must be withheld from the family and the public. This may cause frustration to families and nonprofit service providers, who may show their dissatisfaction by "cop bashing" in the media. This hurts not only that organization's relationship with the particular law-enforcement agency, but also with all police departments, and the police will avoid working with that organization. A good working relationship with a law-enforcement agency, however, will result in that organization receiving positive referrals from that police department.

As relationships between nonprofit organizations and law-enforcement agencies develop, the police will see the value of networking with nonprofit service providers. The following are some ideas for improving

those relationships and the services that nonprofit organizations provide to law-enforcement agencies.

**Dealing with the Family** Besides providing crisis intervention, referral, advocacy, support services, and other assistance to the families of missing children, the nonprofit service provider can be a liaison among the family, the police investigator, and the criminal justice system. In addition, as the relationship between the nonprofit service provider and the family evolves, a family member may confide information to the service provider that may be beneficial to the case. The service provider should encourage the family member to provide the information to the police investigator or get permission from the family member to relay the information to the investigator directly.

**Dealing with the Media** Should the nonprofit service provider decide to issue press releases and provide other information to the media regarding a missing child case, there should first be discussions with the police investigator and the police agency's public information officer on what information should be made public. Failure to coordinate the release of information with the police can jeopardize the location and recovery of the child and, in some instances, may put the child at further risk. Additionally, the nonprofit service provider should keep the investigator apprised of media inquiries and publication of interviews with the parents.

**Photo Dissemination** If a nonprofit organization intends to distribute posters on a missing child, the staff should coordinate this with the police investigator. The nonprofit service provider should determine if the police agency is also distributing posters so as not to duplicate efforts.

In addition, the service provider needs to find out what information the law-enforcement agency wants on the posters and if the posters for the police departments should include information different from that on the posters given to the general public.

All posters sent to law-enforcement agencies should include the child's full name and date of birth. It can be confusing if only the child's age is used and the child has been missing for several years.

If posters are to be distributed to the public outside the jurisdiction of the agency handling the case, the poster should include the telephone number of the National Center and the investigating agencies—including the police and, if applicable, the FBI.

If a nonprofit organization puts up posters in a community, the organization should determine where it is legal to do so. In many jurisdictions, it is illegal to affix such material to utility poles or to the posts of traffic signs. Contact the local police to determine what locations are appropriate. (See the Appendix for a sample missing child poster.)

**Dealing with Leads** If a nonprofit organization is

going to obtain leads on missing child cases, the service provider assigned to the case should ask the law-enforcement investigator what specific questions should be asked. *All information*, whether it seems significant or not, should be given to the police investigator. Information that may seem insignificant at the time may later be the crucial piece needed to locate and recover a child.

All leads should be given to the police in a timely and understandable manner and in written form. If the nonprofit service provider believes that information needs immediate follow-up, he or she should call the police immediately and provide a written report later.

The personnel at nonprofit organizations should keep in mind that, when taking information on leads, they are always interviewing a potential witness. On any call it is important to obtain as much information as possible when the information is fresh in the caller's mind. Because of workload, there may be a delay in the police investigator getting back to the caller, and the person may forget important facts.

It is critical that lead receivers become skillful, especially if the caller wishes to remain anonymous, since the police will not be able to recontact them for further information.

To improve nonprofit service providers' interviewing techniques, training should be provided. Local community colleges with law-enforcement/police science programs may offer classes. Other options include contacting the police training unit or the local police academy and asking the trainer to volunteer to train the staff of the nonprofit organization.

**Ground Searches** If nonprofit organizations undertake ground searches for missing children, training must be provided to the searchers and the organizers prior to the search. This is imperative to ensure thorough, organized searches, documentation of what areas have been searched, and assurance that no evidence crucial in locating the missing child is overlooked or destroyed.

If the search is done in conjunction with the police agency, coordination should be done by the police. If not done in conjunction with the police, information on what areas were searched and the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all organizers and searchers should be provided to the investigator handling the case. All information gathered during the search should be given to the police.

Training in how to coordinate and execute searches can be obtained from local search and rescue organizations. Local community colleges with police science/law-enforcement programs will offer classes on the laws regarding the handling and preservation of evidence. Police academies or training units provide instructors as well.

**NCIC** The service provider can assist the law-enforcement investigator in ensuring that all information possible about the missing child has been entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer system. To ensure this, the nonprofit service provider should become familiar with the NCIC missing person packet. Some law-enforcement agencies have found it beneficial to give this packet to the nonprofit service provider to obtain this information from the family. Also, the service provider can sometimes assist in obtaining the missing child's medical and dental records so this information can be entered. At times, not all relevant information is entered because no one thought to ask the family, or the person obtaining the information was unaware of the potential of the system to accept it.

**VICAP** The Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP) was established by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to gather information nationwide on violent crimes to determine if crime patterns exist. Nonprofit organizations should encourage law-enforcement investigators to submit VICAP Crime Analysis Report forms to the FBI on all non-family abduction cases. Missing person cases in which there is a strong likelihood of foul play can also be submitted. Submitting these cases may result in a coordinated effort among law-enforcement agencies that could lead to the apprehension of the offender and the location of the missing child.

**Unidentified Children** If the police are investigating a case of an unidentified child—either living or deceased—the staff of the nonprofit organization should research their files for missing persons that may match this child's description. Even if the police enter the unidentified child into the NCIC Unidentified Persons File to be compared with missing children of similar description, the actual missing child may not be in that system. The missing child may not have been entered into the NCIC or the entry may have been removed in error. Provide the police with all information on missing children that may match the child they are trying to identify.

**Police Crime Prevention Unit** Contact local police agencies with child safety programs and determine if your nonprofit organization can be of assistance. Nonprofit organizations with prevention and education programs may be able to join forces with the police to provide these services to both children and their parents.

**Police Officer Training** Nonprofit organizations should find out what training is being given to police officers in their area in the handling of missing child cases and what they can do to help. Nonprofit service providers should notify the missing person investigators of upcoming conferences regarding the handling of these cases. Service providers can also ensure that



the police are given written materials, such as the National Center publications. It may be beneficial as well to provide this same information to the training units of the police departments and to the staff of the area police academy.

**Advocacy** Nonprofit service providers often feel frustrated that many police department missing persons units are understaffed and that the personnel lack training. This is usually the result of budget cuts by the local governing body.

Contact the missing persons unit and develop a plan on how your organization might be able to help get its budget increased and approved. Some options are: 1) find out when there will be public hearings, and go and offer testimony; 2) write letters to elected officials with the power to approve the budget; 3) mobilize members of your organization to do the same; and 4) encourage families of missing children to get involved. Several days before there is a vote on the budget, the nonprofit organization can hold a press conference to show its support. On the day of the vote, call the elected officials to reaffirm that you want this budget passed.

This type of involvement by a nonprofit organization will not only improve its relationship with that police agency, it will result in better trained and additional police personnel to investigate missing child cases.

**Support and Recognition** Police investigators handling missing child cases attempt to do a good job but often have large caseloads. Nonprofit service providers should remember that police officers are human. They do not remain unaffected and may suffer from stress and burnout. Just as nonprofit service providers offer support and advocacy services to families of missing children, they can also provide similar services to the police officers they deal with on these cases.

If a police investigator does an exemplary job on a missing child case, take the time to write a letter to the chief of police or the sheriff of the investigator's agency to show your appreciation. Also, if the family of the missing child wants to show their appreciation as well, the nonprofit service provider can encourage them to write a letter.

Some missing persons organizations also pick a police officer of the year and present him or her with a certificate or a plaque at an awards ceremony. Any kind of recognition for a job well done will be appreciated by the police recipient and will encourage that officer and others to excel in the future.

## Networking with State Missing Persons Clearinghouses

While several states had already established state missing children clearinghouses prior to the Missing

Children's Assistance Act of 1984, a majority of the other states have since followed suit. To date, 42 states and the District of Columbia have missing persons or missing children clearinghouses. Established under the authority of state statute, administrative directive, or executive order, the clearinghouses are primarily located within state law-enforcement agencies. Two exceptions are the state clearinghouses in Ohio and Louisiana. In Ohio, the clearinghouse is located within the State Department of Education and, in Louisiana, within the State Department of Health and Human Services.

The role of state clearinghouses varies from handling only missing children cases to handling all missing persons, unidentified persons, and child sexual exploitation cases. Depending on the authority of the clearinghouse, its responsibilities range from serving as an information repository and disseminator to conducting proactive/reactive investigations. All the clearinghouses share one common goal: to serve as the central points of contact in their respective states regarding missing persons. A majority of the clearinghouses are staffed eight hours a day. During other than regular working hours, clearinghouse personnel are generally on call when needed. Staffing varies from one to greater than 50 personnel.

**State Clearinghouses and the Nonprofit Service Provider** The process of recovering a missing child can be a long, complicated, and difficult one. An individual's reasons for being missing and the effect that episode has on him and his family are complex, requiring the assistance of a number of different professionals. Many times the successful recovery of an individual may greatly depend upon the cooperation and coordination of numerous local, county, state, federal, private, and public agencies.

Because the role, resources, and staffing of state clearinghouses vary greatly from state to state, there are instances when comprehensive services cannot be offered. Many times there are a host of services that a nonprofit service provider can furnish to a family that a state clearinghouse may not be able to provide—for instance, counseling and support services, media assistance, legal and financial aid, and advocacy. **Networking with a State Clearinghouse** Upon establishment, nonprofit service providers should contact the state clearinghouse in their state. Developing an early contact is imperative in cultivating a good working relationship. When making initial contact with the clearinghouse, it is recommended that the nonprofit service provider be able to give the following kinds of information:

- Agency overview and purpose
- Service plan: who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Names of staff members and backgrounds

- Copies of incorporation or nonprofit papers

A state clearinghouse is the primary contact point for missing persons in the state. The general public will often contact the clearinghouse seeking all types of information, including information on nonprofit service providers. Therefore, the more information which can be provided to the clearinghouse, the better the service provider's representation to the public. Furnishing such information will also help to establish the nonprofit organization's intent and credibility.

At the time of initial contact, it is also important for the nonprofit service provider to learn about the role and responsibilities of the state clearinghouse. Ascertain if there is one individual in the clearinghouse who acts as a liaison for service providers. Inquire to see what services the clearinghouse can provide and how the service provider could assist the clearinghouse. The clearinghouse may also be able to provide training (initial and advanced) and contacts or listing of services in the state (including youth services, shelters, and other resources that might be helpful). While most clearinghouses will not make direct referrals, the agency will generally provide an inquiring party with a list of service agencies. Inquire as to how your nonprofit organization can be included on this list for future reference.

**Developing a Good Working Relationship** Many times the clearinghouse, in working a missing persons case, will find itself in the role of coordinator, acting as a liaison between the different involved parties, both public and private. Teamwork and communication between all parties is vital to ensure a recovery process and prevent mishaps. Developing a good working relationship is crucial. The following guidelines are provided to foster a better relationship:

- Establish if there are areas in which you as a nonprofit service provider can assist the clearinghouse. Coordinating activities will not only help to minimize duplication of efforts but provide a more effective system.
- The sharing of information among all the professionals involved in a case is imperative. Misinformation or withholding information could cost someone his or her life. Be honest and give all the facts as you know them. Be careful not to jump to conclusions before all the facts are verified. It is also important to understand that there are legal constraints that prohibit law-enforcement and other professional service agencies from disseminating certain kinds of information.
- Do not interfere with the investigation of a law-enforcement officer. Be sure your independent investigation does not jeopardize the recovery and possibly the life of the missing person. If parents believe that the investigating agency is not doing everything possible, they should contact the state clearinghouse or the next higher authority in that state. It is important to keep in mind that most law-enforcement agencies have limited resources and numerous responsibilities. Generally, law-enforcement professionals are doing the very best job they can under the circumstances.

The relationship between state clearinghouses and nonprofit service providers is an important one. A strong working relationship can greatly enhance the recovery process and provide victims with the best possible services. It is a relationship that should be taken very seriously.

## 8. Legislative Advocacy

*Linda Barker-Lowrance  
National Victim Center*

Our government, established by the United States Constitution, is a government by the people and for the people. Through the ballot process, the people elect local, state, and national representatives to enact laws that protect and govern.

Unfortunately, many Americans believe that their responsibility ends at the voting booth. Few pay attention to what their elected officials do until, at some point, the voter's life is impacted by the efforts or non-efforts of the legislator. Most citizens have little or no knowledge regarding the process of how to pass legislation or utilize the power of the elected official to benefit their cause.

This chapter is designed to help you understand and utilize the legislative process to protect and enhance the lives of our country's children. *Note:* The guidelines included in this chapter are derived from the *Victims' Rights Opportunities for Action and Constitutional Amendment for Victims' Rights* curricula developed by the National Victim Center. Reprinted with permission. (See also the National Center's publications *Child Protection Priorities in State Legislation* and *Selected State Legislation*.)

### **Building Coalitions**

Before you develop a legislative agenda, there are few things you should take into consideration and know about your state legislature. First, if you represent a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, familiarize yourself with the federal laws regarding lobbying efforts of nonprofit organizations. There are specific guidelines that dictate how much time and money nonprofit organizations may spend lobbying public officials. In an effort to protect their nonprofit status while seeking legislative change, many grassroots organizations have formed statewide coalitions for the express pur-

pose of legislative advocacy. You should find out what coalitions currently exist in your state.

Working with pre-existing coalitions or forming a new coalition for the purpose of legislative advocacy is not only desirable, but it makes good sense. Coalitions help protect the nonprofit status and increase the number of persons working toward the passage of a piece of legislation. For instance, if your organization has one hundred members supporting a particular bill, that is effective. If your organization, however, is part of a coalition that has twenty-five agencies, and each agency has one hundred members, you have increased your support of the pending legislation twenty-five times. Realistically, not every member of every organization is going to work actively on the legislation, but elected officials know the coalition represents many, while one organization represents far fewer. Numbers are important to politicians; the more people supporting your effort, the more likely you are to succeed in obtaining your goal.

Also, working within the coalition structure equally distributes the duties and responsibilities of a legislative campaign among more than just a handful of dedicated people. For instance, one agency may be responsible for establishing a "phone tree" and insuring that those involved in the legislative effort are kept up to date on the bill's progress through the legislative process. Another agency may be responsible for garnering public support for the measure.

Another advantage to working within a coalition is the expansion of resources. Other groups may have cultivated valuable relationships that could prove beneficial to your legislative agenda.

### **Your Legislature and the People in It**

Each state legislature is unique and functions under its own system of governing. Much of what is dis-

cussed in this chapter is applicable to most states. Terminology may differ, but for the most part you will find the information useful regardless of where you live.

For instance, the length of legislative sessions differs from state to state. Some states may have a full-time legislature that meets year round. Others meet during the first four months of the year, while other state legislatures meet every two years. All legislatures take a break (hiatus), and it is during that time that much of the work on pending legislation is done.

The legislative hiatus is the perfect time to contact lawmakers who are potential sponsors of your legislation. Developing a relationship with senators and representatives provides an opportunity to educate lawmakers on issues pertinent to you. Many legislators offer concerned citizens the opportunity to visit district offices and share their concerns with the legislator. Since it is much more difficult to gain the full attention of a legislator while he or she is in session, it is beneficial to take the opportunity to meet with your state representatives during this time. Your efforts will be appreciated and remembered when the lawmaker returns for the next session.

Once the relationship is established and cultivated, your concerns will be given greater consideration when the legislature reconvenes. Also, in the future, you will find that the legislator will seek your opinion and assistance in the passage of other pending legislation he or she is working on. Remember, do not limit yourself to one lawmaker! Take the time to establish a relationship with a multitude of legislators. The bill with numerous cosponsors has a greater chance of passing and becoming law.

After you have met the legislator, meet his or her staff. Each senator and representative maintains an office staff. Frequently, these are the people who will assist in drafting legislation and working the bill through the legislative process. During the hectic legislative session, it is the office staff that will see that your concerns regarding the progress of the bill are shared with the legislator.

Use the "quiet time" while the legislature is adjourned to meet and familiarize staff members with your concerns and any legislation for which you are seeking support. Their knowledge and experiences are valuable to your legislative agenda. A good relationship with staff members will increase accessibility to individual legislators.

When seeking bill authors, identify the most powerful legislative member. Occasionally, a newly elected legislator will take the state capitol by storm, quickly gaining power and support. Most often, however, power is determined by the majority party in each house. Clearly, the party with the majority members is the most powerful, but do not ignore the mi-

nority members. A bipartisan bill (cosponsors from both political parties) increases the bill's chance of passage more than a bill that is favored by one political party.

It is also important to know the length of terms served by the members of both houses and when they are up for reelection. A politician that knows he or she is going to have to face constituents in an upcoming election will be looking for legislation to sponsor that will accomplish great good and also appeal to voters in their districts. Child-related bills achieve both ends.

How many times have you said, "There ought to be a law . . ."? Laws are written and passed as solutions to problems. For instance, crime victims believe it is their right to be in the courtroom during trial. Defense attorneys, however, often barred their attendance by pleading to the judge that the victim's presence during trial would prejudice the jury. Therefore, many victims sat outside the courtroom, while inside justice was (or was not) served. The accused, his or her family, and any number of spectators witnessed this process, but the victim was denied the only means of justice offered by the system. Victims were determined to exercise what they believed to be their right to attend court proceedings. To achieve this goal, activists passed laws that provided victims with the right to attend the trial.

Many laypersons have little or no knowledge about drafting legislation. A good idea will remain just that—an idea—unless someone drafts the bill in appropriate language.

## A Good Idea Becomes Law

Some legislatures have a legislative counsel office which provides bill drafting services to members, or a member may have a staff person with a legal background and the ability to draft the legislation. Bills are also written by professional lawyers' associations, law schools, lobbyists, and special interest associations. It is always helpful to determine if the law you wish to enact has been passed in another state. Model legislation serves as an example, and it can be modified to fit your state's unique personality. *Note:* For model legislation and criteria for drafting legislation, see the National Center's publication *Selected State Legislation*.

Once a bill has been drafted, it goes to the state senate or house desk, where it is introduced, assigned a bill number, and read for the first time. After the bill is printed, it is assigned by the senate rules committee to a standing committee (the committee which assigns bills may vary from state to state).

In order to consider the hundreds and sometimes thousands of bills that are introduced during each

legislative session, a system of committees exists to analyze and "weed out" proposed legislation. Each bill is subject to the scrutiny of a principal policy committee and, if the bill involves an appropriation of money, a fiscal committee. Remember, the process is repeated twice, once in the senate and again in the house of representatives or assembly. The committee system gives you the opportunity to express your views and opinions. A major portion of a policy committee's responsibilities involves calling for and hearing testimony from those who are concerned with a particular piece of legislation. Familiarize yourself with the legislative committees that typically hear issues that concern or interest you or your group. For example, if you are seeking to change your state's laws regarding the introduction of hearsay evidence in a court of law, that bill would typically be heard by the committee that deals with criminal justice issues.

Some states provide legislative committee members with staff to research and interpret bills pending in committee and organize hearing schedules. The staff provides a valuable service by keeping those involved informed of the bill's progress, any changes or amendments to the bill, hearing dates, and opposition—if any—to the legislation. Getting to know committee staff members will increase your bill's chance of receiving a favorable committee vote.

**How a Bill Becomes Law** Many laws are a direct result of the work of concerned citizens who saw a need for change and, instead of lamenting about the ills of society, sought to solve a problem through legislative change. Learning how to pass a bill is not difficult but, without knowledge of the process, it can be confusing. The following process is based upon the California legislature and may differ slightly in other states:

1. A concerned citizen, organization, special interest group, lobbyist, or legislator can suggest potential legislation. This is your initial opportunity to be involved in the legislative process. Make sure your ideas for legislation are presented to a legislator. Present your proposition during the interim period prior to the session or during the session. Allow for time to develop the legislative concept. Offer resources and plenty of support. It helps if several groups or a coalition of organizations supports the measure.
2. The senator authors the bill. Often, the bill at this stage is merely a concept written in layperson's terms. Offer to help with the wording. Ask for final review if the bill is one you or your group suggested. Remember, be willing to compromise if necessary!
3. The legislative counsel drafts the bill. If you

have done your work well, the concept of your bill will be developed into an excellent piece of legislation by legal experts.

4. The drafted bill is returned to the senator. At this point, you and the other bill supporters should review the content and context of the bill. If there are any revisions or additions you recommend, inform the legislator or key staff assigned to that bill. It can be revised by legislative counsel upon request from the bill's author.
5. The bill goes to the senate desk where it is introduced, assigned a bill number, and read for the first time. Prior to the bill's introduction, you should alert senators about the bill and its goals. Help the primary author obtain coauthors (also known as cosponsors). Make sure all your supporters help out with these tasks.
6. The bill is printed. Once the bill is printed, you can usually obtain a free copy either from the bill author or from the bill room in the capitol.
7. The bill goes to the senate rules committee, where it is assigned to a standing committee. Remember, committee assignments can "make or break" your bill. Know the members of your rules committee. Do not hesitate to ask them to assign your bill to the committee where it has the best chance of passing.
8. After thirty-one days, the bill is heard in committee. Here is where you can have a tremendous impact on the outcome of a bill. Committee hearings are usually open to the public.
9. The committee may decide to: 1) pass the bill as is; 2) pass it with amendments; or 3) hold the bill in committee (this means the bill has failed).
10. If your bill has an appropriation, it is sent to the standing committee. Here, the committee approves financial consideration of pending legislation.
11. The passed bill is then sent to the senate floor for a second reading. A bill passed "as is" is ready and prepared for a third reading on the senate floor. A bill passed with amendments is read, amended, printed with the amendments, and prepared for a third reading on the senate floor. (A bill may also be amended and returned to a committee for further consideration.) This is your "last chance" to encourage all senators to vote for or against a bill. Personal contacts—in person, by telephone, or by letter—are essential here. Make sure all your supporters are working on key members. Obtain a tally of how members think they are going to vote. Confirm your support; work hard to gain the support of undecided members, and focus your remaining

resources on getting opponents to support the measure.

12. Bills that survive the second reading are again sent to the senate floor for a third reading. A roll call vote is taken at the third reading. Bills that do not contain any appropriations require a simple majority for passage. Bills with urgency or appropriations clauses attached require a two-thirds majority.
13. Bills that are passed out of the senate are then delivered to the desk of the house or assembly. The bill follows practically the same process through the second house: 1) introduction and first reading; 2) rules committee assignment; 3) committee hearings; 4) second reading on the house floor; and 5) third reading on the house floor. Likewise, your advocacy efforts should follow the same process you used in the senate.
14. If the bill is passed out of the house on third reading without amendments, it is "enrolled" and then sent to the governor for signature. When the bill is enrolled, it is important to obtain the governor's support. Letters of support are vital at this stage. If time is critical, organize a telephone or opinion-gram campaign among the bill's supporters. Ask the bill's authors and principal coauthors to request the governor to sign the bill or to let it become law without his or her signature.
15. If the bill is passed out of the house with amendments, it is considered "unfinished business." The senate can vote to concur in the amendments—this sends the bill to enrollment for the governor's signature—or the senate can refuse concurrence.
16. If the senate refuses concurrence, a conference committee composed of three members from each house reviews the bill. The conference committee can refuse to pass the bill or adopt a two-house conference report which allows the bill to be enrolled and sent to the governor. At this point, your efforts should be focused on the members of the conference committee. Major compromises often take place in conference committees. You must decide how much you are willing to sacrifice to achieve passage of the bill.
17. The final version of the bill passed out of both houses is then sent to the governor. The governor has twelve days to sign the bill. If the bill is of major public interest, ask for a "bill signing" ceremony. These events provide great public awareness opportunities for the author, principal coauthors, and all the victims and advocates who worked to make the passage of the bill a reality. The governor could also approve the bill without signing it or may veto the bill.

18. If the governor vetoes the bill, a two-thirds vote in both houses is required to override the veto. It is never easy to override a veto, especially if the governor is popular or a member of the majority party in either house. But you have come this far; do not ever give up!
19. A bill which is signed, approved without signature, or approved by overriding a gubernatorial veto is then sent to the secretary of state, where it is chaptered into law.
20. Most bills become law on January 1 of the following year. Bills with urgency clauses take effect immediately. Regardless of the outcome of your bill, it is important to thank the people who worked the bill through the legislature.

Now is the time to regroup, re-strategize, and start planning your legislative agenda for the next session. It is also important at this stage to work and insure that the intent of the law is followed. Get in touch with the agencies or individuals that will enact the new law. Offer your resources and assistance. Make sure the law is enforced or implemented in accordance with its intent and purpose.

### Contacting Your Legislators

Legislators may be contacted by telephone, letter, or personal visits either to their capitol or district offices. The following guidelines offer general tips and proper etiquette for contacting elected officials.

- Always treat him or her as you would like to be treated.
- Understand the pressures and constraints that affect your legislators.
- Recognize that different people have different opinions.
- Be willing to compromise.
- Avoid contacting your legislators only when you need something.
- Offer your services, or those of your organization, as resources.
- Be realistic in your expectations.
- Do not hesitate to commend your legislators.
- Be knowledgeable.
- Make certain your information is factual.
- Always "give credit where credit is due."
- Never pester your legislators.
- Never be confrontational.

Our forefathers left us a legacy, our Constitution. By designating a mechanism for the people to govern—our legislatures—they challenged us to make America better. In order to insure that this country remains free, each American must accept the responsibility of a government for the people and by the

people. The legislative process provides us the means with which we can accept the challenge.

## Legislative Glossary

Parts of this glossary were derived from various states' publications about the legislative process. Reprinted with permission from the National Victim Center from the publication *Victims' Rights: Opportunities for Action*.

**Adjournment** Termination or closing of a session of the legislature or committee until another set time for meeting.

**Adopt** To accept or approve.

**Agenda** List of action or bills to be considered by standing or select committees issued prior to scheduled meeting.

**Amendment** Changes in pending legislation by adding, deleting, or modifying contents.

**Apportionment** Establishment of legislative districts after every tenth-year federal census—based upon population with boundaries established by legislature.

**Appropriation** Money allocated by the legislature to various departments or agencies for their operations.

**Author** The legislator who submits a bill. Also known as **Sponsor**.

**Bicameral** A legislature composed of two houses, usually an assembly or a house of representatives and a senate. Only the state of Nebraska has a unicameral, or one-house legislature.

**Bill** A proposal for the enactment of a new law, the amendment or repeal of an existing one, or appropriation of public money. It is the only vehicle for enactment of a law by the legislature. It may originate in the house or senate, but it must be passed on roll call vote by both bodies and be approved by the governor to become law. If the governor vetoes the measure, the senate and house may override his or her decision. Bills passed by the legislature and signed by the governor become law a.: 1) with emergency clause: date governor signs; 2) with effective date: date given in measure providing it is at least 90 days after adjournment of legislature; or 3) without emergency clause or effective date: automatically 90 days after adjournment of legislature.

**Bill Room** An office where citizens can obtain copies of bills, files, and other legislative publications.

**Calendar** Listing of bills reported out of committees and ready for floor action.

**Caucus** An informal meeting of a group of members—usually of the same political party or special interest—to discuss policy or legislation.

**Chair** Presiding officer of legislature—may be

member, speaker, president, or committee chairperson.

**Chamber** The area reserved for members and staff for conducting legislative sessions—also called **Floor**.

**Chief Clerk** Chief administrative officer of the house of representatives, assembly, or senate.

**Coauthor** A member who places his or her name on a bill as a supporter of the measure but who does not normally present arguments for the measure before committees.

### Committees

**Committee of the Whole**—informal session of entire membership of house or senate acting as one committee—presided over by chairperson appointed by speaker or president.

**Conference Committee**—a joint committee made up of representatives appointed by president to try to resolve differences in legislative measures. A majority of conferees of each house is required to approve a compromise before submitting it to the entire membership of each house for final approval.

**Select Committee**—created by speaker or president to handle specific matters or issues.

**Standing Committee**—members appointed by speaker and president at beginning of legislature with continuing responsibility in a general field of legislative activity. A committee's name reflects its area of jurisdiction—*i. e.*, education, criminal justice.

**Statutory Committee**—created by passage of legislation for specific purpose and with composition of membership defined.

**Subcommittee**—small committee appointed by standing committee chairperson to research and study bill or problem and to report findings to entire committee.

**Concurrence** Action of one house agreeing to or approving proposal or action by the other body.

**Confirmation** Ratifying an executive act by a legislative body. For example, gubernatorial appointees must be confirmed by a senate vote.

**Congress** The body of elected officials in the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.

**Constituents** Citizens whom the elected lawmaker represents.

**Convene** To assemble the meeting of the legislature daily or at beginning of session as provided by constitution or law.

**Debate** Discussion of a matter according to parliamentary rules.

**Decorum** Proper conduct of legislator as set forth in house and senate rules.

**Digest, Legislative** Weekly publication of house listing bills introduced in legislature by number, short title, sponsors, and committees to which assigned.

**Emergency Clause** Statement added to legislation

which declares necessity of immediate enactment. Requires two-thirds vote by each house and becomes law immediately upon governor's signature.

**Engrossed Bill** Version of bill which includes all amendments attached.

**Enrolled Bill** Final official version containing all necessary signatures.

**File** A pamphlet which lists the bills that may be debated in committee and on the floor.

**Filibuster** A process allowed in some states whereby a legislator "holds" the floor's attention through talking or long speeches to "kill" or to postpone a vote on a bill.

**FY** Fiscal Year.

**Gallery** Balcony of house or senate chamber from which visitors may view proceedings of legislature.

**Hearings** Public comment sessions conducted by legislative committees on announced subjects.

**History** A pamphlet which reports on the status of bills by day.

**Hopper** Desk which assigns numbers to legislative measures and processes for introduction.

**Initiative** A method of initiating legislation.

**Interim** Period between legislative sessions.

**Interim Study** Meetings or public hearings held between legislative sessions to study and make recommendations on specific issues.

**Journal** Official chronological record of each house which contains roll call votes, attendance records, committee assignments, and daily record of events—but which is not a verbatim transcript.

**Laid Over** A postponement of consideration of a legislative measure for a day, usually in connection with introduction and committee assignments in senate.

**Legislative Counsel** Attorneys who work for some legislatures to draft and review bills before they are filed.

**Legislature** Bodies of officials elected by the people to represent specified legislative districts.

**Line Items** Each proposed budget item is on "a line" and refers to a project or program and its funding amount.

**Lobbyist** Person who seeks directly or indirectly to encourage the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation.

**Majority** Group of legislators, usually of same political party, who have the greater number of elected members and who control top leadership positions; also the number of members necessary to pass legislation.

**Minority** Group of legislators, usually of same political party, which numbers fewer members.

**Networking** Organizing a group of citizens with common concerns to establish and maintain legisla-

tive contacts and mobilize together when citizen action is required.

**President** Presiding officer of senate elected by senate members.

**Pro Tempore** Designated officer of house or senate to act in absence of speaker or president.

**Quorum** A majority of the membership necessary to conduct business.

**Recall** Constitutional process by which elected officials may be removed from office.

**Recess** Intermission in daily session or committee meeting.

**Referendum** Constitutional process by which legislature or qualified voters may refer certain legislative measures to a vote of the electorate.

**Regulation** A rule or order which deals with details of procedure, has the force of law, and is issued by an executive authority of a government (e.g., a state agency or commission).

**Resolution** A formal expression of the opinion or will of the entire house or senate.

*Concurrent Resolution*—these resolutions deal with matters of concern to both house and senate and must be passed by both chambers before they can be enacted.

*House or Senate Resolution*—these address issues which only relate to the originating house.

**Rules** The set of regulations and parliamentary procedures adopted separately by house and senate.

**Secretary of State** Chief administrative officer of the senate elected by senate membership or general electorate.

**Sine Die** Final adjournment for the legislature.

**Speaker** Presiding officer of the assembly or house of representatives elected by house members.

**State Plan** A written document outlining a state's objectives and describing its intent to comply with various federal mandates. Usually written for specific subject areas.

**Statutes** The compilation of all enacted bills or laws.

**Testimony** The prepared comments made during a hearing which may or may not support the announced topic of discussion.

**Thank You** A term which should be expressed often.

**Title** Every bill must have a title—"A Bill to be Entitled. . . ." Only one subject may be contained within a bill, and this subject must be stated in the title. The only amendments that can be added to the bill are those which cover the same subject area as the title.

**Veto** The governor's disapproval of a bill. A veto can be overturned by a two-thirds vote of both the house of representatives or assembly and senate.



# Conclusion

*Ernest E. Allen, J.D.  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children*

We have reached a pivotal stage in our efforts to serve and protect America's children. It is a time for reflection upon the tremendous good that has been accomplished and a time to look forward to new challenges. It is a time for self-assessment and a time of commitment to greater coordination, cooperation, and teamwork as we strive to do more.

Many of our organizations were born at a time of high emotion and intense media spotlight. The early 1980s was a time in which a nation discovered the victimization of its children, a segment of the population referred to in the title of a well-known book of the period as "hidden victims."

The names and images of the period were burned into the conscience of an entire country: Adam Walsh, Etan Patz, Yusef Bell and the other missing and murdered children of Atlanta, the victims of John Wayne Gacy in Chicago and Dean Corll in Houston, and many others. And America responded.

Federal and state laws were changed, law-enforcement and criminal/juvenile justice agencies were trained and sensitized, elected officials and candidates for public office based their campaign strategies on the child victimization issue, the private sector stepped forward eagerly and willingly, and great progress was made. As with other issues in the public policy arena, however, the emotional peaks are difficult to sustain.

Media shifted its attention to new causes, and nonprofit organizations addressing social ills began to face an era of scarce resources. Our new challenge was to institutionalize the process and programs created in a time of high emotion and to build structures and systems which protected children and responded to their victimization as a normal part of doing business.

It should not require the tragic story of a victimized child to provoke action. Yet, there can be no

question that Adam, Etan, Yusef, and countless others were the catalysts for a movement and that their legacies are the fundamental changes which have taken place in virtually every city, county, and state.

There was national action as well. In 1984 the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children was established to serve as a clearinghouse of information on missing or exploited children. The National Center provides technical assistance to citizens and law-enforcement agencies; offers training programs to law-enforcement and social service professionals; distributes photos and descriptions of missing children nationwide; coordinates child protection efforts with the private sector; networks with nonprofit service providers and state clearinghouses; provides information on effective state legislation to ensure the protection of children; and disseminates publications to professionals and the general public.

It has been an extraordinary five years.

- More than 388,000 telephone calls have been handled by our hotline.
- The photo distribution network has worked with more than 1,200 companies and 30 federal agencies to distribute more than 77,000 missing children's photographs throughout the country. This does not include the millions of photographs sent out by our large-scale photo distribution partners, such as ADVO-System and the American Gas Association. To date, a total of 130 children have been recovered as a direct result of the use of photo distribution nationally.
- More than 28,000 law-enforcement and criminal/juvenile justice personnel in 44 states and Canada have completed the Center's law-enforcement training program.
- There was only one clearinghouse for missing

persons when the Center opened. We have helped make it forty-three.

- The Center has been used as a resource in the recovery of more than 14,000 children.
- More than 3 million of the Center's award-winning publications dealing with various aspects of the missing and exploited child issue have been distributed.

Much has been accomplished, but the challenges are greater than ever. In this era of scarcity, it is essential that we seek new opportunities for collaboration, for information sharing, for joint ventures. Each child-serving organization has unique skills and resources which could be brought to bear on our problems.

Let me cite a few examples:

1. *Long-Term Missing Children.* The NCMEC has more than 4,000 active cases involving children missing for more than two years. The problem of the long-term missing child frustrates Center personnel, law-enforcement, friends, and family. It is particularly a source of pain and anguish for parents, who must go about their lives without resolving the inevitable doubts, fears, and anger.

In many cases involving long-term missing children, the early grief and anxiety felt by parents is replaced by anger, disillusionment, and a sense that nobody cares, nobody is looking. The early glare of the media spotlight dims. Police tend to move on to new and higher priorities. Even the Center, in its role as champion of such children, advocate for parents, and mobilizer and coordinator of law-enforcement and justice system response, becomes a symbol of impotence.

It is imperative that we reexamine such cases, provide appropriate and meaningful support and information to parents, and access all available methods and techniques for resolution of these cases. We are beginning an effort to develop a data profile, perform aggressive case reviews, work with other organizations, involve school systems in photo distribution and records screening, keep media attention and publicity high, and promote new and special approaches in working with and supporting the parents of long-term missing children.

The solution of some of these long-term cases could be a "shot in the arm" for the issue and for our organizations. This team approach could also serve as a case study for how we can work together and collaborate in other ways as well.

2. *Counseling/Treatment for Child Victims.* The National Center has played a key role in increasing

sensitivity and awareness of crimes against children. It has trained professionals, worked closely with police and prosecutors as successful cases have been made against adult offenders, and campaigned for increased reporting, more aggressive enforcement, and meaningful prosecution.

Yet, there are huge gaps in the United States regarding treatment, follow-up counseling, and therapy for the child victims. Too often, the same justice system which puts offenders away is unable to provide assistance for the trauma and long-term burdens of the child victim.

Our organizations should act as catalysts to bring attention to the problem. The Center hopes to work with prosecutors and prosecutorial organizations to develop programs to seek offender resources to pay for the treatment of the victim, including it as an element of a plea bargain, condition of probation, restitution order, and so on.

Here again, we must work together and coordinate our efforts. We can tap existing networks of counselors, psychologists, and other appropriate professionals, identifying those willing to assist.

3. *Hotline Coordination.* The heart of the Center's operation and the key to its effectiveness and impact is its hotline. The Center's management is currently reviewing the hotline, both in terms of operations and technology, and is committed to upgrading and amplifying the importance of the hotline.

As we pursue this process, it becomes more imperative than ever that we look at the Center's hotline and its relationship with other child-serving hotlines to maximize information sharing and eliminate service or information gaps. We are actively exploring linkages with the National Runaway Switchboard and envision similar linkages with other hotlines.

There are many other areas and many new opportunities. Because of the collective effort of countless organizations and caring, dedicated people, American children are safer and smarter than a decade ago, law-enforcement and the justice system are better prepared and more sensitive to the unique features of child victimization cases, laws are better, and the scope of the problem is less hidden.

Yet, every day brings new awareness that the progress made has barely scratched the surface. Today's challenges seem greater and more formidable than those a decade ago, and look what we have done.

More important, imagine what we can do if we can truly work together. We have come a long way for America's children, but we have only just begun.

# Appendix

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Vanished Children's Alliance

## Missing Child Case Procedure

1. Take initial intake from parent/guardian. Give technical and referral information. (See Sample 1.)
2. Mail registration packet immediately after intake. (See samples 2-9.)
3. Parent/guardian mails back all necessary paperwork.
4. Submit file to casework manager/advisor for approval.
5. Begin photo dissemination. (See samples 13, 14, 24, and 25.)
6. Begin case investigation. (See samples 15 and 18.)
7. Take sightings. (See Sample 16.)
8. Begin sighting follow-up. (See Sample 17.)
9. Contact law-enforcement and parent/guardian on a regular basis. (See samples 11, 12, and 23.)
10. Locate and/or recover missing child. (See Sample 21.)
11. Mail location/recovery form to parent/guardian. (See Sample 22.)
12. Close file. (See samples 19-20.)
13. Submit closed file to casework manager/advisor for approval.

A **Missing Child Registration Packet** includes the following:

1. Your organization's brochure or information sheet.
2. A letter to the parent/guardian that includes information your organization requires to open a case. (See Sample 2.)
3. A registration form. (See Sample 3.)
4. A consent and release form. (See Sample 10.)
5. Any additional information your organization deems important.

**Sample 1**

**Initial Intake Form**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Caseworker \_\_\_\_\_ Referral Source \_\_\_\_\_

---

Caller's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
last first middle

Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
number street apartment number  
city state zip

Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Message can be left with \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

---

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F  
last first middle

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Missing from \_\_\_\_\_  
location city state

Hair color \_\_\_\_\_ Dyed Y/N Length \_\_\_\_\_ Style \_\_\_\_\_

Eye color \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses/contacts Y/N Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_

Build \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Blood type \_\_\_\_\_ R/L handed

Fingerprinted Y/N Who has prints? \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguishing features (scars, birthmarks, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

---

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F  
last first middle

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Missing from \_\_\_\_\_  
location city state

Hair color \_\_\_\_\_ Dyed Y/N Length \_\_\_\_\_ Style \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample 1, continued**

Eye color \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses/contacts Y/N Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_

Build \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Blood type \_\_\_\_\_ R/L handed

Fingerprinted Y/N Who has prints? \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguishing features (scars, birthmarks, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

---

Missing category Non-family abduction \_\_\_\_\_  
Parental (M,F,G, other relative) abduction \_\_\_\_\_  
Runaway/voluntary \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

Abductor's/companion's name \_\_\_\_\_  
last first middle

AKA/aliases \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Hair color \_\_\_\_\_ Dyed Y/N

Length \_\_\_\_\_ Style \_\_\_\_\_ Eye color \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses/contacts Y/N

Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Build \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Blood type \_\_\_\_\_

R/L handed Fingerprinted Y/N Who has prints? \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguishing features (scars, birthmarks, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

---

If parental abduction, who has legal custody? \_\_\_\_\_

Was police report filed? Y/N Date filed \_\_\_\_\_ Case number \_\_\_\_\_

Agency's name \_\_\_\_\_ Officer's name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Child in NCIC? Y/N NCIC number \_\_\_\_\_

How is child listed in NCIC? \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 1, continued

Warrants issued? Y/N For what? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Possible destination \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe form of transportation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Other relevant information \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Suggestions given to caller \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Information mailed to caller \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Follow-up Letters Sent  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ by (name) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ by (name) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ by (name) \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 2

Registration Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Thank you for your interest in our organization. We hope we can be of assistance to you in your efforts to locate your missing child. We certainly understand that it is a most difficult time.

In order for us to help you in your search for your missing child, we require that the following information be returned to us in a timely manner. Please check and return this form with the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ A completed, signed, and dated registration form.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A completed, signed, and dated consent and release form.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the most current and valid court-approved custody order granting *you* legal custody/guardianship, if applicable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Verification of National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer entry (obtain through appropriate law-enforcement agency or local FBI field office).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copies of any police reports made or warrants issued, when available.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ten (10) color and ten (10) black-and-white photographs of each missing child (clear and most current photographs would be appreciated); and three (3) photos of the abductor, if applicable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to notify this organization immediately of any new development or if my child is located/recovered.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to notify this organization immediately of any changes in my home and/or work addresses and/or telephone numbers.

As soon as we receive the needed paperwork, we can proceed in our efforts to assist you in the location and recovery of your child. Remember, time is of the essence. Please return needed paperwork as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

## Sample 3

## Registration Form

Reporter's (parent, guardian, or law-enforcement) name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
street

\_\_\_\_\_ city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Place of employment \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work hours \_\_\_\_\_

A message may be left with \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

List any criminal convictions, locations, and dates \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you the legal custodian/guardian? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

Referral source (How did you hear about us?) \_\_\_\_\_

Will you: Accept a collect call from us? \_\_\_\_\_

Notify us of address change? \_\_\_\_\_

Notify us of phone change? \_\_\_\_\_

Keep us updated on any new leads, sightings, or info? \_\_\_\_\_

Notify us immediately of child's recovery? \_\_\_\_\_

The undersigned hereby agrees to indemnify and hold harmless this organization and its officers, agents, employees, and other missing children organizations with which this organization networks, for and against all claims, demands, actions, suits, damages, costs, and expenses, including legal costs and attorney fees arising out of or resulting from the use and dissemination of the information supplied, and the searches requested by the undersigned, whether brought by the missing person or others.

Reporter's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Sample 4

## Missing Child Information Form

Missing category Non-family abduction \_\_\_\_\_

Parental (M,F,G, or other relative) abduction \_\_\_\_\_

Runaway \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Child's full name \_\_\_\_\_  
first middle last

Nicknames/aliases \_\_\_\_\_

Sex M/F Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
month day year Current age \_\_\_\_\_

Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
city state country

Date missing \_\_\_\_\_  
month day year Time \_\_\_\_\_

Missing from \_\_\_\_\_  
city state

Describe how child disappeared \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What circumstances occurred prior to the child's disappearance? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Possible destinations \_\_\_\_\_

[attach additional sheets, if necessary]

Was a missing persons report filed with police? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Police agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Case number \_\_\_\_\_ Is the FBI involved? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

Name of FBI agent \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 4, continued

Is child listed in National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

NCIC number \_\_\_\_\_

Missing category as listed in NCIC \_\_\_\_\_

Current case investigative progress and assistance \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Race/Nationality Asian/Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian \_\_\_\_\_

Black \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Eye color \_\_\_\_\_ Hair color/length \_\_\_\_\_

Size/build for age Sm \_\_\_\_\_ Med \_\_\_\_\_ Lg \_\_\_\_\_ Thin \_\_\_\_\_ Heavy \_\_\_\_\_ Obese \_\_\_\_\_

Hair description Wavy \_\_\_\_\_ Curly \_\_\_\_\_ Straight \_\_\_\_\_ Treated \_\_\_\_\_

One length \_\_\_\_\_ Layered \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Skin tone \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ Contacts Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

Color of Contacts \_\_\_\_\_ Nearsighted \_\_\_\_\_ Farsighted \_\_\_\_\_ (check one)

Smokes? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ Brand \_\_\_\_\_

Number of holes in each ear \_\_\_\_\_

Scars/marks/tattoos/other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe clothes and other personal belongings in child's possession \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Speech impediment Y/N \_\_\_\_\_ Regional accent/dialect \_\_\_\_\_

Are dental, x-ray, or fingerprint records available? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, which? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Right-handed? \_\_\_\_\_ Left-handed? \_\_\_\_\_ Blood Type \_\_\_\_\_ Circumcised? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

Medical/mental conditions or disabilities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Special medications or drugs \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 4, continued

Prescriptions on file at (name, address, phone number of pharmacy) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Doctor's name, address, and phone number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Medical and vaccination records on file at \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Therapist/counselor (name, address, phone number) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School last attended (name, address, phone number) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Grade level at time of disappearance \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's hobbies/interests \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Child's favorite toy \_\_\_\_\_ Name child gave toy \_\_\_\_\_

Does child have this toy with him or her? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

Does child have a passport? Y/N Date issued \_\_\_\_\_ Date expires \_\_\_\_\_

Passport number \_\_\_\_\_ Who applied for passport? \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 4, continued

If child was ever missing before, explain (include dates, how missing, where located, and who was involved) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

List other individuals or agencies searching for your child \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Names and ages of children not missing who live with you \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

If you have more than one missing child, please list names \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 5

Missing Child Additional Information Form (Runaway)

What happened that led to your child's running away? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

List five of your child's closest friends, teachers, or relatives in order of emotional closeness:

Name	Address	Area code/phone number	Relationship
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____

Has your child run away before? Y/N If yes, give a full account/details, including the places your child went and people accompanying or who had contact with child \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Did child run away with anyone else? Y/N  
 If yes, with whom? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you have their families contact us (if their children are missing juveniles)? Y/N

What money/bank or checkbooks/credit cards/personal belongings does child have with him or her? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What money/bank or checkbooks/credit cards/personal belongings does child's companion have with him or her? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



Sample 5, continued

Does child have access to money? Y/N How/from whom? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ How much? \_\_\_\_\_

Was child employed? Y/N List previous employers and dates of employment \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List skills \_\_\_\_\_

Does child have a driver's license? Y/N Does child have a driving permit? Y/N

Does child have a state ID card? Y/N State \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license/permit/ID card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

List any driving infractions (include dates and locations) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Vehicles presently involved? Y/N Unknown

If yes, registered owner, address, and phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Legal owner and address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

License plate number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle ID number \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Make \_\_\_\_\_

Model \_\_\_\_\_ Style \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_

Unique characteristics of vehicle \_\_\_\_\_

Has child ever been involved with law-enforcement or been arrested? Y/N

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List current and past probation officer's name/county/state/dates/phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there presently warrants out for child's arrest? Y/N

Sample 5, continued

If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where did child "hang out"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Give names and addresses of people child knew there \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List places child has lived in the past (include dates) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explain any notes, letters (attach copies), phone calls from child or friends regarding child's disappearance \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you received and accounted for all long-distance/toll calls on your phone bills from several months prior to the time child ran away? Y/N

Do these bills give you ideas that should be pursued? Y/N

If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Explain any drug or alcohol usage \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Any prior or present involvement with prostitution or pornography? Y/N

If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Involved in a cult? Y/N If yes, name/description/location of cult \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List rock groups followed \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample 6**

**Runaway's Companion Information Form**

Name of Companion \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname/maiden name/aliases \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to runaway \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F

Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Eye color \_\_\_\_\_

Hair color \_\_\_\_\_ Race/nationality \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

Last known address \_\_\_\_\_

Last known phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Did companion live at home? Y/N Parent(s) name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Other places companion has lived in the past (include dates) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

State ID card number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's permit number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle make/model/year \_\_\_\_\_

License plate number/state \_\_\_\_\_

Name/address/phone number of best friend (not runaway) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies and "hangouts" \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Last school companion attended \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Address and phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Graduated Y/N Degree \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample 6, continued**

Last known employer and address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_ Immediate supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Past jobs \_\_\_\_\_ Skills \_\_\_\_\_

Real property owned (address and type of dwelling) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List bank or checking accounts:

Bank/S & L Name	Branch/City/State	Savings/Checking Account Numbers
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Names/addresses of ex-spouses \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name/date of birth/sex of children \_\_\_\_\_

Outstanding warrants Y/N For what? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_ NCIC number \_\_\_\_\_

Other pertinent information \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sample 7

Abductor Information Form

Full name of abductor \_\_\_\_\_  
Nicknames/aliases \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F  
Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Age \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
city \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_  
Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_ Passports held \_\_\_\_\_  
Date issued \_\_\_\_\_ Date expires \_\_\_\_\_ Passport number \_\_\_\_\_  
Languages spoken \_\_\_\_\_ Speech impediment? Y/N  
Regional accent/dialect \_\_\_\_\_  
Race/nationality Asian/Pacific Islander \_\_\_\_\_ American Indian \_\_\_\_\_  
Black \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Size/Build Sm \_\_\_\_\_ Med \_\_\_\_\_ Lg \_\_\_\_\_ Thin \_\_\_\_\_  
Heavy \_\_\_\_\_ Obese \_\_\_\_\_  
Eye Color \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses? Y/N Contacts? Y/N Color of contacts \_\_\_\_\_  
Hair color \_\_\_\_\_ Hair length \_\_\_\_\_ Style \_\_\_\_\_  
Hair description Wavy \_\_\_\_\_ Curly \_\_\_\_\_ Straight \_\_\_\_\_ Treated \_\_\_\_\_ One Length \_\_\_\_\_  
Layered \_\_\_\_\_  
Skin tone \_\_\_\_\_ Pierced ears? Y/N Number of holes in each ear \_\_\_\_\_  
Smokes? Y/N Brand \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_  
Scars/marks/tattoos/other \_\_\_\_\_  
Right-handed \_\_\_\_\_ Left-handed \_\_\_\_\_ Blood type \_\_\_\_\_ Circumcised? Y/N  
Are medical, x-ray, dental, or fingerprint records available? Y/N  
If yes, which? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
Medical, mental conditions, or disabilities \_\_\_\_\_  
Special medications or drugs \_\_\_\_\_  
Prescriptions on file at (name, address, phone number of pharmacy) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sample 7, continued

Doctor's name, address, and phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Therapist's/counselor's name, address, and phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Describe clothes worn and other personal belongings in abductor's possession \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Driver's license/state ID card number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_  
Registered vehicles (make, model, year, color, and style) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Legal owners (names and addresses) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
License plate numbers and state \_\_\_\_\_  
Vehicles known to be in abductor's possession \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe past driving record and list any known infractions (include dates and locations) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ Type of work \_\_\_\_\_  
Last employer (supervisor/company/address/phone number) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship with employer was Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Poor \_\_\_\_\_  
Does this company have branches in different parts of the country? Y/N  
If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_  
Job title \_\_\_\_\_ Employed from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 7, continued

Describe other past employments \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Received public assistance? Y/N Type of assistance \_\_\_\_\_  
 When and where? \_\_\_\_\_

Served in the armed forces? Y/N Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_  
 From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Discharge type Honorable/Dishonorable

Is abductor a wounded veteran? Y/N If yes, describe \_\_\_\_\_

Highest grade completed \_\_\_\_\_

High schools attended and locations \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Attended from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Graduated? Y/N

Has abductor ever attended any high school reunions? Y/N Which? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Trade schools attended and locations \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Attended from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Graduated? Y/N

Acquired skills \_\_\_\_\_

Colleges attended and locations \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Attended from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_ Minor \_\_\_\_\_

Graduated? Y/N Degree \_\_\_\_\_

List all advanced degrees/dates/schools \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 7, continued

List all credentials and/or licenses (include date and state) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Union or club memberships (include location) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

List magazine and newspaper subscriptions \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Pensions, relief, other income or assets \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

List all financial debts \_\_\_\_\_

Are there creditors looking for abductor? Y/N If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Has abductor ever filed bankruptcy? Y/N When and where? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Cards	Account Numbers	Date of Expiration
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Bank/S & L Name	Branch/City/State	Savings/Checking Account Numbers
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Describe past criminal convictions (include dates and locations) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Spent time in jail? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

Dates/length of time/institutions/locations \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 7, continued

Describe any pending or past lawsuits or judgments (include dates, county, and state) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are there warrants for arrest? Y/N For what? \_\_\_\_\_

NCIC number \_\_\_\_\_

Last seen (date/location) \_\_\_\_\_

Last known address and phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lived with (name and relationship) \_\_\_\_\_

Places lived (include dates) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has abductor ever registered to vote? Y/N Where/when? \_\_\_\_\_

Party affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Has pets? Y/N Type \_\_\_\_\_ Have pets been licensed in the past? Y/N \_\_\_\_\_

List friends and relatives in order of emotional closeness:

(1) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work, none ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/employer's address \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Real property owned (full address, county, and dwelling type) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Registered vehicles (make, model, year, license number, and state) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sample 7, continued

(2) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/employer's address \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Real property owned (full address, county, and dwelling type) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Registered vehicles (make, model, year, license number, and state) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(3) Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Employer/employer's address \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

Real property owned (full address, county, and dwelling type) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Registered vehicles (make, model, year, license number, and state) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

[add additional sheets, if needed]

Describe abductor's personality and/or your past relationship with him/her \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe what abductor likes to do in free time (hobbies, dreams, lifestyles) \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 7, continued

Places abductor always wanted to visit or live \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you think abductor has taken the child? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Has abductor ever taken a child before? Y/N If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Has abductor ever physically or sexually abused or neglected a child before? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

List ex-spouses and other children:

Name of Ex-Spouse/Address/Phone Number	Children/Date of Birth/Sex
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Does abductor pay child support? Y/N For whom/where? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 8

Abductor's Companion Information Form

Name of abductor's companion \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname/maiden name/aliases \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to abductor \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F

Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_ Eye color \_\_\_\_\_

Hair color \_\_\_\_\_ Race/Nationality \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_

Last known address \_\_\_\_\_

Other places he or she has lived in the past (include dates) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's license number \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle make/model/year \_\_\_\_\_

License plate number/state \_\_\_\_\_

Last known employer and address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_ Immediate supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Past jobs \_\_\_\_\_

Skills \_\_\_\_\_

Real property owned (address and type of dwelling) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

List bank or checking accounts:

Bank/S & L Name	Branch/City/State	Savings/Checking Account Numbers
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Sample 8, continued

Name/address of ex-spouses \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name/date of birth/sex of children \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Outstanding warrants? Y/N For what? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_ NCIC number \_\_\_\_\_

Other pertinent information \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sample 9

Criminal/Non-family Abduction Additional Information Form

How long after child's abduction did law-enforcement begin an investigation? \_\_\_\_\_

Law-enforcement agencies and officers involved \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe law-enforcement's investigation (from beginning to present) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Circumstances surrounding child's abduction \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the crime scene \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was the crime scene investigated? Y/N

Describe \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was a door-to-door search conducted? Y/N

Describe \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was a search party used? Y/N

Describe \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are all members of the search party known to law-enforcement? Y/N

Sample 9, continued

List all search party participants \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Did search party participants search in pairs? Y/N

Were dogs used in the search? Y/N

Describe \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What evidence or other relevant information was found at the crime scene? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Has there been any analysis of the evidence? Y/N

Results \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Any witnesses at the scene of the crime? Y/N

Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Describe what was seen \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Anyone wanted for questioning? Y/N

Explain \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any suspects? Y/N

Sample 9, continued

Names of Suspects	Sex	Date of Birth
1) _____		
Description _____		
_____		
2) _____		
Description _____		
_____		
Was a vehicle involved? Y/N		
Make _____		
Model _____ Year _____ Color _____		
Other distinguishing features _____		
License plate number and state _____		
Have composites of the abductor been developed? Y/N		
If yes, where can they be obtained? _____		
How have the composites been disseminated? _____		
_____		
Other important information ascertained about the case _____		
_____		
_____		
What are your feelings about what happened? _____		
_____		
_____		
What media attention has the case had? _____		
_____		
_____		



Sample 9, continued

List and describe any known enemies of child or your family \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List and describe anyone who took a special interest in or liking to your child \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Where is that person now? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe any school/family/personal problems your child was having \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe any unusual behaviors or changes in patterns in your child \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe other abductions in which no suspect was apprehended in your area over the last two years \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Relevant Information \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

[add additional sheets, if necessary]

ATTACH COPIES OF ALL RELEVANT POLICE REPORTS/ARTICLES/COMPOSITES/ETC.

Sample 10

Consent and Release Form

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_, also known as \_\_\_\_\_, authorize the above-named agency and its authorized agents to assist in the search for my/our missing child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

My/our signature(s) affixed hereto indicate my/our consent for the above agency to begin such search and to continue to its natural conclusion.

Consent is hereby granted \_\_\_\_\_ to use photographs of my child(ren) along with details concerning the disappearance and search for the child(ren).

\_\_\_\_\_ may use such photos and information on local and national television, newspapers, flyers, posters, magazines, or any other distribution source.

Further, I/we consent to the investigation and confirmation by the above agency of any and all information I/we have given or will give to assist in the search for my/our child(ren). I/We understand and agree that \_\_\_\_\_ is under no obligation to continue assisting in this search, if I/we have not given complete or accurate information or have failed to divulge all information within my/our knowledge or have failed to use my/our best efforts in this search.

By signing this agreement, I/we agree to release, indemnify, and hold harmless the above agency, its directors, officers, employees, volunteers, and authorized agents from any and all liability, claims, and causes of action which may result or arise from the release of details concerning the disappearance of the child(ren).

I/We understand that the registration of my/our child(ren) in no way guarantees the location of my/our child(ren). I/we agree to contact the above agency within 10 days of the location of my/our child(ren) and I/we will not hold \_\_\_\_\_ or its agents liable for the dissemination of the photographs, or responsible for showing the photographs for a period of 90 days after I/we notify \_\_\_\_\_ of the location/recovery.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ (parent or guardian)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Notary:

**Sample 11****Case File Letter**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

A file has been opened for:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ The file is currently complete and we are working on your child(ren)'s case.

\_\_\_\_\_ The following information or documents are needed in order to open your child(ren)'s case:

Please be advised that we must have a complete case file to work on your missing child(ren)'s case.

Let us know of any change of circumstance or, we hope, the recovery of your child(ren).

Thank you.

Sincerely,

**Sample 12****Child Status Letter**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

It has been some time since we have heard from you concerning your missing child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

Our files require updating from time to time to enable us to keep abreast of active cases.

Please advise us of your child(ren)'s current status. We would certainly be pleased to hear of a successful recovery but, should this not be the case, perhaps we have new ideas or suggestions. We are dedicated to the prevention and location of missing children. If we can help you in any way, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

**Sample 13**

**Photo Dissemination Letter**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As we receive sample copies of how the photos of your missing child(ren) are used, we will make every attempt to pass them along to you. Enclosed is a copy.

Please keep us advised of any changes or any new information.

Sincerely,

**Sample 14**

**Photo Dissemination List**

MISSING CHILD'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

BORN: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE MISSING: \_\_\_\_\_ MISSING TYPE: N P R O

GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECIPIENT NOTIFIED OF RECOVERY \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECIPIENT NOTIFIED OF RECOVERY \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECIPIENT NOTIFIED OF RECOVERY \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECIPIENT NOTIFIED OF RECOVERY \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECIPIENT NOTIFIED OF RECOVERY \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECIPIENT NOTIFIED OF RECOVERY \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECIPIENT NOTIFIED OF RECOVERY \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP \_\_\_\_\_

DATE SENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE RETURNED \_\_\_\_\_

DATE RECIPIENT NOTIFIED OF RECOVERY \_\_\_\_\_



Sample 16

Sighting Form

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm Caseworker \_\_\_\_\_

Received on \_\_\_\_\_ phone line Referral source \_\_\_\_\_

CALLER

Name \_\_\_\_\_ or anonymous

Does caller want name held confidential? Y/N

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Ext. \_\_\_\_\_

ACTUAL SIGHTING

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F Age \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F Age \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F Age \_\_\_\_\_

Description of child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and description of adult(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date seen \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Location \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_

Additional descriptions or remarks \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CASEWORKER

Personal reaction to caller \_\_\_\_\_

Action taken/date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Results/date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sample 17

Weekly Case Follow-up Form

Caseworker \_\_\_\_\_

Week (date) \_\_\_\_\_ Week ending (date) \_\_\_\_\_

(1) Missing child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Missing type N P R O Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Missing child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Missing type N P R O Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Missing child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Missing type N P R O Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parents \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Message phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Tries (dates and times) \_\_\_\_\_

Contacts made (dates and times) \_\_\_\_\_

Update from parents \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Law-enforcement agency \_\_\_\_\_

Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Tries (dates and times) \_\_\_\_\_

Contacts made (dates and times) \_\_\_\_\_

Update from law-enforcement \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Needs follow-up \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CASEWORKER'S SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWED BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 18

Case Checklist

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Caseworker \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex M/F

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_

DATE INITIALS WHEN COMPLETE, VERIFY AND PLACE IN FILE:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Registration form completed, signed, and dated by custodial parent/guardian  
REQUIRED

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Completed intake form  
REQUIRED

\_\_\_\_\_ 3) Consent and release form completed, signed, and dated by custodial parent/guardian  
REQUIRED

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Current copy of court-approved and filed custody papers granting registering parent  
REQ. IN PK CASES legal custody

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Additional documentation, such as police reports, birth certificates, college tran-  
OPTIONAL scripts, newspaper or magazine articles

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. 10 color and 10 black-and-white photographs of each missing child  
7 PHOTO MIN.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. 3 photographs of the abductor, if known  
OPTIONAL

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Verified NCIC Missing Persons File entry  
REQUIRED

Law-enforcement person and agency verifying \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ NCIC number \_\_\_\_\_

Missing type listed in NCIC \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ NCIC number \_\_\_\_\_

Missing type listed in NCIC \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 18, continued

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ NCIC number \_\_\_\_\_

Missing type listed in NCIC \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

MANAGEMENT REVIEW

CASE COMPLETE

OPENED \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
date authorized personnel

\_\_\_\_\_

CASE INCOMPLETE

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_  
authorized personnel

NEEDS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sample 19

Closing Form for Intake or Non-registered Case

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date missing \_\_\_\_\_

Date located/recovered \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	INITIALS	
_____	_____	1. Pull intake form or incomplete file.
_____	_____	2. Notify casework manager, executive director, and staff.
_____	_____	3. Mail location/recovery form to parent/guardian.
_____	_____	4. Stamp <i>located, recovered, deceased, or inactive</i> on the top of intake.
_____	_____	5. Put intakes in file folder and stamp on outside <i>located, recovered, deceased, or inactive</i> .
_____	_____	6. Write date recovered, located, deceased, or made inactive, and circumstances on front cover of case file folder.
_____	_____	7. Type a rolodex card (in top right-hand corner, type <i>intake</i> ).
_____	_____	8. Stamp rolodex card <i>located, recovered, deceased, or inactive</i> , and the respective date of the particular occurrence.
_____	_____	9. Copy child's file in the intake/incomplete file into the recovered or inactive file in the computer.
_____	_____	10. Remove child's name from intake list or inactive list in computer.
_____	_____	11. Add child's name to Master Recovered List, if applicable.
_____	_____	12. Add child's name to Monthly Recovered List, if applicable.

PROCESS COMPLETE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Casework Manager

Sample 20

Closing Form for Registered Case

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date missing \_\_\_\_\_ Date located/recovered \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	INITIALS	
_____	_____	1. Verification of location/recovery. Verification provided by _____ From _____ Title _____
_____	_____	2. If a parent calls in, complete location/recovery call form. (Verify this is recovering parent.)
_____	_____	3. Pull case file.
_____	_____	4. Notify casework manager, executive director, and staff immediately.
_____	_____	5. Mail location/recovery form to parent.
_____	_____	6. Pull rolodex card.
_____	_____	7. Stamp rolodex card <i>located, recovered, deceased, or inactive</i> .
_____	_____	8. Write date recovered, located and where, deceased, or inactive, date and the reason, then file in located or inactive rolodex.
_____	_____	9. Stamp outside cover of case file folder <i>located, recovered, deceased or inactive</i> .
_____	_____	10. Write date recovered, located, or deceased and how and where they were located, or inactive, date, and reason on file folder.
_____	_____	11. Pull photo dissemination file.
_____	_____	12. Pull pictures out of photo dissemination file and put in case file.
_____	_____	13. Pull picture for "recovery wall" (make sure name is on picture).
_____	_____	14. Pull missing children case file up on computer screen. Type <i>located, recovered, deceased, or inactive</i> and the date.
_____	_____	15. Copy open computer file to recovered or inactive file. Remove the open file after it is in recovered or inactive file. (Always double-check before removing file.)
_____	_____	16. Remove child's name from organization's two master lists.
_____	_____	17. Add child's name to Master Recovered List, if applicable.
_____	_____	18. Add child's name to Monthly Recovered List, if applicable.
_____	_____	19. Pull photo dissemination list and mail postcard to photo disseminators.
_____	_____	20. Stamp <i>located, recovered, deceased, or inactive</i> on poster.

PROCESS COMPLETE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Casework Manager

Sample 21

Location/Recovery Questionnaire

Date of call \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Staff person taking call \_\_\_\_\_

Caller \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date missing \_\_\_\_\_

Date located \_\_\_\_\_ Date recovered \_\_\_\_\_

Cite and state child located \_\_\_\_\_

Child was with (name and relationship) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Condition of child \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was child abused (physical, sexual, emotional)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was child told about the abduction and about you; or what reason did child give for running away? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What has happened to the abductor (if applicable)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How was child located and recovered? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was our organization of assistance to you? Y/N

If yes, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sample 21, continued

LOCATION TO BE VERIFIED WITH LAW-ENFORCEMENT

Agency name \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Officer/agent's name and title \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of conversation \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information supplied by law-enforcement \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NOTES/COMMENTS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Sample 22

Location/Recovery Form

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We have been informed that your missing child(ren) has/have been located/recovered. If this is the case, please take a few minutes to complete and return the following information for our files. If your child(ren) has/have not been located/recovered, please let us know immediately.

Thank you.

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date missing \_\_\_\_\_ Date recovered \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to child \_\_\_\_\_

Your address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone number (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City and state child located \_\_\_\_\_

Child was with (name and relationship) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe condition of child \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe living conditions, if known \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was child abused (physical, sexual, emotional)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what was child told about the abduction and about you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If applicable, what has happened to the abductor? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sample 22, continued

If runaway, what reason did he or she give for running? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How was your child located and recovered? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were you assisted in your search by any private investigators, attorneys, groups, etc., that you would refer to other parents of missing children? Y/N

If yes, please list their names, titles, addresses, and phone numbers:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did \_\_\_\_\_ (agency's name) assist you in any way during the search for your missing child? Y/N

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to volunteer assistance to other parents searching for their missing children? Y/N

If yes, please describe your areas of interest and skills \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample 23**

**Letter Seeking Referrals**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are always seeking reputable professionals who are willing to assist families of missing and recovered children. If you have come across any that were of great assistance to you and your family, please complete this form and return it to us.

Thank you.

Professional categories might include attorneys, therapists, private investigators, nonprofit organizations, and law-enforcement.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job title/profession \_\_\_\_\_

Company/agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fees \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job title/profession \_\_\_\_\_

Company/agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fees \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample 23, continued**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job title/profession \_\_\_\_\_

Company/agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fees \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job title/profession \_\_\_\_\_

Company/agency \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fees \_\_\_\_\_

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name printed \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Your missing/recovered child's name is \_\_\_\_\_

Sample 24

Notification of Recovery Postcard

Date \_\_\_\_\_

We are pleased to report that \_\_\_\_\_

is/are no longer missing.

Thank you for your help!


(your logo here)

Sincerely,

Sample 25

Sample Missing Child Poster Format

## Have You Seen This Child?

<p><b>WANTED:</b> <b>Arrest Warrant Issued</b></p>	<p><b>MISSING CHILD</b></p>	
<p>OPTIONAL PHOTO OF ABDUCTOR (if warrant issued for arrest)</p>	<p>CHILD'S PHOTO</p>	<p>CHILD'S PHOTO, DIFFERENT ANGLE</p>
<p>(Date of Photo)</p>	<p>(Date of Photo)</p>	<p>(Date of Photo)</p>
<p><b>NAME OF ABDUCTOR</b> Date of Birth: Ht.:      Wt.: Hair:      Eyes: Complexion: Scars, etc.: Occupation: Car:</p>	<p><b>NAME OF CHILD</b> Date of Birth:      Age: Grade in School: Ht.:      Wt.:      Hair:      Eyes: Complexion: Scars, etc.: Hobbies, sports, etc.: Details of Abduction—Date, Place: Indicate violation of court order, warrant on file. Indicate if abuse has occurred.</p>	
<b>IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:</b>		
<p>Officer's Name, Police Department: Case Number:</p>	<p>Phone Number: Warrant Number (if secured):</p>	
 <p><b>National Center for Missing and Exploited Children</b> <b>1-800-843-5678</b></p>		

# Nonprofit Service Provider's Handbook

**A Message to the Reader, by Marsha Gilmer, M.S.S.W.**

**Introduction, by Nikolette Thoman**

- 1. The Nonprofit Service Provider**
- 2. Needs of Missing Children and Their Families**
- 3. Needs of Exploited Children and Their Families**
- 4. Providing Services**
- 5. Prevention, Education, and Public Awareness**
- 6. Keeping the Nonprofit Organization Going**
- 7. Networking**
- 8. Legislative Advocacy**

**Conclusion, by Ernest E. Allen, J.D.**

**Appendix**

## The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) serves as a clearinghouse of information on missing and exploited children; provides technical assistance to citizens and law-enforcement agencies; offers training programs to law-enforcement and social service professionals; distributes photos and descriptions of missing children nationwide; coordinates child protection efforts with the private sector; networks with nonprofit service providers and state clearinghouses on missing persons; and provides information on effective state legislation to ensure the protection of children.

A 24-hour toll-free telephone line is open for those who have information on missing or exploited children: **1-800-843-5678**. The TDD hotline (for the hearing impaired) is **1-800-826-7653**. The NCMEC business number is **(703) 235-3900**.

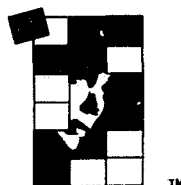
A number of publications, listed here, are available free of charge in single copies by writing the Publications Department of the National Center at the address below:

### BOOKS

- Camp Director's Guide*
- Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis*
- Child Pornography and Prostitution*
- Children Traumatized in Sex Rings*
- Child Sex Rings: A Behavioral Analysis*
- Interviewing Child Victims of Sexual Exploitation*
- Investigator's Guide to Missing Child Cases*
- Nonprofit Service Provider's Handbook*
- Parental Kidnapping*
- Selected State Legislation*
- Youth at Risk*

### BROCHURES

- Child Protection* [also in Spanish]
- Child Protection Priorities in State Legislation*
- For Camp Counselors*
- For Hospital Professionals*
- Informational Brochure*
- Just in Case . . . You Are Considering Daycare*
- Just in Case . . . You Are Considering Family Separation* [also in Spanish]
- Just in Case . . . You Are Dealing with Grief Following the Loss of a Child*
- Just in Case . . . You Are Using the Federal Parent Locator Service*
- Just in Case . . . You Need a Babysitter* [also in Braille and Spanish]
- Just in Case . . . Your Child Is a Runaway* [also in Spanish]
- Just in Case . . . Your Child Is Missing* [also in Spanish]
- Just in Case . . . Your Child Is Testifying in Court*
- Just in Case . . . Your Child Is the Victim of Sexual Abuse or Exploitation*
- My 8 Rules for Safety*
- Publications Brochure*



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