



FAMILY ABDUCTIONS OVERVIEW

The **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC)** is a private, nonprofit organization, that is congressionally authorized to perform 15 specific duties related to missing and exploited children. It was created to **help find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation, and prevent child victimization**. NCMEC is the nation's largest and most influential child protection organization. NCMEC leads the fight to protect children, creating vital resources for them and the people who keep them safe. Every child deserves a safe childhood.



WHAT IS A FAMILY ABDUCTION?

A family abduction occurs when a child is **taken, wrongfully retained, or concealed** by a parent or other family member depriving another individual of their custody or visitation rights. In some circumstances, family abductions can be considered a crime under federal or state law, and criminal statutes vary across the country about what conduct is considered unlawful.

WHAT WE ARE SEEING:

Family abductions are the **second-most common** type of missing child case reported to NCMEC.

Family abductions typically make up **4-5%** of missing child cases reported to NCMEC.

About 20% of new family abduction reports made to NCMEC were **international**.

An abduction may be more likely to occur if a parent has:

- ⚠ Threatened to abduct or previously abducted the child
- ⚠ Engaged in planning activities (e.g., selling a home, securing travel documents or vital records)
- ⚠ No strong ties to the child's home state, but ties to friends and family living in another state/country
- ⚠ A history of domestic violence or child abuse
- ⚠ A history of marital issues

TIPS TO HELP PREVENT FAMILY ABDUCTIONS:

- ✅ Obtain a custody determination from the court which specifically outlines custody and visitation rights.
- ✅ Advise the child's school or daycare of custody orders and have children memorize essential information such as home address and phone number in case of emergencies.
- ✅ Request that the judge include abduction-prevention measures such as supervised visitation, posting a bond, enrolling the child into the U.S. Department of State's Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program (CPIAP), and surrendering a child's passport to the court.
- ✅ If a court order prohibits the child's removal from the country, enroll them in U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Prevent Abduction program.

HOW NCMEC CAN HELP:

After a case is reported to NCMEC, a **Case Manager** is assigned. As the primary point of contact, the Case Manager helps manage communication between all involved parties and works across multiple NCMEC divisions to coordinate the application of specialized resources to help locate the child.

Role of the NCMEC Case Manager:

- » Maintains continued contact with parents, legal guardians, and law enforcement to obtain updated information about the child, possible companion, or suspect, to further assess risk and ongoing case needs.
- » Acts as a resource providing assistance to parents and legal guardians to help them navigate through the reporting process with law enforcement and legal process with the court.
- » Allocates resources, including poster distribution and analytical searches. An active case with law enforcement, and verification of the custody situation, is needed for poster creation.
- » Facilitates collaboration between various local, state, and federal agencies. For international cases, NCMEC Case Managers work closely with the Office of Children's Issues, a part of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs.
- » Helps connect families with mental health services and peer support.
- » Coordinates access to recovery planning and travel assistance to recover a child if needed.

Legal Technical Assistance for Families, Attorneys, Law Enforcement, and Judicial Officials

- » Information regarding legal assistance programs in the community and possible referrals to assist with the prevention of and response to family abductions.
- » Country-specific information and statistics regarding risks related to international family abductions and legal mechanisms for recovering a child abducted internationally.
- » Resources and assistance for attorneys representing parents/guardians and children.
- » Amicus Briefs for impact litigation about issues that NCMEC may be specially situated to address given its mission.
- » Help locating state-specific statutes to be used as evidence of custodial rights for Hague Applications.

HOW TO REPORT TO NCMEC:



To report a missing child to NCMEC, call our 24-hour hotline **1-800-843-5678**.



Scan to view NCMEC resource guides.



For questions regarding the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program (CPIAP), the Prevent Abduction program, or the Hague Abduction Convention, contact the **U.S. Department of State** Office of Children's Issues at **1-888-407-4747** or visit **travel.state.gov**.