

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® Best-Practices Guide for Child ID Kits

One of the most important tools for law enforcement to use in the recovery of a missing child is an up-to-date, good-quality photograph along with descriptive information. A Child ID Kit should be a simple yet effective tool in helping families maintain a current photograph of and descriptive information about their children. The method should be streamlined for ease of use, because this information can greatly assist law enforcement in finding a child when disseminated in a timely manner. The Child ID Kit should be made available at little or no cost.

1. Recent, Accurate, and Good Quality Image of Child

Child ID Kits should contain a

- Recent, head-and-shoulders photo of a child in which the child's face is clearly seen, in focus. The photo should also represent the child's true features and be taken on a solid, neutral, or plain background.
- Usable, photo-quality image with a digital image being the preferred format. The image size should be such that it provides for ease of electronic transmission to avoid delays in dissemination.

2. Recent, Accurate, and Good Quality Descriptive Information

Child ID Kits should

- Contain space for accurate, narrative description useful to identify a child such as name, nickname, height, weight, sex, age, eye color, dentition, eyeglasses, hair color/style, scars, identifying marks, disabilities, tattoos, and body piercings.
- Be easily updated, or edited if maintained electronically, so parents and/or guardians can update the information every six months or add more information as appropriate, including clothing worn on the day the child was last seen.

3. Additional Identifying Information

Child ID Kits should contain directions for parents and/or guardians about how to collect identifying information such as fingerprints, teeth impressions, and DNA. These directions need to note this information should be collected by competent, trained individuals such as law-enforcement and healthcare professionals.

4. Information Maintained by Parents/Guardians

All copies of the child's photos and descriptive and identifying information should be maintained by the parent and/or guardian only and should be secure and readily accessible.

5. Ease of Use and Information Distribution

- Child ID Kits should contain user-friendly instructions. Digital versions should include on-screen instructions.

- Digital Child ID Kits should employ an easily used digital media format such as CD-ROM or Flashdrive.
- Digital Child ID Kits should be compatible with commonly available computer operating systems.

REMEMBER

To be as effective as possible, parents and guardians should immediately provide the Child ID Kit to law enforcement authorities when reporting their child missing.

Helpful Tips

- The photo's suggested resolution should be at least 640 x 480. The image size transmitted should not be too large to send via e-mail.
- Have your dentist's and doctor's names and phone numbers readily available in order to access dental and medical records, if needed.
- If you have home video of your child, it should be kept with the Child ID Kit, as a video can capture a child's mannerisms.