

RCMP



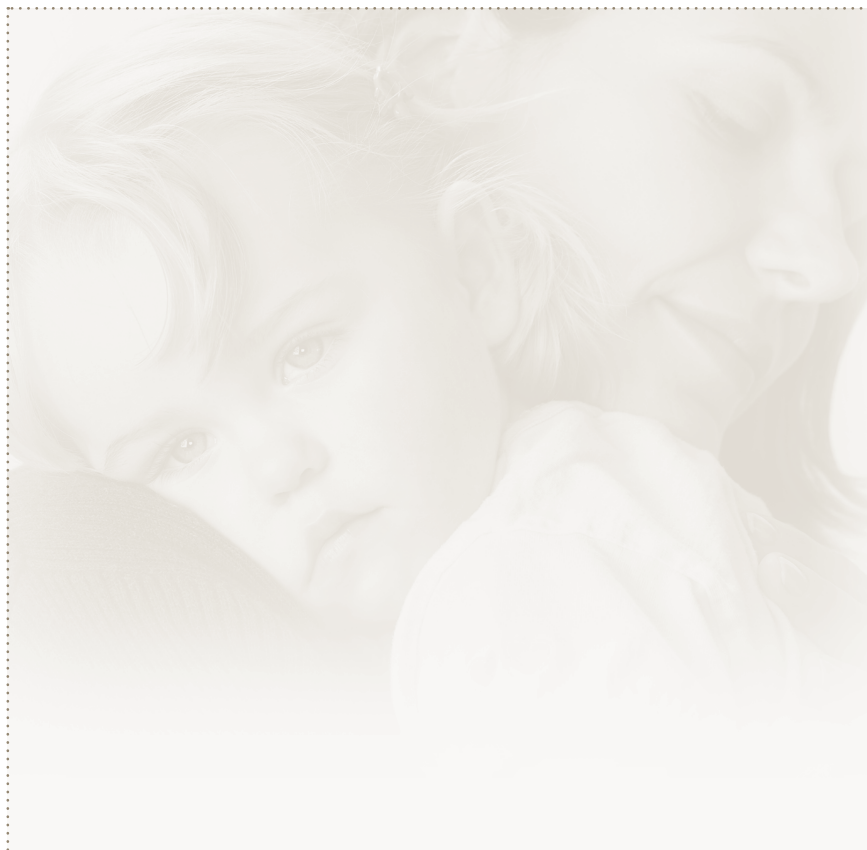
ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN SERVICES
**WORKING TO BRING OUR
CHILDREN HOME**



Royal Canadian Mounted Police Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada



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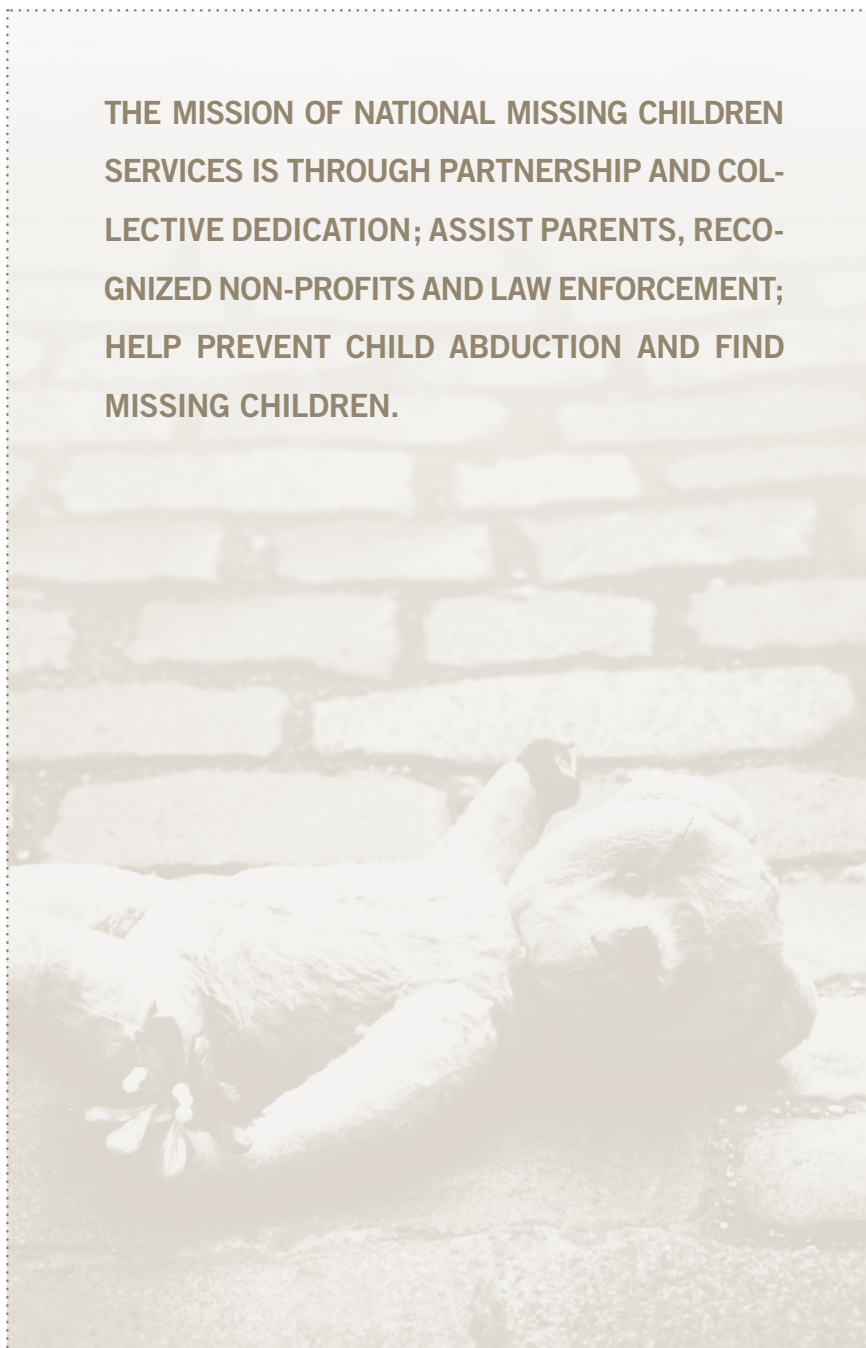
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Or visit our website at: **www.ourmissingchildren.gc.ca**

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THE MISSION OF NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN SERVICES IS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND COLLECTIVE DEDICATION; ASSIST PARENTS, RECOGNIZED NON-PROFITS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT; HELP PREVENT CHILD ABDUCTION AND FIND MISSING CHILDREN.



01_ WHAT DO I DO IF A CHILD IS MISSING?

1. **STAY CALM.** Contact your neighbours, friends, spouse, siblings and anyone who may know where your child may be located. Invite a friend or acquaintance with a “calm” manner to stay with you.
2. **Conduct a telephone search of the neighbourhood.** Call **family, friends and relatives** who may wish to help. Do not use your home telephone for general calls. Your child may try to contact you. Encourage others to use their telephones so **your line will always remain free for incoming calls.** If you have to leave the house, have an answering machine activated or have a friend or neighbour stay behind to answer the telephone. Do not make idle conversation
3. **Call the police and report the child as missing. Remember time is of the essence,** so while you are making a missing child occurrence report, have friends and relatives **conduct a basic land search of the neighbourhood area.**

Places to check:

- your home and property, including the attic/basement for well hidden children. Do not disturb or move anything in your child’s room until the police investigators have arrived and checked the area, as any movement of items may disturb valuable evidence necessary for the search
- home of your child’s friends, neighbours, and relatives
- ex-spouse’s home, if you are separated
- past and present baby-sitters homes
- school and school yard (the child may have after school activities or detention)
- community centre - areas where your child frequents
- local sports facility - indoor and outdoor
- parks and play areas
- shopping centres and corner stores
- video arcades
- hobby shops
- bicycle shops

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- bus terminals
 - home computer, in the event your child met someone on the Internet and has arranged to meet them
4. **Try to recall the present and past few days of family life**, situations and events that might disturb the child, argument, confrontation, school happening, disciplinary action -a possible motive for hiding.
 5. **Update the police occurrence missing child report**, if the telephone and land search has not been successful. This report is important as it allows the police to place a description of the missing child on the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) computer system, so all police agencies in Canada will have the information and be involved in the search. At the request of the investigating police officer, the child may also be entered on the United States National Crime Information Computer (NCIC) system. Depending on your geographical location, the police may wish to notify border crossing and ferry-rail-airport agencies.
 6. If you suspect parental or caregiver abduction, provide the police with a **photo of the child and suspected abductor**, an address, telephone number, vehicle information and any other pertinent information regarding abductor and accomplices as well as any suspected or known transportation details. If you are separated from your spouse it is important to report important information, like a description of the abductor, placement of tattoos, scars and their descriptions, the make/model/colour of his/her car, licence plate number, places he/she frequents, interests, dreams (may take the child on a vacation), family, relatives names, telephone numbers, addresses (in Canada and abroad), names and contact details of doctor, dentist and other specialist and professionals of interest.
 7. **Provide the police** with the information in your prepared **Child Identification Kit**. This kit should include updated clear photographs, foot and fingerprints, birth certificate, medical history, passport, dental records, X-rays, child's name and description including location of scars, birthmarks and any other identifiable data (glasses, braces, earrings, etc.). A videotape or a recent photo CD of the child may be made specifically for the kit. Take time to mentally recall accurately what your child was wearing that day and report it to police.

8. **Conduct a complete physical search of your area** in collaboration with police/and or neighbours. Organize a search party of friends and relatives and search areas, such as child's route home from school, community centre, friends house, favourite hang-out etc. Be on the look out for articles of clothing, toys, books and other personal belongings scattered on the ground, on equipment, in garbage cans etc. If found, do not disturb. Contact and report to police immediately.
9. **Ensure that someone is at home at all times to answer the telephone** in case your child calls.
10. Continue to keep the telephone line **FREE**. Your child may try to contact you.
11. **Contact your provincial not- for- profit searching agency** and **register** your missing child. Searching agencies will provide personal and investigative support, as well as give you suggestions regarding steps which can be taken to further assist in the search for your child. Always check the reputation and credibility of agencies thoroughly before providing them with confidential and detailed information.
12. **Act quickly**. This is very important. Try to keep focused on the task at hand, that is locating your missing child. Ask a trusting close friend to continue to provide support for you. Each moment that passes is very important and must be used efficiently.
13. **Continue your search** even if there are no immediate results. Follow up with the investigating police officer and a provincial searching agency.
14. **Solicit media support**, such as radio, television, local publications and newspapers, only at the advice of the police and the searching agency involved with the case. If you solicit the services of a searching agency, the telephone service provided by them will screen and evaluate the calls. It is not advisable to leave or publicize your home or work number or address. Telephone calls and incoming mail can mislead investigators and upset the family.
15. **Distribute a photograph** of the missing child. All police and searching agencies have services available to complete this task. It is important to work cooperatively and keep all the agencies searching for your child well informed and updated, especially regarding your personal searching procedures.

16. **Keep a detailed diary** of people and agencies you have contacted and steps you have already taken. Logging the events lessens the duplication of efforts and allows a review and follow up of inquiries.

FOR SUSPECTED RUNAWAYS

- Act quickly and be very aware of the time that expires.
- Check **your teenager's room**. Firstly, look for a note regarding plans or stating she/he has runaway. Secondly, walk around the room for visible clues regarding the disappearance and if you need to pick up items, **do so very carefully and place them back where they were found**. Note: an older child **may pack a few things** if they are running away or they might leave a note explaining their disappearance. **Be careful not to disturb items in the room**, such as desk papers, waste basket contents, wallet, purse, linen, makeup, jewellery, cosmetic bag and home/ personal computer.
- Check for signs of possible **religious or cult involvement**. This may be evident by carefully looking through the books, magazines, collections, tapes, compact discs, records and personal belongings.
- If you are familiar with computers, **check chat rooms and recent e-mail correspondence** for any indication of Internet luring. If you are unsure of this type of search, leave it to the experts. Inexperienced persons may destroy valuable evidence stored on the computer.
- **Contact police immediately** and file a missing person report, if the signs and your intuition leads you to believe that your child/youth has been abducted or ran away.
- **Check school locker and desk** for information which may help determine your teenagers plans, friends names and addresses and possible meetings and activities.
- **Develop a time line** of the youths last known and favourite activities. As well, develop a history of alcohol and drug use and related contacts.
- Refer to **"Places to Check"** in this brochure and follow the steps.

02_ SAFETY AND TRAVEL TIPS FOR FAMILIES

Children need to play and learn where they feel safe and secure. Parents and care givers are the people responsible for providing that safety. Before they are able to learn how to stay safe in other places, they must feel safe in their home, school and play environment.

Parents and care givers can help children to stay safe by encouraging them to trust their own instincts and decisions. As well, parents should allow their children to make choices and decisions daily and participate in family discussions. **Effective street proofing begins at home.**

Below are some basic tips to help you keep your children safe.

1. Teach children:
 - their **name (especially their last name), address, telephone number**, parents' names, places of work and contact numbers.
 - to **Dial 911** from a home, cellular or public telephone if there is an emergency.
 - To help children remember, review this important information often and reward progress. Remember that your child's age and maturity will affect how much information they can learn and remember.
2. Insist that very young children, *under the age of 6 years*, **hold the supervising adult's hand at all times** while walking to and from stores, play areas, school grounds, camping and other activities. Older children should stay close to and in sight of their parent. Also, watch children at play carefully.
3. Children must be taught to **stay close to you in public places**, especially shopping, and not to play 'hide and seek'. Teach them that they can ask someone with a name tag for help if they become separated from you or lost, such as, a cashier or a security guard.
4. Encourage children to **travel in groups**, no matter what their age. The popular "**buddy system**" works best.
5. Insist that children **check with you before accepting a ride, gift or candy from someone**, even if it is someone they know. Children should be taught that adults do not ask children for help.

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6. Always have a **secret code word** that only your family knows. Teach your child that if someone comes to pick them up who is not a parent or care giver, he or she must tell you the secret code word before leaving with that person.
7. Tell your child that a family member or 'good' friend will tell them immediately if something happens to you, and that a stranger would not have this information.
8. A child should never go anywhere without telling the adult in charge (teacher, care giver, activity leader, coach) information like, who they are going with and where they are going.
9. Teach children that it's **OK to say "NO"**. If a person tries to grab or restrain them, teach them to scream loudly, scatter belongings, knock over furniture, make a loud noise and shout, "THIS PERSON IS NOT MY PARENT."
10. Take your child around the neighbourhood where they walk and play, pointing out '**safe houses**'. These are houses where they are safe to go to, especially in an emergency, to ask for help or to wait for a parent to come and get them.
11. Make a '**Communication Center**' in your home so that family members know where each person is at all times. It should be set up in a place that is easy to get to and use, with enough pencils and paper to write notes. The Communication Center should also have a list of important contact and emergency numbers posted on it.
12. Never **give an infant to anyone to hold or watch even for a moment** unless you know them well. This also applies to very young children.
13. Never leave a small child alone in a car or vehicle, even for a very short time. Many things can happen to children who are alone in a car. These include:
 - the child may wander away from the vehicle and become lost;
 - the child may be severely frightened or injured when the car is stolen by someone who does not notice the child is in the car; or
 - the child may be injured from extreme heat or cold inside the car, or if a fire is started in the car.

14. Be careful of people who ask to take photos of your child. For example, if you notice someone in a park taking photos of children, leave the area. A person with a legitimate reason to take photos will ask for your permission to do so, and will show you their identification. Check this identification carefully.
15. Promise your children that you will never leave them, so that they will not believe this information from a stranger or person who maybe trying to abduct or hurt them.
16. Assure your child that if he or she were missing, you would never stop looking for them, no matter how long it took to find them.

TIPS FOR KIDS

- Memorize your last name, address and telephone number.
- Memorize where your parents work and their telephone numbers at work.
- If you are in trouble, call 911. Learn how to make local and long distance phone calls.
- Always ask your mom or dad or caregiver if it is OK to go anywhere. Make sure you tell them exactly where you are going. Do not leave that place to go to another place without asking permission first.
- Always walk, play and bicycle with a group of friends or a **'buddy'**.
- Know and visit the places that your parents have told you are safe houses in your neighbourhood.
- If someone you do not know very well asks you what your name is, where you live or for your help, **DO NOT ANSWER**. Do not come close to this person, and quickly run away.
- If someone grabs or holds you, **scream loudly**, squirm, kick, and throw your jacket or backpack.
- Never get into a car with someone you do not know, even if they offer to give you a ride home. Also, stay a safe distance away from any car that stops close to you.
- Every family should have a "secret code" word that only you and your family know. In an emergency, only go with a person who knows this code.
- Say 'No' to adults who ask you to do something for them, like: find a pet, accept a gift, join them for an activity, or give them directions.
- Never share your computer password with anyone else or give personal information and photos to your friends over the internet.
- Don't ever meet anyone you have talked to on the Internet, unless you have permission from your parents or care giver.
- If you don't feel right about doing something, don't do it.

TRAVEL TIPS FOR PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS

1. Always carry the proper identification. These may include: a passport, citizenship card, birth certificate, baptismal certificate, certificate of Indian status or permanent resident card.
2. Always have documents that show custody rights if you are separated or divorced.
3. Carry a letter of “permission to travel” with the child if you are not the parent or legal guardian. This letter should include the custodial parents’ contact information and a description of the situation.
4. Always travel in the same vehicle as the child(ren) when you cross a border, even in a caravan type situation.
5. Please be patient at border crossings while checks are being made. The child’s safety is of utmost importance.

03__ SAFETY IN CYBERSPACE INTERNET LURING

The Internet has entered the lives of children and youth at a rapid rate. At the touch of the finger, it has opened up the world for them to explore known and unknown places. It serves not only as an exceptional educational tool but also as a means of rapid communication, allowing children to talk to their closest friends and Internet friends living in other countries. The value of the Internet is unparalleled.

Nonetheless, it has the potential for children to be victimized and on occasion, seriously harmed. As children grow and learn, they may come in contact with predators on the Internet. Their innocence, coupled with their trusting and fearless nature, often leads them to explore computer Internet sites they do not understand. In doing so, they place themselves in a position of vulnerability and danger. In essence, the stranger no longer meets them face to face but develops a relationship with them in secret.

The protection of children from Internet predators is a difficult one. Many parents conclude that the only way to deal with the problem is to keep the child offline or monitor them exceptionally close. This is a drastic step. Parents can be guaranteed that their child will fall far behind the others in knowing how to enjoy one of the most powerful education and communication tools invented to date. As well, these uninformed children will be much more vulnerable to dangerous situations when they use the Internet at school, at a friends house or in the library.

Safety in cyberspace does not differ greatly from other child protection approaches. However, the difference lies in the fact that the average child probably knows more about the computer and Internet than their parents do.

If this situation exists consider the following:

Be Informed

Take lessons and learn to use the Internet yourself. Set up a parent support group and learn from each other. Invite special speakers to talk to your group. Talk to computer sales clerks and determine which software packages are available to safeguard your child and block out offensive materials. Set up your child's accounts or have someone knowledgeable do it for you.

Inquire as to the safeguards used by the school, library and friend's home where your child may have an alternative access to potentially dangerous situations. Sit down with your child and talk about their computer interests, Internet friends and especially be aware of any communications with adults. Watch, learn and ask questions in a non-threatening way. Monitor credit card usage to determine if your teen may be accessing a non acceptable paid site using your credit card. Be informed of the dangers of the Internet.

Be Smart

Set the rules for Internet use, including when and how long your child can go on-line. Have your child use a code name while on-line. Change passwords frequently. Periodically view the history of their chat line. Check the computer hard drive for signs of the nature and scope of activities. Always maintain access to your child's on-line accounts and regularly and randomly check the email messages. Take note of materials printed, especially pornography type photographs. Check the diskette collection for clues of activities like pornography and other obscene materials periodically. Always position the computer in a high traffic area where you can monitor some of the activity. Advise children not to give their name or family names, addresses, telephone numbers, the name of the school he/she attends, parent's workplace or any other pertinent identifiers that might help a predator locate them. Also, advise them not to discuss family vacation plans and other pertinent information over the Internet. This might result in a house burglary or car theft while the family is away from home; or may lead to an abduction.

Be Alert

Watch for signs of behaviour change, such as: withdrawal from conversation regarding Internet activities; attempts to be secretive; noticeable signs of embarrassment when asked certain questions about activities; and the apparent use of language uncharacteristic of the child's age group. Also, question activities involving the scanning and sending of photographs, particularly of self. Predators often request photographs for personal use or mass distribution. Look for hidden photos of children and adults having sex, which are often used to break down the child's inhibitions. Report any on-line activity to police considered potentially dangerous.

Some Internet Luring Flags for Parents and Caregivers

The child or youth:

- is obsessed with computer activity
- has none or only a few friends - seems to spend all his/her spare time on the computer
- shows noticeable changes in character and behaviour
- appears secretive and non-communicative regarding computer met friends and activities
- seems unusually preoccupied with chat room communications
- appears sheepish and uncooperative when asked about computer activities
- changes the screen or shuts off the computer when an authority figure enters the room
- receives questionable mail, email, gifts, packages
- receives excessive telephone calls from adults or friends not known well to the family
- requests photos to be taken of self and scanned by computer to send to friends
- changes the style of dress suddenly and uncharacteristically
- seems to dress to look older, and perhaps more seductive
- downloads offensive materials found by parent, such as: pornography

If you notice changes in your child's appearance, behaviour and activities, approach them in a non-threatening way and discuss your concerns. Your approach will determine your success in determining their activities or the nature of the way they respond.

Protecting your child and youth in cyberspace requires ***Team Work*** - you and your child, and you and your friends and neighbours. So don't shy away! **Be Informed, Be Smart and Be Alert. Your child's safety is in your hands.**

04__COMPUTER PHOTO AGE PROGRESSION

RCMP National Missing Children Services offers a Computer Photo Age Progression service. Computer Photo Age Progression is a combination of science and art. It enables a trained Forensic Artist to create from photographs a portrait with a likeness of what a missing child would look like today.

When a child has been reported missing, it is essential that the investigating police officer has a complete description and other important information about the child. When a child has been missing over an extended period of time the original photographs of the child become outdated. It is important that an Investigator has up-to-date photographs of the child for use on flyers and posters, to verify sightings and generate new leads for the police. It would be unlikely that a child on a poster would be recognized if the photograph portrays the child at a young age and he/she is now two or more years older.

The main objective of National Missing Children Services is to assist police nationally and internationally, in the search for and recovery of missing children. This technology is a useful tool to an Investigator and will enhance the ability to assist police agencies across the country.

This service is available to all police agencies, across Canada and internationally, where the service is not available. It may be utilized at any time by contacting National Missing Children Services.

The following age progression of Yohanna Cyr demonstrates the results of the Computer Photo Age Progression system.



2 YEARS OLD



26 YEARS OLD

The ideal criteria for a request for Computer Photo Age Progression of missing children:

1. The child must be a minimum of two years of age.
2. The child must be missing for a minimum of two years.
3. Photographs of the child taken as close to the day of disappearance as possible must be available, preferably a frontal view.
4. Provide photographs of the biological parents and/or brothers and sisters at the age the child's photo is being aged to.
5. Provide photographs of the biological parents and/or brothers and sisters at the same age as the child was when last seen, most suitably in the same position as the photo of the child.
6. Photographs may be in either colour or black & white.
7. DO NOT mark on the photographs in any way. Comments should be attached on a separate piece of paper. (For example : identifying the location of a specific scar.)
8. The best photographs are the 'school picture' type. The more photos available, the better chance the Forensic Artist has in obtaining a good likeness.

05__TRAVEL REUNIFICATION PROGRAM

“Our Goal is to Reunite Families”

On October 2, 1991, the Minister of Justice, Attorney General of Canada and the Solicitor General announced the inception of the Travel Reunification Program developed to assist in the recovery of an abducted child. The program is managed by National Missing Children Services (NMCS), National Police Services, Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

When an abducted child is found, and after certain criteria are met, this program provides a parent or guardian with transportation to *and from* any location serviced by Air Canada and Via Rail. However, this service does not apply to their partner carriers.

This program is also part of the Air Canada Kids Horizon program which fully supports the needs of Canadian children.

Via Rail Canada Inc. is proud to have been chosen by the Travel Reunification Program as the official ground transporter, and to bring Canadians together from coast to coast.

It is important to note the following:

- Only parents who cannot afford to travel are eligible;
- All arrangements must be made by a NMCS designated official (subject to Air Canada or Vial Rail's final approval);
- Reservations are dependent upon the availability of the promotional seats which are designated specifically for the program;
- There is no exchange of funds between NMCS and a parent/guardian/ authority in order to activate the travel arrangements. A valid credit card is required to cover taxes, and airport fees when applicable;
- NMCS will not reimburse parents who have made their own travel arrangements beforehand;
- At least 24 hours notice is required, Monday to Friday only to process the travel request; and
- The program does not apply to the abducting parent, even if the abductor is accompanying the child home or to a place of residence.

In order to be eligible for travel assistance, the following guidelines must be met.

1. Travel assistance is limited to parental child abduction incidents, including situations whereby the child may be in the care of a private guardian, or abducted by a private guardian.
2. Transportation will be provided only for the following persons and reasons:
 - an abducted child(ren) from the place of location to its home or residence;
 - the left-behind parent, to and from the place where the child was located;
 - a substitute person, approved by the authorities, to and from the place where the child was located.
3. The request for assistance must originate from one of the following requesting authorities:
 - a law enforcement agency investigating a parental abduction complaint;
 - a representative of a Canadian Central Authority pursuant to *The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction*; or
 - NMCS or an agency designated by NMCS, National Police Services, such as a recognized not-for-profit agency.
4. The requesting agency is responsible for assessing the financial circumstance of the left-behind parent (or guardian) before any travel arrangements can be made. In essence, the left-behind parent must be in need of financial assistance to travel within Canada or to a foreign country.
5. The official status of the custody must be determined. The requesting authority must make every reasonable effort to confirm and assure that the child can be legally removed from the abducting parent's care and authority before the left-behind parent or guardian is permitted to request travel arrangements. The missing child should be in the custody of a State authority or authorities such as social service, foster care service, child protection service, children's aid or any other similar service located within Canada or in the country of location.

This effort may prevent the abduction from reoccurring while the left-behind parent is traveling to the location to pick up the child. For any cases in which there is a likelihood that the offence will reoccur prior to the left behind parent's arrival, this criteria will be considered unmet and tickets will not be issued.

6. The requesting authority must confirm that the parent or guardian has obtained the necessary documentation in order for the designated individuals to travel uninterrupted within Canada or *to and from* the foreign country.
7. Reservations will be processed only after the child is removed from the care and control of the abducting parent or guardian and all travel documents have been obtained.

The reunification
program is supported by:



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