

## ADDING VALUE TO YOUR SEARCH

The Florida Department of Law Enforcement's Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse (MEPIC) was established in 1983 as the first state clearinghouse in the nation. The program provides a centralized file to collect, store, and disseminate information on missing children in the state of Florida as well as provide analytical and investigative support in the processing of leads associated with missing children cases. MEPIC also provides liaison among citizens, private organizations and law enforcement officials regarding missing children information.

Running away may be the one of the most dangerous acts children can commit because they do not see themselves as potential victims. Law enforcement officers often stand as the only defense between a runaway missing child and an exploiter or victimizer.

The enclosed suggestions are offered in an effort to assist parents and custodians who are either searching for their runaway child or seeking help in preventing a possible runaway situation.



Florida Department  
of Law Enforcement

Gerald Bailey  
Commissioner



MISSING CHILDREN  
INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE  
1-888-FL-MISSING  
(1-888-356-4774)

[www.fdle.state.fl.us](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us)

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT ★ MEPIC

THE RUNAWAY CHILD

A Parent's Guide





## FINDING YOUR CHILD...

**R**unning away is a frightening experience for child and parent alike. Your child immediately becomes vulnerable as soon as he/she leaves home. Your child can become victim to drugs, drinking, sexual exploitation, child pornography, child prostitution, or other violent acts.

**I**t is important for parents to remain calm when they discover that their child has run away. The **first 24 HOURS** are the most important in locating the child.

- Check with your child's friends, school, neighbors, relatives or anyone else who might know of your child's whereabouts.
- Report that your child has run away to your local police department. Have an officer respond to your home to take the report.

In order for the police officer to enter your child's name into the FCIC/NCIC computer, provide the police with a recent photo of your child, description of your child, hair

- Call the FDLE MISSING ENDANGERED PERSONS INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE at 1-888-FL-MISSING to report your child missing.
- Check any and all local spots your child may frequent, check area hospitals and treatment centers.
- Call your local Runaway Hotline (if there is one) as well as the National Runaway Switchboard.
- Make fingerprints and dental records available to police.
- Have posters and fliers made and place them in public places, store windows, truck stops, shopping malls and hospitals.



## BACK HOME AGAIN...

**W**hen your child is recovered or returns home, it is important to show love and concern for his safety, not anger or fear. If you react angrily your child may feel unwanted or unloved and runaway again.

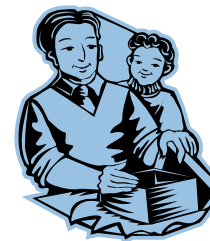
- ◆ Promptly notify police, the FDLE Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse, the National Runaway Switchboard or anyone else who may have assisted you in your search.

- Seek assistance of a trained counselor or professional if you are unable to deal with family problems effectively which may have prompted your child to leave home.
- It may be necessary for a child to go to a temporary residence or runaway shelter while the family works toward resolving their problems. Members of the clergy, school personnel or the law enforcement community can also direct you to available resources and services.



## OTHER HELP LINES...

**National Runaway Switchboard**  
1-800-621-4000  
**Florida Network of Youth and  
Family Services**  
1-800-786-2929  
**FDLE**  
**Missing Endangered Persons  
Information Clearinghouse**  
1-888-356-4774  
**Toll Free Nationwide**



For Additional  
Information also visit our  
website at:  
[www.fdle.state.fl.us](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us)