

The First 10 Minutes: What To Do When Your Child Wanders

Print this. Put it on your fridge. You will not think clearly in the moment, that's what this is for.

MINUTE 0-1

- ☐ **Call 911 immediately.** Do not wait. Tell them your child has a disability and is at risk near water.
- ☐ Say the words "**endangered missing child with autism**" (or your child's condition). This changes the response priority.

MINUTE 1-5 · SEARCH WATER FIRST

- ☐ **Check all water within sight first:** pools, ponds, ditches, fountains, hot tubs, retention ponds. Drowning is the leading cause of death in wandering incidents.
- ☐ Send one adult to the **nearest road or traffic area** while you check water.
- ☐ Note the **exact spot** your child was last seen and the **time**.

MINUTE 5-10

- ☐ **Alert neighbors.** Knock on doors, ask them to check backyards, pools, sheds, parked cars.
- ☐ Have someone **stay at home base** in case your child returns.
- ☐ Get a **recent photo** ready on your phone for police.
- ☐ Check your child's **favorite places and fixations** (a specific store, playground, animal, vehicle).

PREPARE BEFORE IT HAPPENS

- ☐ Keep a current photo on your phone at all times
- ☐ Fill out an emergency ID card for your child
- ☐ Know your neighbors with pools
- ☐ Introduce your child to local first responders if possible