



POLICY TITLE:	Missing, Abducted and Absent Children		
 	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY		
Approved By:	Date Approved:	Original Effective Date:	Last Revision:
Robert L. Matthews	September 27, 2023	June 6, 2007	September 22, 2023

I. ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE	<i>Missing, Abducted and Absent Children Business Process</i>
II. AUTHORITY	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA, or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the CFSA mission and all applicable federal and District of Columbia laws, rules, and regulations, including 42 USC 671(a)(35)(B) and its implementing regulations, as well as the applicable provisions of Title 4 (Chapter 13) and Title 16 (Chapter 23) of the DC Code.
III. APPLICABILITY	All CFSA employees and contractors.
IV. RATIONALE	CFSA must have procedures for locating children when they run away or go missing. A sense of urgency is important because missing and absent children are at risk of victimization, exploitation, injury, and even death. Immediate action is critical and clear procedures for locating children mitigate their risk.
V. POLICY	<p>This policy establishes requirements and instructions for CFSA employees when a child receiving in-home services is reported missing, and for CFSA employee and contractors when children who are in foster care are reported or believed to be missing, abducted, at high risk and absent from their place of residence, or absent from placement although their whereabouts are known as defined in the <i>Missing, Abducted and Absent Children Business Process</i>.</p> <p>When a child is missing or absent, the resource provider and assigned social worker shall notify individuals, agencies, and organizations described in the <i>Missing, Abducted and Absent Children Business Process</i>. The assigned social worker shall coordinate communication among team members who are working to locate and safely return the child. The social worker shall also ensure that all key individuals, especially the parent(s) and resource providers, know about the situation.</p> <p>Immediate notification to the law enforcement agency in the jurisdiction in which the child is placed (hereafter referred to as the local law enforcement agency) and the CFSA Diligent Search Unit is mandatory and critical. The Diligent Search Unit supports the social workers' efforts to locate and return the child.</p> <p>Within this policy, the term "child" refers to anyone under age 18 or a foster child under age 21. The term "caregiver" includes parent, guardian, or legal custodian (as applicable).</p>

VI. CONTENTS	<p>A. Reporting Requirements for Resource Providers and Caregivers</p> <p>B. Reporting Requirements for the Agency</p> <p>C. Requirements for Supervisory Social Workers</p> <p>D. Role of the Diligent Search Unit and Coordination with the Social Worker</p> <p>E. Social Worker’s Tasks When a Missing, Abducted, or Absent Child is Located</p>
VII. SECTIONS	<p>Section A: Reporting Requirements for Resource Providers and Caregivers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The resource provider (including foster parents, kinship parents, and staff of congregate care facilities) or caregiver shall file a police report with the local law enforcement agency immediately (within 1 hour) when the child is missing or abducted, or absent and at high risk. In addition, group home providers shall complete an Unusual Incident Report immediately for missing or abducted, or absent and at high-risk children. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law enforcement personnel will report this information to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). 2. The resource provider or caregiver shall also report any missing, or abducted or absent and at high risk child immediately to the CFSA Hotline and provide the number of the police report. 3. If the child returns home, the resource provider or caregiver shall immediately notify the local law enforcement agency, CFSA’s Hotline, the assigned social worker, and other relevant parties who may have been notified that the child was missing or abducted, or absent.
	<p>Section B: Reporting Requirements for the Agency</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Agency shall file a report with the local law enforcement agency and NCMEC immediately, and in no case later than 24 hours after being notified that a child is missing or abducted, or absent and at high risk. The report submitted to law enforcement agencies and NCMEC shall include where reasonably possible: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A photo of the child or youth; b. A description of the child's or youth's physical features, such as height, weight, sex, ethnicity, race, hair color, and eye color; and c. Any endangerment information, such as the child's or youth's pregnancy status, prescription medications, suicidal tendencies, vulnerability to being sex trafficked, and other health or risk factors. 2. The Agency (in collaboration with the resource provider or caregiver, as needed) shall maintain regular communication with law enforcement agencies and NCMEC in efforts to provide a safe recovery of a missing or abducted child or youth, including by sharing information pertaining to the child's or youth's recovery and circumstances related to the recovery.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The Agency shall use reasonable efforts to locate the missing, abducted, or absent child within 24 hours from notification that the child is missing. 4. If the missing or abducted, or absent child is identified as high risk, the Agency shall initiate a Child Locator Staffing within 3 business days of notification that the child is missing. 5. All ongoing attempts to locate the missing, abducted or absent child shall be documented in the electronic case management system.
	<p>Section C: Requirements for Supervisory Social Workers</p> <p>Upon notification by the social worker that a child is missing, abducted, or absent, the supervisory social worker shall ensure the caregiver and social worker have completed all reporting requirements and review/revise the plan as necessary to ensure progress in locating the child.</p>
	<p>Section D: Role of the Diligent Search Unit and Coordination with the Social Worker</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CFSA Diligent Search Unit is responsible for searching for missing, abducted, and absent children who are in the legal custody of CFSA. 2. The CFSA Diligent Search Unit shall work collaboratively with the assigned social worker, MPD, local law enforcement agencies, and community agencies to help locate missing, abducted, and absent children and return them to CFSA care.
	<p>Section E: Social Worker’s Tasks When a Missing, Abducted, or Absent Child is Located</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When a child is located, the social worker shall engage the child to determine: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Why they were missing, abducted, or absent b. The most appropriate placement based on the child’s safety and well-being c. A plan to promote stability for the child 2. The social worker shall schedule a return staffing for all missing, abducted, or absent children who return to CFSA after 72 hours and are chronic absentees or at high risk, and those who are located but do not return to CFSA. 3. The return staffing shall focus on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The child’s safety, health and well-being b. Reasons for the child being missing, abducted, or absent c. Appropriateness of the child’s current placement