

Away from Supervision:

What Youth Services Workers Need To Know



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What's the Purpose of this Presentation?

The purpose of this presentation is:

To understand what:

- What is from Supervision
- Why Children run away
- What Human Trafficking is and the Warning Signs
- Federal and State Regulations for Away from Supervision
- What Steps need to be taken when a Child becomes missing
- The Away from Supervision/Runaway Event Survey



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What is Away from Supervision ?



Away from supervision is any foster child that has run away, is missing or has been abducted.

FOSTER PARENT

If a child is away from the supervision of their **foster parent**, and the foster parent does not know their whereabouts, the foster parent **must immediately** notify:

- the child's providing agency and worker
- local law enforcement



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What is Away from Supervision ?



Residential Facilities -

Away from Supervision is any youth that is away without consent from a previously defined boundary for more than 15 (fifteen) minutes resulting in a staff member's inability to intervene.



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Things to Consider with Foster Children Run Away?



- ❖ Running away from foster care is not rare.
- ❖ Most children who run away from foster care return or are found.
- ❖ Girls are more likely to run way.
- ❖ Youth rarely leave the foster care system permanently by running away.

Here are some thoughts to consider in terms of “foster children runaways” As a worker it is important to take into account that running away from foster care is NOT rare!

Most children who run away from foster care return or are found.

Girls are more likely to run away than boys.

Youth rarely leave the foster care system permanently by running away.

Things to Consider with Foster Children Run Away?

continued



- ❖ There is no ethnic link to running away.
- ❖ Runaways tend to have more school problems, higher rates of suicidal ideation, more reported behavioral problems, and more alcohol, substance abuse, and mental health disorders.
- ❖ Children with more placements are more likely to run away.



You should also remember that there is NO ethnic link to running away.

Runaways tend to have more school problems which might include: low academic performance, poor attendance, and social and behavioral issues.

These children also are more likely to have higher rates of suicidal thoughts.

Suffer from alcohol and or substance abuse issues.

And often have a increased rate of suffering of mental health disorders.

It is also important to highlight the correlation in runaway tendencies with children who have had a higher number of placements rates.

Those who have had higher number of placements are also more likely to runaway.

Which brings us to stress the important of “normalcy” – for our foster care children!

Why Foster Children Run Away?

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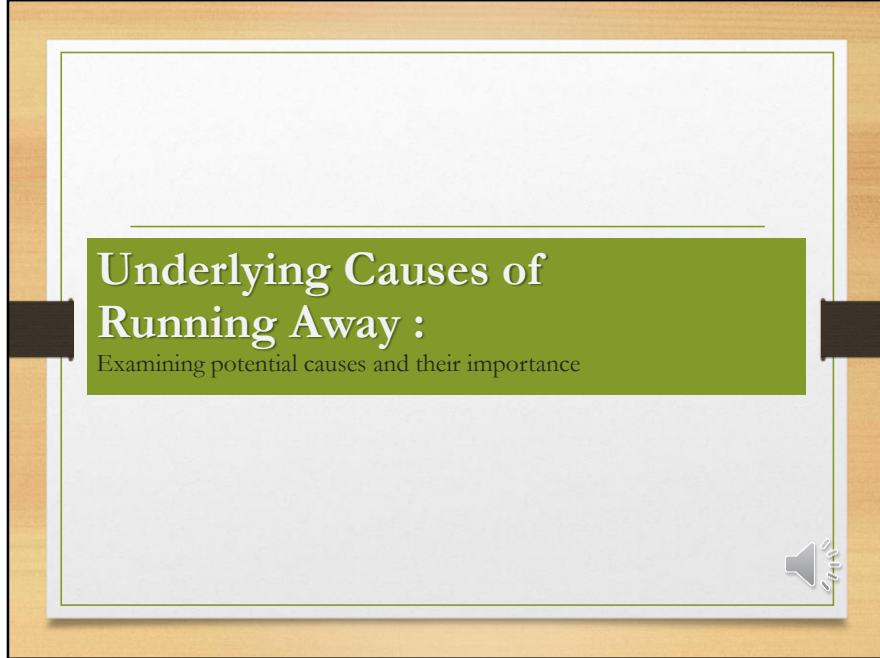


- ❖ The older the youth the more likely they are to run away.
- ❖ Children who previously had less supervision are more likely to run away – lack normalcy.
- ❖ Children in residential facilities and group homes are more likely to run away.



So let's look at a few more thoughts to consider in the matter of "foster children runaways":

- Older foster care children who are in care are more likely to runaway.
 - Children who have little or less supervision, those that lack "normalcy".
- And
- Children who reside in residential facilities and group homes all have an increase likelihood of running away



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What are the Underlying Causes for Running Away?



It is important to discover the **underlying** cause to why a child has run away from care.



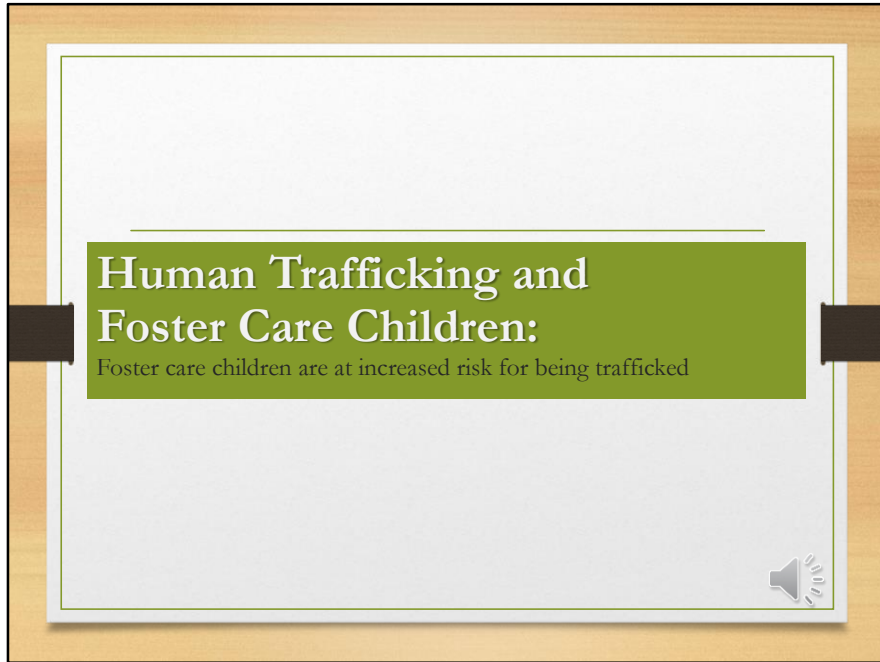
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What are the Underlying Causes for Running Away?

Some of the reasons may include, *but are not limited to the following:*

- Escape Maltreatment
- Lack of Control Over their own Lives
- Problems with Foster Parents, Caregivers, and/or Staff Members
- Problems with Other Children in Placement
- Trying to Reconnect with Family, Friends, and Loved Ones
- Trauma
- Having Negative Peer Influence
- Being Controlled by Another Individual
- Being a Subject of Sex Trafficking

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What is Human/Sex Trafficking?



Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to lure their victims and force them into labor or commercial sexual exploitation.



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What is Human/Sex Trafficking?

The trauma caused by the traffickers can be so great that many may not identify themselves as victims or ask for help, even in highly public settings

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What is Human/Sex Trafficking?

Traffickers look for people who are susceptible for a variety of reasons including:

- Psychological or emotional vulnerability,
- Economic hardship
- Lack of a social safety net
- Natural disasters, or political instability.

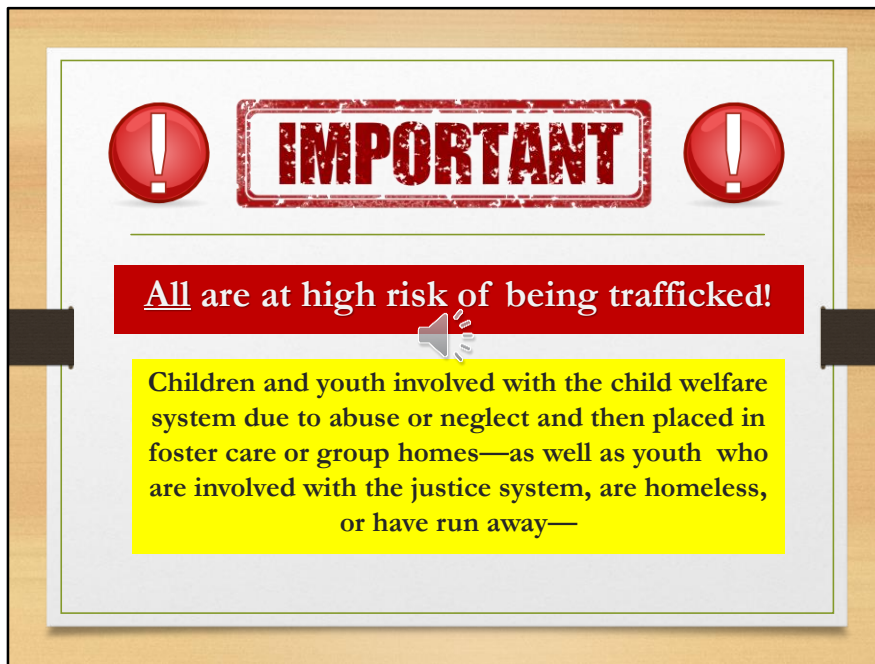


Traffickers look for people who are susceptible for a variety of reasons including:

- Psychological or emotional vulnerability,
- Economic hardship
- Lack of a social safety net
- Natural disasters, or political instability.

Children and youth in the foster care system are often already susceptible based on those reasons.

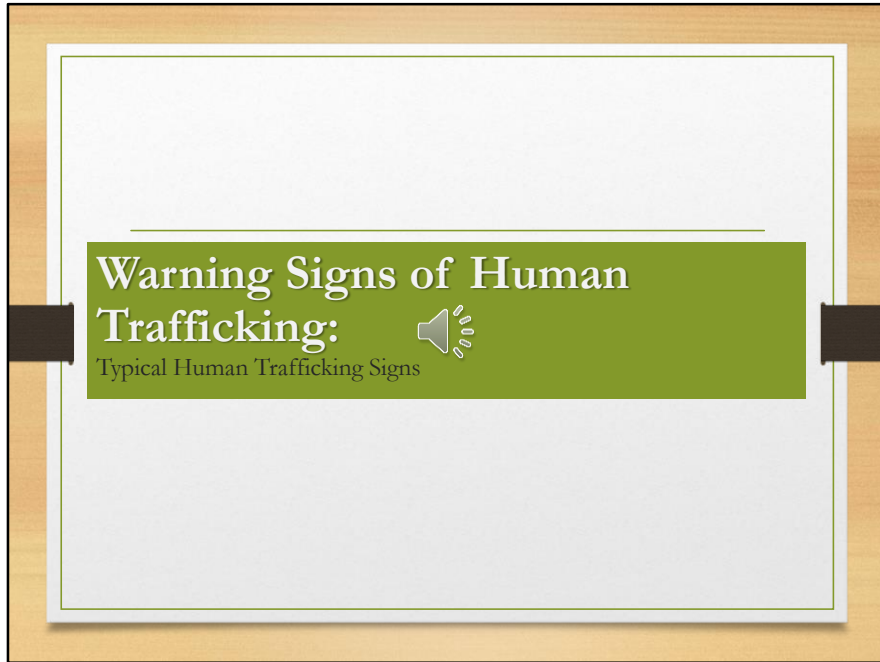
Which puts them at high risk for being trafficked. Especially if they go un-reported when they are away from supervision.



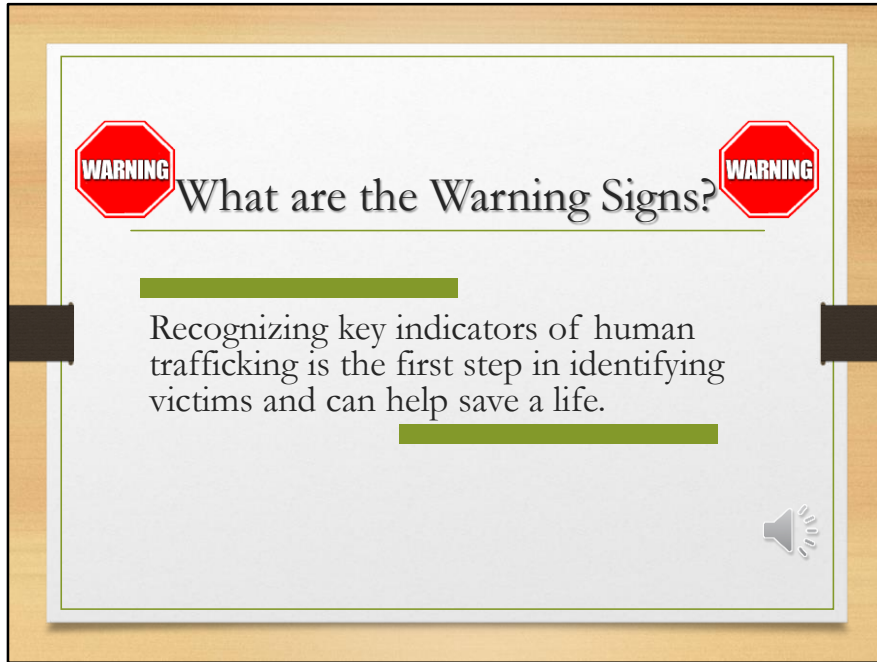
It can NOT be stressed enough the importance of maintaining proper supervision, establishing and maintaining regular contact, and following up with all children and youth in your case load.

Foster parents, caregivers and established staff personnel in residential facilities are responsible for ensuring proper supervision and following policy and codes if a child is away from supervision. It is imperative that the foster parent/caregivers and/or residential facilities staff report missing children and youth.

It is SO VERY VITAL that those children and youth who are away from supervision are reported and located! Our foster care children and youth are a population that is largely targeted for Human Trafficking!




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What are the Warning Signs?

Recognizing key indicators of human trafficking is the first step in identifying victims and can help save a life.




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What are the Warning Signs?

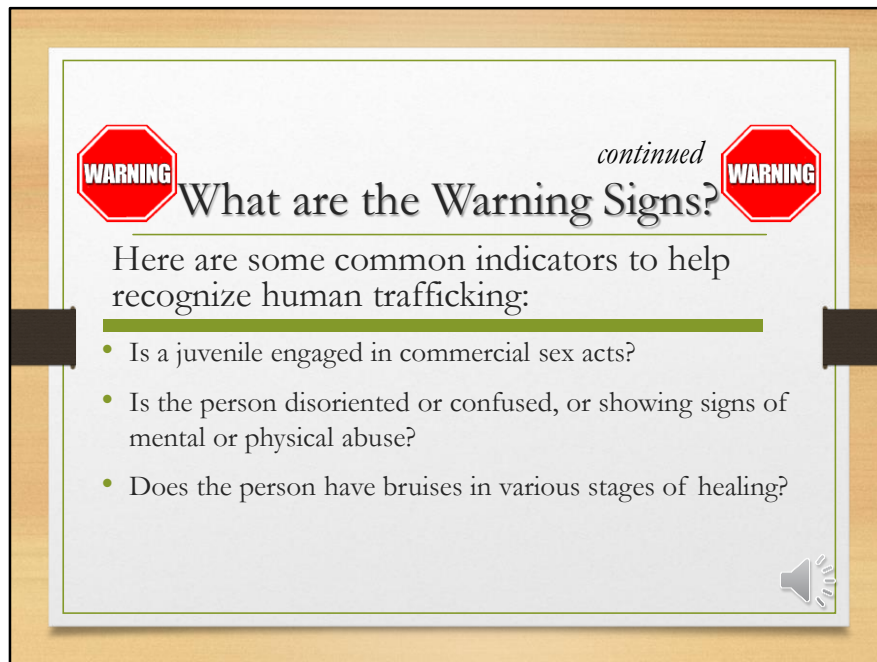


Here are some common indicators to help recognize human trafficking:

- Does the person appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or houses of worship?
- Has a child stopped attending school?
- Has the person had a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?



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WARNING *continued* **WARNING**

What are the Warning Signs?

Here are some common indicators to help recognize human trafficking:

- Is a juvenile engaged in commercial sex acts?
- Is the person disoriented or confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- Does the person have bruises in various stages of healing?



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continued

What are the Warning Signs?

Here are some common indicators to help recognize human trafficking: *continued*


- Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?
- Does the person show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Is the person often in the company of someone to whom he or she defers? Or someone who seems to be in control of the situation, e.g., where they go or who they talk to?
- Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?

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What are the Warning Signs?

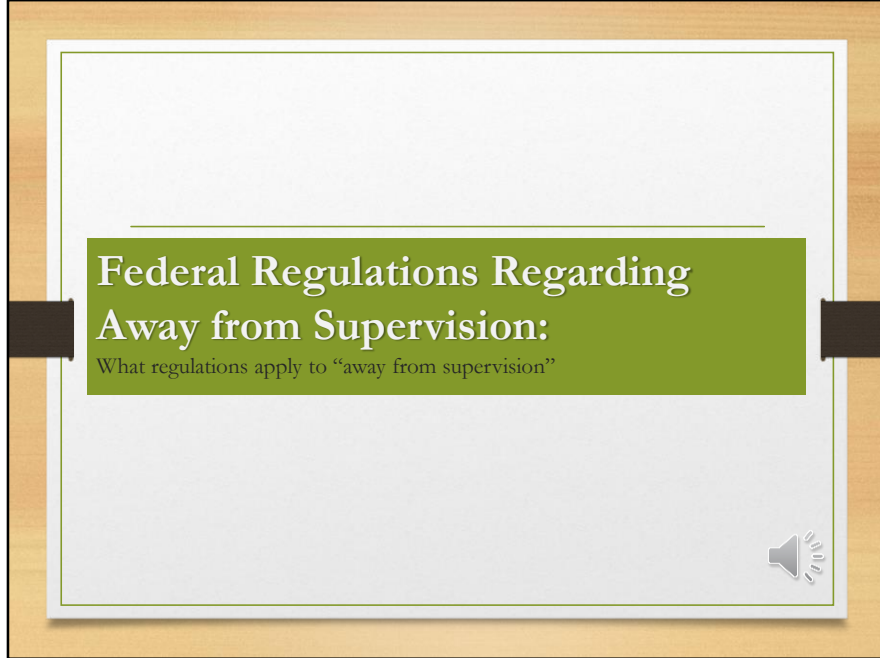


Here are some common indicators to help recognize human trafficking: *continued*

- Is the person living in unsuitable conditions?
- Does the person lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?
- Does the person have freedom of movement? Can the person freely leave where they live? Are there unreasonable security measures?



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What are Federal Regulations?



❖ Section 104 of the [Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act](#) outlines that state agencies must develop a protocol for the following:

- For locating missing foster children
- For determining the primary factor for running away and/or absent from care
- For determining the child's experience while absent, including a screening for sex trafficking
- For immediate reporting of missing and abducted children to law enforcement so can be entered into National Crime Information Center (NCIC) Database (This must be done within 24 hours).

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What are Federal Regulations?



❖ Section 105 of the [Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act](#) states that state agencies must also report the following:

- Information on children who run away and their risk of sex trafficking
- Characteristics of children who runaway from foster care such as reason for entry into care, length of stay, type of placement, etc.
- Information of child's experience while absent from care
- Trends in numbers of children reported as runaways



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What is West Virginia's Policy?

Foster Care Policy: 5.18: Runaway, Missing or Abducted Children

When a child is missing, abducted, or is on runaway status, it is vital that information is reported quickly to law enforcement agencies, to ensure the child's safe return.

The Department requires foster care providers to provide notification to the Department immediately when a child runs away, is missing, or is abducted.


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What is West Virginia's Policy?

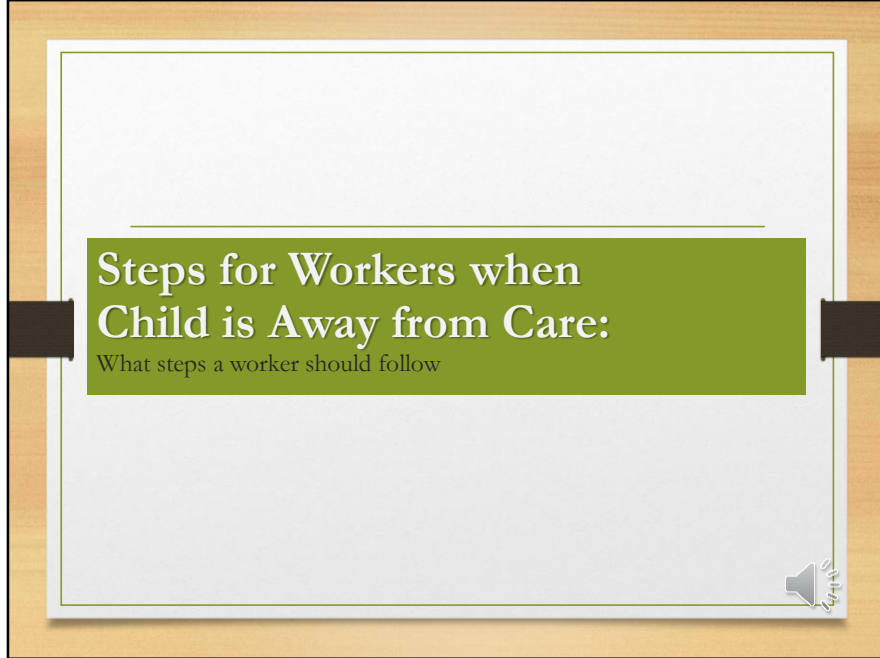
Foster Care Policy: 5.18:
Runaway, Missing or Abducted Children

When notified is received, the Department worker is required to provide notification to law enforcement immediately, and in no case later than 24 hours after receiving information on missing or abducted children, for entry into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.



Foster Care Policy: 5.18 entitled Runaway, Missing or Abducted Children also outlines response time and action required by the department worker:

The policy explains that when notification is received, the Department worker is required to provide notification to law enforcement immediately, and in no case later than 24 hours after receiving information on missing or abducted children. The notification must be reported to law enforcement so that it can be entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.





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What Steps Need to be Taken?

The child's worker must take the following steps to ensure that the child is located safely and quickly!

The child's worker **MUST**:

- **Contact** law enforcement immediately, but no later than within 24 hours, to report the child is missing, abducted or has run away.
- **File** a runaway petition or missing person's report if one has not been filed by the provider.
- **Provide** law enforcement with any information needed to locate the child. The child's SafeKids Pix ID card, family photos, or school pictures should be utilized to assist in the identification of the child.
- **Cooperate** with law enforcement completely to locate the child.



So, what is next after the worker receives the report that a child in care is missing, has been abducted or has ran away.

What steps need to be taken?

The child's worker must take the following steps to ensure that the child is located safely and quickly.

The worker **MUST** contact law enforcement immediately, but no later than within 24 hours, to report the child is missing, abducted or as a run away.

The worker may need to file a runaway petition or missing person's report if one has not been filed by the provider.

The child's worker will provide law enforcement with any information needed to locate the child. The child's SafeKids Pix ID card, family photos, or school pictures should be utilized to assist in the identification of the child.

The child's worker will cooperate with law enforcement completely to locate the child.

What Steps Need to be Taken?



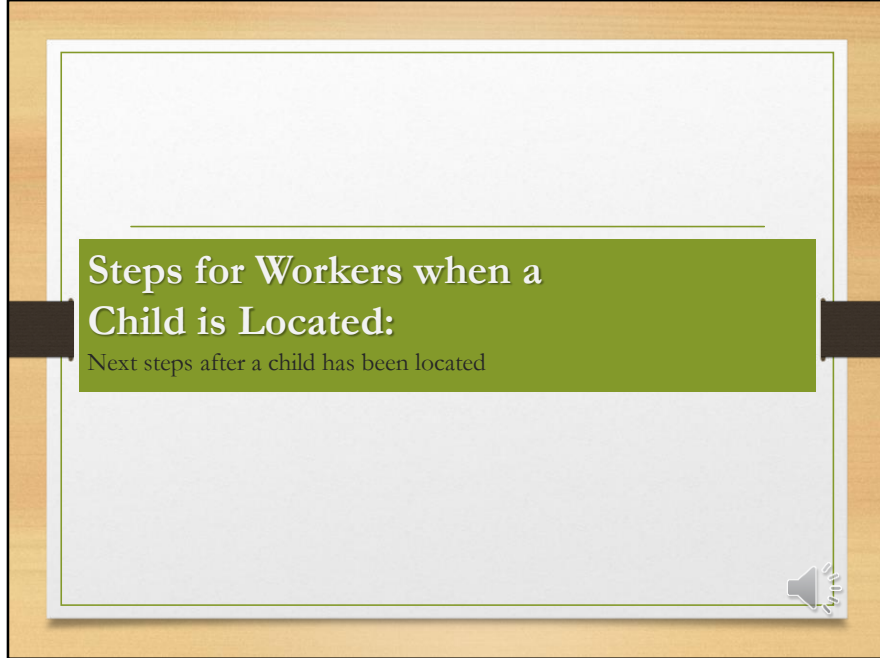
The child's worker must take the following steps to ensure that the child is located safely and quickly!

The child's worker **MUST:** *continued*

- **Notify the child's biological parents**, if parental rights have not been terminated, immediately about the child's situation.
- **Notify their immediate supervisor and Community Services Manager** when a child is missing or abducted, immediately.
- **Notify the court, guardian ad litem, or attorney for the child** when a child is missing, abducted, or on runaway status.
- **Should consult with their immediate supervisor and Community Services Manager** to consider additional options in locating missing children while maintaining the child and family's foster care status confidential.



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What Steps Need to be Taken Once the Child is Located and Returned?

Once the child has been located and returned, the foster parents or residential facility providing care for the child will complete the [Away from Supervision/Runaway Event Survey](#) with the following information:

- 1) Determining the primary factors that contributed to the child's running away or otherwise being absent from care, and to the extent possible and appropriate, responding to those factors in current and subsequent placements;
- 2) Determining the child's experiences while absent from care, including screening the child to determine if the child is a possible sex trafficking victim;
- 3) Reporting such related information as required by the Secretary.



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What does the Away from Supervision/ Runaway Event Survey include?

The Away from Supervision/Runaway Event Survey **must** be filled out once the foster child has returned to care. It is the responsibility of the **child's worker** to ensure this form has been completed. This form includes the following information:

- Why the Foster Child left
- Where they left from
- Where they went to
- Who they were with
- What they did

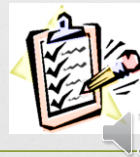


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What does the Away from Supervision/ Runaway Event Survey include?

It is **important** to fill out the Away from Supervision/Runaway Event Survey Form to:

- Quickly and properly intervene
- Determine the child's experience while away
- Determine the underlining cause for running away
- Screen for abuse, drug use, and/or sexual activity
- Screen for sex/human trafficking
- Obtain proper assistance for the runaway child



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What is Away From Supervision/ Runaway Monthly Report?



Residential Facilities **must** fill out a monthly report about children who are away from supervision. This report will include the following information: the number of runaway episodes, the number of episodes per gender, the activities runaway engaged in, etc. For more information, please refer to the link below:

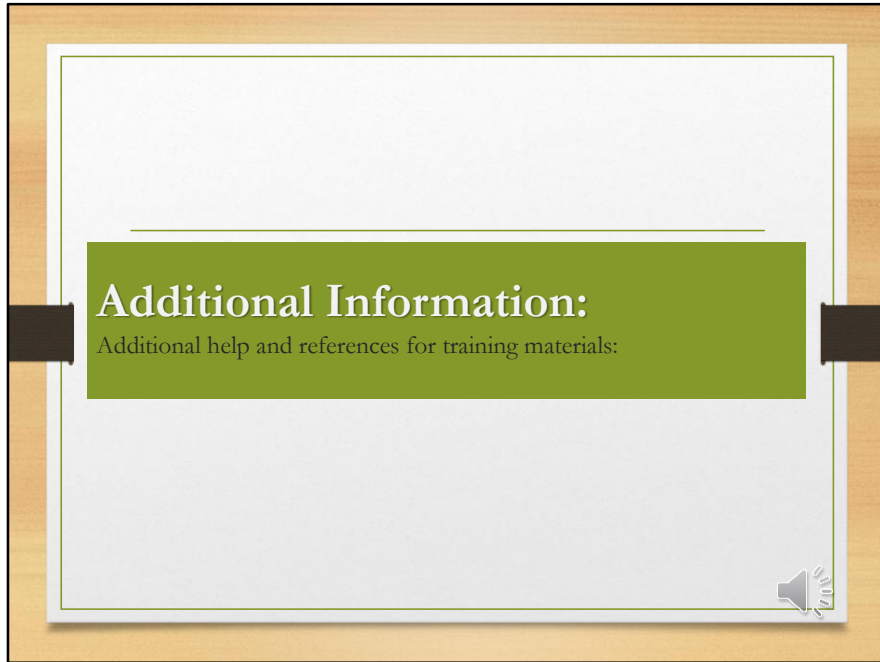
[Away From Supervision/Runaway Monthly Report](#)

Information on how to fill out this form, please refer to the directions below:

[Directions for Completing the Away From Supervision/Runaway Reporting](#)



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How can You get Additional Help?

Resources and Hotlines:

- National Runaway Safeline: 1-800-Runaway, 1800RUNAWAY.ORG
- Safe Place: <http://nationalsafeplace.org/>
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: 1-800-THE-LOST, <http://www.missingkids.com/>
- The National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888, <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>



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References

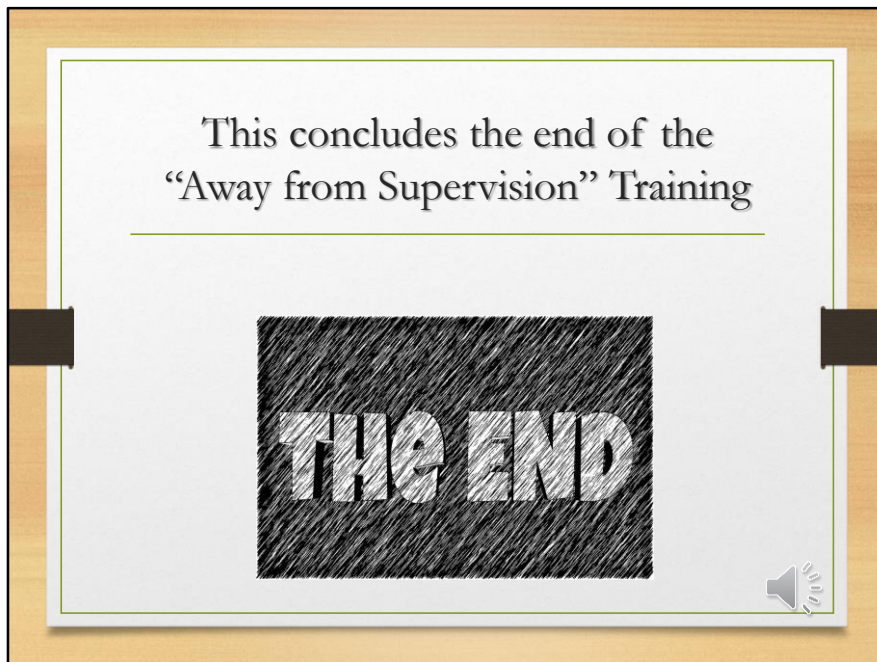
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