

When Kids Run

A family safety plan for wandering and elopement

Many autistic and neurodivergent children wander or bolt: toward water, a favorite place, or away from noise and stress. It isn't defiance, and it isn't bad parenting. **Here's the truth:** you can't watch every second, but a plan in place before it happens can make the difference.

Secure your home

- ☐ Door and window alarms or chimes, so you hear when a door opens.
- ☐ Locks or latches placed high, out of your child's reach.
- ☐ Fencing and locked gates around yards, and especially around pools.
- ☐ Visual "stop" signs on doors as a reminder for your child.

Teach safety skills

- ☐ Swimming lessons. Water is one of the greatest dangers for children who wander.
- ☐ Practice "stop," "wait," and responding to their name, with fun and praise.
- ☐ Teach them to show an ID card or say your phone number if they can.

Make your child findable

- ☐ An ID bracelet, shoe tag, or clothing label with your phone number.
- ☐ A recent photo on your phone, updated every few months.
- ☐ A GPS tracker if your child will wear one.
- ☐ Ask your local sheriff's office whether they offer a special-needs registry or tracking program.

Tell your circle

- ☐ Introduce your child to neighbors and share a photo and your number.
- ☐ Make sure school, sitters, and family know the plan.
- ☐ Notice the pattern: when, where, and what your child runs toward or away from.

If your child is missing

1) Call 911 right away. Don't wait. Say your child is autistic or has a disability. **2)** Check nearby water first: pools, ponds, canals, lakes. **3)** Then check their favorite places and hiding spots. **4)** Have your child's photo and the information below ready for responders.

My child's emergency info

Name, age, height / weight:

Communicates by / responds to:

Drawn to (water, trains, places):

Calms with (words, objects, songs):

Fears or triggers (sirens, touch):

Medical needs / allergies:

Want help with running off?

Elopement is one of the most important behaviors to address. A behavior consultation or ABA support can find out what your child is running toward or away from, and teach safer ways to get that need met.

[Book a free consultation](#)

ACCEPT. UNDERSTAND. LOVE.