

Canada's Missing Children Annual Report

2000

Missing Children's Registry Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Message from the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

National Police Services, Missing Children's Registry exemplifies the RCMP's strong commitment to assisting law enforcement in the protection of all children. Together with the our missing children program partners, many significant contributions have been made to protect the well being of our children. This is evident each time a child is located and successfully reunited with his or her family.



As the primary source of information on missing children in Canada, the Registry provides reliable and relevant information to Canadian and international police agencies searching for missing children. The dedication of the men and women working for the Missing Children's Registry has been proven time and again. In the 15 years since its creation, the Missing Children's Registry has become nationally recognized for its effective role in providing advice to police, assisting with investigations, and producing relevant information and research for parents and professionals. This assistance takes a number of forms - but the number of successful recoveries speaks for itself. Whether the child was abducted, lost or ran away, the Registry (and its partners) have assisted with more than 6000 cases involving missing children since its inception.

Local, national and international law enforcement agencies, attempting to return missing and abducted children to their families have been able to rely on the expertise available at the Missing Children's Registry.

Located at RCMP Headquarters in Ottawa, the Missing Children's Registry (RCMP) works in close partnership with several not-for-profit organizations dedicated to child safety, and with three federal agencies including : *Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.* The search for missing children often goes beyond Canada's borders. The Registry has developed vital linkages with other agencies in the United States, and internationally with other countries belonging to the *Hague Convention.*

Other important linkages have also been established between the Registry and Criminal Intelligence Services Canada, and Interpol. These are essential for investigators to search for an abductor and trace the path of the abducted child outside the country. Some of the Registry's recent accomplishments include active participation on the Interpol Specialist Group on Crimes Against Children, and the development of a national law enforcement co-ordinators program.

I encourage you to please continue to report all incidents of missing children to the Missing Children's Registry and enter the child on the CPIC system immediately. This data is essential for the Registry to continue supporting the efforts of police agencies in Canada and around the world in the search for missing and abducted children.

Youth is one of the RCMP's strategic priorities. Since many youth run away from home and are vulnerable to victimization on the streets, our efforts to protect youth are ongoing. As such, the RCMP has a tremendous commitment to assisting all law enforcement agencies in meeting this challenge. This commitment is exemplified by the continued success and dedication of the Missing Children's Registry. Together, we can help keep all children safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Zaccardelli'.

Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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National Police Services
Missing Children's Registry, RCMP
by M. L. Dalley, Ph.D., Research Officer
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INTRODUCTION

As Canada's clearinghouse for missing children, the National Police Services, RCMP Missing Children's Registry (MCR) provides an investigative service to Canadian and foreign police forces and provides information to not-for-profit agencies, government and non government agencies as well as the media and general public. The Registry's Interpol connections enable police forces to quickly and expediently link and trace the path and /or whereabouts of abductors, runaways and predators.

MCR has an extensive mandate, including enhancing the investigations of missing children by the following: providing accurate and current information on the status of a missing child case; monitoring the Canadian Police Information Center (CPIC) missing person's file for entered children; and requesting and/or providing follow up information or action on investigations. When a police department requests assistance on a missing child case, MCR opens a file and assists in the investigation, using the expertise of trained investigators.

Investigative assistance is also provided to help foreign police agencies search for missing children believed to be in Canada. Connections are made through Interpol or by direct contact with MCR investigators. A file is opened and the investigation continues in Canada. Linkages are made with the appropriate police agencies and investigative and intelligence information gathered on the case are shared with the police agency requesting assistance.

Registered Canadian not-for-profit searching agencies work together with MCR to search for a missing child. Photograph distributions, exchanges of pertinent information and support for the families are areas where these agencies excel and augment police services. In addition, reunification mechanisms are put in place and when required, two-way travel service arrangements are made through MCR for a parent or guardian to return the child home.

The Registry serves as a mechanism through which law enforcement agencies and other interested groups and organizations can request information. To assist in the dissemination of information, an annual report, newsletters, articles and bulletins are published periodically. Three research studies have been conducted to gather more information on areas of particular concern. Missing children photographs, tips, research papers and reports are posted on the **our missing children** program web site at the following address: **ourmissingchildren.ca**.

THE our missing children PROGRAM

In 1986, the Canadian Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada was instrumental in establishing a Missing Children's Registry at the RCMP Headquarters in Ottawa. In 1988, the program became nationally recognized under the umbrella of Canadian Police Services, now National Police Services. Canada Customs International Project Return joined the program in 1991; Citizenship and Immigration joined in 1993; and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) joined in 1996. The four departments were officially recognized as partners and the program became the **our missing children** program.

Although each department has a unique function, the departments work together in the search, recovery and return of missing children. Our MCR partners primary functions are as follows:

1. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA

The role of Citizenship and Immigration Canada is to identify, intercept and recover missing children at our national borders and within Canada. Immigration has a role to play in all cases involving non-Canadians and non-resident visitors.

Immigration officers work closely with local police agencies, provincial authorities, non-governmental agencies and youth services in the event that a child's safety is at risk. Moreover, they hold fingerprint clinics in conjunction with their law enforcement partners, and lecture to community groups, and at schools on child safety issues.

2. CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency place border alerts and detect and recover missing children crossing international borders. In 1986, a national program was implemented and a training course developed describing the techniques to be used to identify and intercept missing children. By 1987, more than 3,500 Customs officers were trained to participate in the program. Since its inception in 1986, over 982 children have been recovered at the border by Customs and Immigration officers and returned to their legal guardian.

Approximately 60% were runaways and 40% abductions. When individuals enter Canada from other countries, Canada Customs remains vigilant and watchful for missing children.

3. DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The Consular Affairs Bureau provides assistance and support with respect to international child abduction cases.

The department seeks to ensure that children who have been or who are at risk of being abducted across borders receive appropriate protection and assistance. At headquarters, consular officers deal with affected parents, lawyers, local authorities, social welfare agencies, provincial and federal Central Authorities, and manage the work on such cases.

At missions overseas (over 250 offices), trained staff deal with the local authorities, the affected parents and in many cases, the abducted children.

Canada has great interest in and commitment to the search and return of missing children to their country of origin. This was recognized by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in the 1998 Report, *International Child Abduction: Issues for Reform*.

The department has been at the forefront of efforts to make the *Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction* work, the only international instrument designed to prevent and resolve cases of international parental abduction. Sixty-two countries are currently party to the Hague Convention, including Canada, which signed in December, 1983.

In those countries where the Hague Convention is not in force, the Department provides extensive consular assistance and support to Canadian families affected by child abduction. Additionally, assistance is provided to process the necessary documents in order to return the child to Canada.

In recent years, the department has been successful in reuniting over 30 children from non-Hague Convention countries to their legal custodial parents in Canada. Most recently, the department has successfully negotiated two bilateral agreements (with Egypt and Lebanon) to facilitate the resolution of cases of child abduction to these countries.

Since 1995, DFAIT assisted with 679 cases, 206 child abduction cases and 473 child custody cases.

SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MISSING CHILDREN'S REGISTRY, ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE AND THE PROGRAM PARTNERS

These are as follows:

1. A working agreement with Interpol Ottawa to handle the investigation of all missing children cases.
2. The development and administration of a travel reunification program.
3. A computer age progression service, available to all police forces in Canada.
4. The commitment to advertise the program service by setting up display booths worldwide.
5. The development of in-house database linkages (CPIC, NCIC, FOSS, INTERPOL, ICES).
6. The development of a Missing Children's Registry database, which is designed to track all missing children cases, opened and closed.
7. The presentation of research findings at Court hearings and trials, as expert witnesses.
8. The publication of a quarterly Newsletter and annual Missing Children's Registry report.

9. The publication of the first Canadian research studies on parental abduction, in collaboration with Child Find Ontario and as well, a study on *Parents Who Kill Their Children*.
10. The strengthening of linkages and participating as chair of the international Interpol Specialist Group Committee On Offences Against Children.
11. The development and implementation of a working agreement with Criminal Intelligence Services Canada, regarding the sexual exploitation of children and Internet predators investigations.
12. The hosting of the first international missing children conference in Montreal, Quebec, October 2000.

AWARDS FOR SERVICE

These are as follows:

Treasury Board of Canada

On June 10, 1996, the our missing children program received the **Treasury Board of Canada Award of Excellence** for service to the public.

The Webber Seavey Award

On November 1, 1999, the our missing children program received the **Webber Seavey Award for Quality in Law Enforcement** at the 106th International Association of Chiefs of Police Conference (IACP) in Charlotte, North Carolina. The award was shared with two other winners, the Reading Police Department, and the Boston Massachusetts Police Department.

CAN PRO Award and the International Crime Stoppers Award

This *Safe Children* crime prevention video received national and international recognition. The video was produced by Friday Communications and in collaboration with the RCMP Missing Children's Registry and Community Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services.

CRITICAL LINKAGES

These are as follows:

1. NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN (NCMEC)

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is the United States resource center for child protection, and spearheads national efforts to locate and recover missing children, as well as raise public awareness about the issue. As a private not-for-profit organization, established in 1984, NCMEC operates under a Congressional mandate and works in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. NCMEC coordinates the efforts of law enforcement, social-service agencies, elected officials, judges, prosecutors, educators, and the public and private sectors to break the cycle of violence that historically perpetuated needless crimes against children.

The NCMEC works closely with the RCMP Missing Children's Registry and the **our missing children** program partners in the search and recovery of missing children. The Center operates a 24-hour, toll free Hotline 1-800-THE-LOST or 1-800-843-5678, available in Canada and the United States. As well, for those who wish to report information on missing and exploited children, a CyberTipline, www.cybertipline.com is available.

2. NOT-FOR-PROFIT AGENCIES

The RCMP Missing Children's Registry liaises with recognized not-for-profit agencies to facilitate cooperation between the agencies and the police community. Some agencies are deeply involved in the search for a missing child whereas, others concentrate on crime prevention activities. Their activities and services vary, including private detective searches, photo age distribution, meeting and counseling of parents: and attending and/or suggesting ways for police to orchestrate reunions. Since the inception of the Missing Children's Registry program in 1986, these agencies have greatly assisted in the search, recovery, and return of missing children.

Agencies who have applied and met the preset criteria for recognition by MCR are as follows: Child Find Canada and its provincial organizations, International Social Service Canada, the Missing Children's Network, the Missing Children's Society of Canada, Operation Go Home, Victims of Violence: Canadian Center for Missing Children, Fax Find Society of British Columbia, and the National Missing Children Locate Center.

3. INTERPOL

Interpol linkages are essential for investigators to search for an abductor and to trace the path of the abducted child. The RCMP Missing Children's Registry has the facility to

contact Interpol offices in other countries.

Alerts are placed and investigative and intelligence information shared.

To strengthen the investigative process, the Interpol Standing Working Party on Offences Against Minors was established in 1992. It is comprised of police officers as well as experts working in child protection related fields. The Party monitors and co-ordinates the initiatives of 178 member countries with the goals of improving and promoting international co-operation, targeting offences against children and putting mechanisms in place to protect children. Although the objectives remained the same, in 1999 the Party was renamed, the Interpol Specialist Group on Crimes Against Children.

Its mandate is to “encourage and promote the best practices of prevention and law enforcement in order to protect children from all forms of neglect, abuse, and exploitation”. Some areas of concentration, among others, include sexual offences against children, child pornography, sex tourism involving children, and missing children which constitutes parental child abductions: stranger abductions, and runaways. When considering the safety and protection of children, all countries benefit from the Group’s undertakings and exchanges of information.

In complimenting the Group and supporting its mandate, MCR is primarily focused on missing children investigations. In 2000, the Registry opened 418 missing children cases originating from countries outside of Canada.

4. CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICES CANADA

Under the umbrella of National Police Services, Criminal Intelligence Services Canada coordinates national intelligence gathering on missing children files related to “paedophile networks” for use by national and international law enforcement. As well, it supports the on-line computer databank, Automated Criminal Intelligence Information System (ACIIS-II), which is accessed by authorized police users.

MCR works in close collaboration with CISC on the investigation of missing children cases involving child predators. Of particular concern are those cases, whereby a child is lured away from their safe environment by Internet connections with predators, to places of risk, in Canada and/or across international borders.

5. RCMP NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

Crime Prevention Initiatives

In 1999 the RCMP designated youth as one of its national priorities. The RCMP National Youth Strategy’s (NYS) objective is to maximize the organization’s role in addressing the social causes of crime and victimization.

This is to be accomplished by encouraging effective practices and sustainable services, developing and supporting crime prevention initiatives, and working with inter-agency partners, non-governmental organizations, volunteers and the private sector on issues of shared concern.

The NYS is supporting the development of a learning tool, “Missing,” for safe Internet use. The tool includes a computer game, video and guide for children that teaches children how to safely surf the Internet. Also, a police officer’s teaching guide for “Missing” is in the process of being developed by Live Wires Design Ltd., in collaboration with the RCMP. This crime prevention tool will eventually be provided to all RCMP Detachments for police use in schools.

DATA COLLECTION ON REPORTED ACTIVITIES

The data collected for this report originates from two sources: the Canadian Police Information Center (CPIC) system and a manual internal monitoring system. The internal manual monitoring system of MCR transactions has been set up and is updated by liaison analysts. Each time a file is opened or closed, data is collected and scored. Monthly and yearly reports are produced based upon this collection of data.

SOURCE I

CANADIAN POLICE INFORMATION CENTRE SYSTEM

Transactions Analysis

The CPIC data was collected over the year at regular intervals by accessing the CPIC missing person’s file. Frequencies and trends on file transactions of missing children are plotted by referencing weekly snapshots, monthly reports, and yearly transaction reports. The snapshot of the system is a picture of the database at any given point in time. Snapshots are taken at the end of each week.

A transaction log reports all Canadian law enforcement transactions entered on the system for the year. Each time a case is entered or removed, a transaction is scored. Since runaway children may be repeaters, each time a child runs away a new transaction is generated. Each “enter” and “remove” transaction is scored, even though the same individual may generate a new file each time. **Thus, it is important to note that the runaway category reports cases and not, children. As well, the removed transactions indicate the number of children located from previous years as well as the current year.**

DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

Stranger abduction

Background

Stranger abductions are not prevalent in Canada. However, each incident of abduction tends to shock the nation. This stereotypical view is usually based upon tragic kidnappings, where a child is taken for a long period of time and is subject to murder, sexual assault, or grievous bodily harm inflicted by strangers unknown to family or the child (Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak, 1992: 227). It is concerning to note that more than half of abductions resulting in murder, occurred in close proximity to the child's home (Kreston, 1999).

Attempted child abduction is also a serious concern for parents and guardians. Occasionally, the media paint a scary picture of a predator traveling around a neighbourhood or school in a van with the intention of luring a child into a vehicle. Finkelhor, Hotaling and Asdigian (1995: 941) estimated that more than 100,000 children living in the United States were victims of attempted abduction. In Canada, the exact number is not known but it is known that it does happen.

Lures are classified in four categories: emergency, bribery, assistance, and authority. Common luring strategies include: inviting children into cars, requesting children to help with parcels, inviting them to see or search for a pet, faking an emergency, calling and talking to the child using his or her name, and impersonating a nurse, teacher or police officer. Today's parents are particularly concerned about the luring of children by predators who make contact with children via the Internet. To date, only a few cases of this nature have been reported to the Missing Children's Registry.

Findings

A stranger abduction is defined as an abduction by individuals other than the subject's parent or guardian. In other words, the abductor may be an uncle, sister, cousin, grandfather, neighbour or close friend. This CPIC definition also includes a child who has been briefly restrained from his/her intended destination, and for example, is sexually assaulted and then released.

The Registry monitors the incidents of stranger abductions reported to police by referring to weekly CPIC reports. If investigative assistance is required by another country, MCR enters the missing child on the CPIC system and monitors these files internally. The number of stranger abductions reported to police over the years has remained fairly consistent. On average, 66 children were reported missing each year over a 14 year period (See Figure 1 and 2).

Figure 1

Incidents of Stranger Abduction Cases Reported on CPIC from 1987-2000 Canada

Incidents	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Avg
	93	85	69	84	78	70	61	68	68	45	60	42	52	42	66

Stranger Abduction 2000

In 2000, 42 stranger abductions/kidnappings were reported to police. More females (30) than males (12) were abducted by strangers, 71% and 29 % respectively.

Figure 2

Incidents of Stranger Abduction Cases Reported on CPIC By Province 1999-2000 Canada.

Province	YT	NWT	NVT	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	PO	NB	PEI	NS	NE	TOTAL
1999	0	0	0	13	7	1	1	19	11	0	0	0	0	52
2000	0	0	0	7	3	2	0	15	15	0	0	0	0	42

General Attributes of Abducting Child Molesters

- Unlikely to have established long-term relationships with the abducted child;
- Abduction is usually the only encounter between the abductor and child;
- Nature of offense is primarily predatory;
- Less likely to view child as interpersonal “love” object;
- Interaction with child is superficial, minimally empathetic, more prone to injurious behaviour;
- Little contact with the child outside of the current offense;
- Likely to possess low social and interpersonal skills;
- Less likely to be married;
- Most frequently, there is a presence of or use of a weapon; and
- Abductor was usually a victim of sexual assault.

Source: Publication of NCMEC (1995). “Stranger Abductions”. Child Molesters Who Abduct.

Infant Abduction

Background

Infant abduction is not a common occurrence in Canada. In fact, Canada only began to look at the problem seriously when two incidents occurred at two different hospitals in 1991 and 1994. On one occasion, the mother handed the baby over to an individual posing as a nurse. On the other occasion, the baby was left in a bed positioned too near to the nursery door and was abducted. These cases, and a few others over the past decade, were resolved fairly quickly with no harm to the babies.

Today, there are very few incidents of infant abduction from hospitals. This reduction in number is mainly due to the efforts of not-for-profit searching agencies, community based policing programs, and *our missing children* program initiatives.

Nonetheless, infants and toddlers are very vulnerable and need to be protected from harm. Recently, the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) monthly publication featured an article cautioning parents to keep newborns safe from ‘con artists’ and kidnappers by being wary of online birth announcements. It was stated that “*putting a birth announcement on the Internet could expose a family to unwanted sales solicitations, insurance and financial fraud and, on occasion, infant kidnapping.*”

Findings

On occasion, children under age one are reported missing. However, the known Canadian statistics include children who wander off, are lost as the result of an accident, are abducted by a stranger or parent, and are reported missing by an unknown cause. More males (114) than females (111) under the age of one are reported missing. A breakdown of the 225 cases of missing children by province is as follows (See Figure 3).

Figure 3

Canadian Children Under the Age of One Year Missing for All Categories 1999-2000 Canada

Province	YT	NWT	NVT	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PEI	NS	NE	TOTAL
1999	1	0	0	20	22	3	2	96	37	3	0	1	2	187
2000	0	1	0	37	23	8	11	86	56	1	0	1	1	225

General Attributes of Infant Abductors

Usually female with reported low self-esteem;
Frequently overweight;
Varies in age (usually childbearing years);
Usually has no prior criminal record;
Married or living with a partner;
Usually does not travel far with infant following the abduction;
Does not harm infant;
Warm and attentive to infant's needs;
May have difficulty, or cannot have a baby of their own;
Often is trying to replace a lost infant;
May have visited the hospital and nursery on several occasions;
The abductors race and colour is almost always the same as the infant; and
The abductor's partner is not usually involved in planning the abduction.

MCR & NCMEC publications

Parental Abduction

Background

The exact extent of parental abduction is not known. Some cases are reported to police agencies, whereas others are processed through the civil courts. The number of parental abductions, where criminal charges have been laid by the searching parents, have remained fairly consistent over the past 10 years.

Parental abductions usually occur during the period of separation and divorce. This action has been attributed to the uncertainty surrounding court proceedings and the child custody dispute. Finkelhor, Hotaling & Sedlak (1990) reported that in cases where the abducting parent violated the existing custody order, 40 percent of the occurrences happened more than 2 years after the divorce, and 10% occurred more than four years afterward.

As well, parents abduct children for a variety of other reasons, including power struggles motivated by revenge, psychological problems whereby the abducting parent over-identifies with the child, a compelling need to have the child exclusively, custody order disagreements, and legitimate parent-child safety concerns sometimes characterized by abuse and/or a criminal history.

In the past, due to the tendency of Canadian courts to grant sole custody to mothers, it was shown by researchers that the majority of abductors were fathers. Nonetheless, mothers abduct as well. However, mothers tend to abduct after a court order where as fathers tend to abduct before the court order is issued. (Kiedrowski, Jayewardene & Dalley, 1994: 9; MacDonald, 1998: 153).

Parental abduction has a drastic emotional impact on the searching parent as well as on the abducted child. Searching parents experience significant stress and concern for the well-being of their children (Hoff, 1994: 71). Many have symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, including symptoms such as anxiety, despair, fluctuating sleeping patterns, helplessness, guilt, depression, grief, social isolation, loss of appetite, irritability, and anger. Most research findings show that stress is decreased somewhat when the child is returned. Additionally, family and friend support is critical to the well being of the searching parent.

The effects are more profound for the child. The child is uprooted from its familiar surroundings, including favourite teddy bear and blanket, loses contact with one parent and significant others, and generally leaves everything behind that puts meaningful order into his or her existence. Not only is this situation traumatic, but also the child often lives the life of a fugitive, moving from place to place, changing schools, changing their identity and leaving behind new found friends (Swaren & Dalley, 1993). These children become “overwhelmed with the stress of new stimuli and are unable to make sense of the situation [which] may lead the child to excessive anxiety and fears, which in turn may develop into chronic anxiety, stress reactions, depression, paranoia and/or other complications” (Faulkner, 1999: 10).

Older children may blame themselves for not contacting the searching parent and develop a sense of guilt for not doing so (Hoff, 1994: 77). Conversely, abducted children may believe that the other parent is not searching for them, which results in feelings of anger, withdrawal, depression, and betrayal (MacDonald, 1998: 171). If the child was very young at the time of the abduction, s/he may not remember the searching parent and may consequently be confronted with conflicting emotions and confusions upon reunification (Hoff, 1994: 74; MacDonald, 1998: 171).

When missing children are found and asked what they were told when they lost contact with the other parent, children reported the following: that the searching parent did not love or want them anymore; that they were abusive toward the child or abducting parent, or that the parent was dead (Kiedrowski, Jayewardene & Dalley, 1994). These lies distort the child’s view of the searching parent, and upon reunification the bond between the child and the searching parent may be severely affected. Some parents report that the initial reunion was a happy event. However, as time passed, the building of a new relationship became increasingly more difficult. At this point, counselling often proved beneficial.

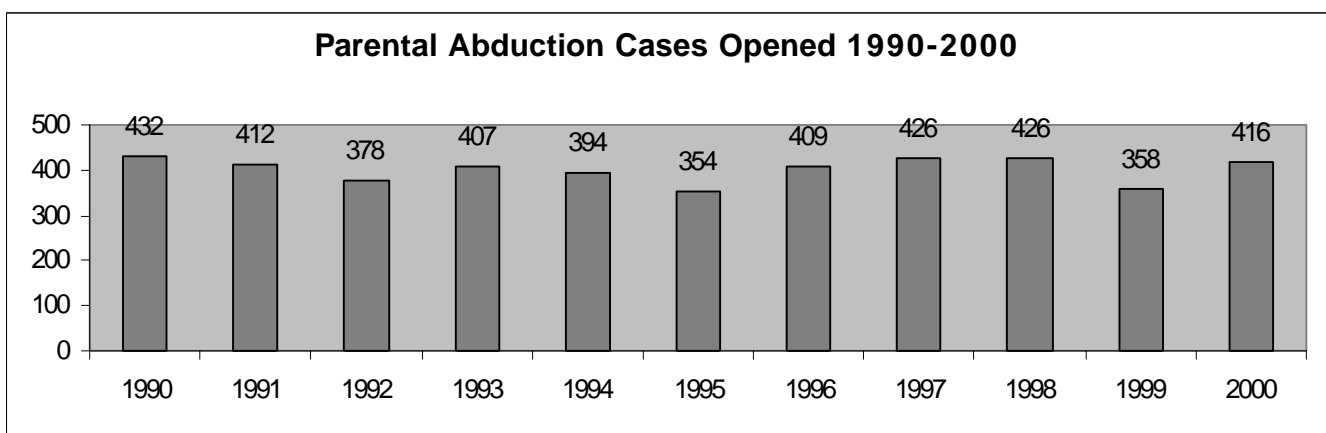
Upon reunification with the searching parents, the child may fear re-abduction as well, an additional stressor. They may have recurring dreams and nightmares about the abduction, or display re-enactments in play activity (Hoff, 1994: 75). These children may also develop a lack of trust towards others and have difficulty attaching emotionally to the searching parent once reunited. Children abducted by a parent may consequently suffer from psychological disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, reactive attachment disorder, general anxiety, and stress disorder, separation anxiety disorder, and learned helplessness (Faulkner, 1999). However, the severity of these symptoms and disorders most probably depends upon the age of the child, the circumstances of the abduction and duration of the abduction.

Findings

A parental abduction is defined by CPIC services as “when the subject is a child and s/he has been abducted by a parent.” This category is divided into those cases where a custody order has been granted, and where no custody exists.

Parental abductions in Canada have remained fairly consistent over the years (See Figure 4). A total of 416 parental abductions were reported to police in 2000. More males (217) were abducted than females (199). Of 252 parental abductions where there was no custody order, 134 were females and 118 males, and of the 164 reports where there was a custody order, 99 were males, 65 females.

Figure 4



International Parental Abductions

Background

The age of children abducted internationally tend to be older (over eight years of age) and the abducting parent tends to be of foreign origin. Foreign-born abductors also tend to be more successful in taking their children to their home country since they are more familiar with the culture and country, and may have friends and family there (Kiedrowski, Jayewardene & Dalley, 1994: 17; MacDonald, 1998: 50). However, native-born abductors who attempt to abduct their children internationally tend not to be as successful since they may encounter visa and naturalization difficulties in foreign countries. Difficulties arise when the countries hosting the abducted children do not comply to the requests of the searching parent nor to the court orders issued for the children's return (Hoff, 1994: 59). Quite often, some countries do not recognize custody orders of the searching parents and do not co-operate.

General Characteristics of Parental Abduction

Male and female children were equally likely to be abducted;
The majority of abducted children were usually under eight years of age;
Children were likely to be abducted from their homes, and less likely to be taken from school yards or from another residence;
Children tended to be abducted during weekends, summer, or winter holidays;
The abducting parent tended not to use physical force;
Both separated mothers and fathers were likely to abduct their own child;
Mothers tended to abduct their child after a court order; while fathers tended to abduct before the court order was issued;
Searching parents experienced significant emotional distress, which decreased somewhat once the child was located;
Abducted children, depending on their age and duration of the separation, experienced emotional trauma, often characterized by anxiety, fear, depression, paranoia and other emotional complications; and
An abductor often told the child that the other parent was dead or did not want to see them anymore, an approach intended to distort the child's impression and memories of the searching parent.

(Hoff,1994; Kiedrowski, Jayewardene & Dalley,1994; MacDonald,1998; Swaren S. & Dalley M.,1993)

Runaway Children and Youth

Background

Runaway children and youth compose the greatest numbers of missing children. Children run away for many reasons. The most common is an intolerable home situation characterized by family conflict. Parents and children misunderstand each other and have difficulty resolving problems. Marital fighting, siblings fighting, and children arguing with parents are some factors which contribute to an unstable home environment. Inadequate parenting skills, poor communication, weak parent-child bonding, a history of abuse, the use of drugs and alcohol by parents and/or by the runaway may exacerbate these factors. Running is also a response to an inability to cope with stressors originating from home, school, peers and community.

Many children run "to the street" where they link with persons experiencing similar problems. Being part of the "street family," fulfills the child's sense of belonging. Those who repeatedly run away disconnect from the source of the problem (home, school, community, peers) and connect to the "street family" as a way of dealing with problems. Other young people find living on the street too frightening, and return home hoping to find the problem resolved. Most often the problems still exist, and they run again. These runaways are considered to be repeat runaways. In a few instances, young people resolve their own problems and stop running away. While for others, the problem is complex and there is no easy solution and the running episodes continue.

These families and young people need special help, such as counselling and social service intervention.

A study conducted in Canada by De Man, Dolan, Pelletier, and Reid (1994), compared the running away behaviour of boys and girls. Boys tended to retreat and turn inward, exhibiting behaviours such as depression, and suicide. As well, they often removed themselves physically from unpleasant environments (De Man et al., 1994: 62). Adolescent girls tended toward a mixed pattern of avoidance behaviour, displaying both internal and external “coping” tendencies. In essence, the girls’ behaviour was more complex, sometimes manifesting itself in withdrawal and depression behaviours, as well as overt deviancy, such as drug and alcohol abuse, vandalism, and precocious sexual activity (De Man et al., 1994: 63).

Often young people who are completely rejected by their family are not able to return home. When this happens, they have very few support systems. These runaway young people are often referred to as *throwaways* or *street kids*. Their numbers are not known, mainly because no one cared enough about them to report them as missing to the police. Home is the “street” and their family is often made up of “street kids” and other “street people.” This group is extremely vulnerable to victimization and may be involved in serious criminal activities.

Running away and living on the streets is a growing problem in Canada. This situation warrants care and attention by all those concerned with the protection of Canada’s children. Street and runaway youth form a troubling group of individuals. Their employment patterns raise serious questions, as does their involvement in illegal activities. In essence, more attention must be directed to these youth who will be the fathers and mothers of future generations.

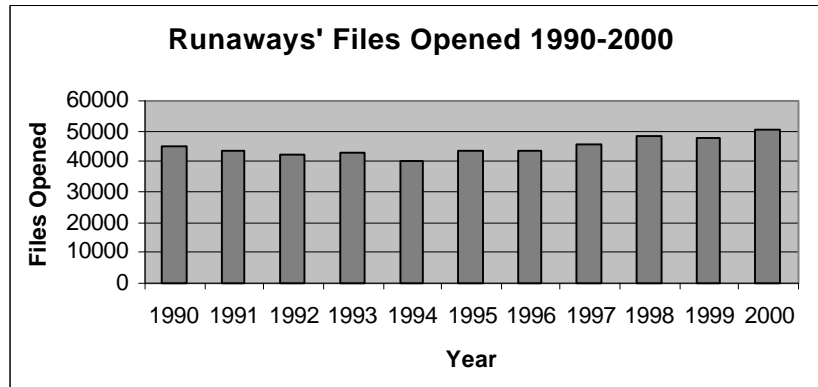
Findings

The runaway category includes children, under 18 years of age, who have run away from home or substitute home care (foster home, group home, Children’s Aid Society home/shelter). The causes for ‘running’ may include a previous history of running away or a particular circumstance which leads to the subjects disappearance (family fight, break up with boy/girlfriend etc.).*

An average of 41,251 cases of missing runaway children have been reported to Canadian police agencies over a 11-year period (See Figure 5).

* CPIC Reference Manual, Appendix III-4-H

Figure 5



In 2000, the total number of cases opened was 50,633, which contributed to 79.5% of all missing children cases. However, this number does not necessarily account for the total number of runaway children. Many of these cases reflect repeat incidents of running away. In essence, it is possible for one child to generate more than one case. For example, one female child/youth was reported to police agencies 39 times and entered each time as an individual case. On any day, there are about 1400 runaway cases on the Canadian Police Information Centre system..

A sample of 350 police reports revealed the following information. The findings showed that 90% of the runaways used drugs and alcohol, 14% were involved in prostitution, and 6% were listed as having Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Also, the results showed that Aboriginal youth comprised 8% of the transactions.

Characteristics of a runaway

Based upon a literature review and case analysis, the following characteristics were identified.

Most runaways came from homes torn apart by family conflict, described by researchers as *an intolerable home situation*;

Family stress was exacerbated by factors such as marital problems, divorce, physical and sexual abuse of children and/or spouses, parent and/or youth abuse of drugs and alcohol, and poor communication skills;

Runaways did not perform well in school, often finding school an uncomfortable and frustrating experience. Most only completed Grade 9 before being suspended, expelled or dropping out of school. Parents and teachers perceived them as troublesome, and a behaviour problem in and out of the classroom;

Runaways tended to be extremely unhappy, lonely, and lacked self-esteem and self-worth. Internal conflict, psychological problems, inadequate social skills, poor coping and communication skills affected their self worth;

Most runaways had no means of support and lacked the training and skills to get a job. Consequently, they became involved in the sex trade, drugs, panhandling and other delinquent activities;

The longer a youth was on the street, and the further the distance from family, school and familiar community support systems, the more vulnerable and likelihood of the youth to be involved in delinquent types of activities;

Overall, runaways dropped out of school and were not involved in school or community sport and other types of society acceptable recreational type activities;

Approximately half the youths ran away soon after the first runaway episode;

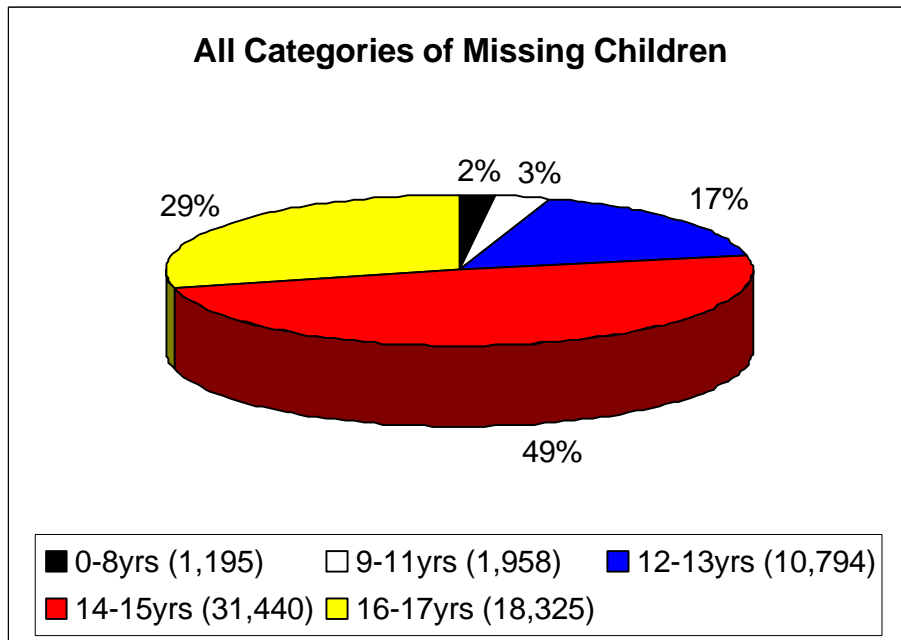
Most runaways did not travel far from home; 75% stay within 50 miles of home; and

Empirical conclusions, regarding the physical and sexual abuse of children prior to running, or while on the street, were inconsistent and sometimes non specific. Thus, research findings on abuse must be interpreted with caution, but it does occur.

Dalley, M., Missing Children's Registry, Royal Canadian Mounted Police 1993 Report, "*A Runaway Profile.*"

ALL CATEGORIES OF MISSING CHILDREN CASES

Figure 6



Findings

The following findings are derived from the Canadian Police Information Centre system records of **all** missing children cases:

Of 63,712 cases of all categories of missing children cases, 72% have repeat or habitual characteristics.

More females (59%) than males (41%) are reported as missing.

Of 62,899 cases removed from the system, 86% were removed within a week and 62% in one day. *Some cases from previous years would be included in these statistics.*

The majority of missing children were runaways. For the year 2000, the number indicated an all time high of 50,633 cases.

The majority of missing children were between the ages of 14 and 17 years, but there were 1,195 reports of younger children, up to eight years of age, who were missing (See Figure 6).

OTHER CATEGORIES OF MISSING CHILDREN

Unknown

The unknown category is used when the police agency has no previous record on the missing child. The child has never run away, walked out, or wandered off before the incident was reported to police. They have “no previous history.”*

In year 2000, 5,635 females and 4,396 males, for a total of 10,031 were reported to police and entered in this category. Occasionally, a stranger abduction is entered in this category, but usually the category designation is changed as more information surfaces.

Accident

This category is used when the probable cause for the child’s disappearance is an accident of some kind and the body has not been recovered. This includes accidental drowning, all types of accidents, fire/avalanche/hiking disappearance etc. *

In 2000, 9 females and 26 males, for a total of 35 children went missing by accident and were reported to police.

Wandered Off and Lost

This category is used when the child is presumed to have wandered away, in a confused state, from a hospital, mental institution or chronic care facility, become lost in the woods, has not returned when expected from hiking, camping, hunting or wandered away or is lost from the family location or who has not returned when expected from school, a friend’s house, a meeting, etc. *

In 2000, 289 females and 308 males, for a total of 597 children went missing and were reported to police.

Other

This category is used when the child/youth has not returned to a detention home or institution housing young offenders. *

In 2000, 1,154 females and 804 males, for a total of 1,958 children went missing and were reported to police.

* CPIC Reference Manual, Appendix III-4-H

Canadian Police Information Centre Report Summary of Cases

The annual CPIC system yearly printout for the last 14 years was analyzed, and the number of cases of missing children reported to police agencies was tabulated. See Figure 7 for comparisons and averages. Also see Figures 8, 9, and 10, which shows a breakdown by profile, province and sex for year 2000.

***Please note this number does not necessarily account for the total number of children/youth. Many of these cases reflect repeat incidents, especially in the runaway category where there is a 70% repeat factor.**

Figure 7

Frequency By Profile of Missing Child CPIC Case Reports For Fourteen Years

YEAR¹	SA	PA	RUNAWAY	UNKNOWN	ACC	WANDER	OTHER	TOTAL
Average	66	410	44108	10704	36	728	1927	57979
2000	42	416	50633	10031	35	597	1958	63712
1999	52	358	47585	9884	38	496	1947	60360
1998	42	426	48388	10254	28	623	2326	62087
1997	60	426	45527	9404	37	506	2138	58098
1996	45	409	43717	9181	34	822	1914	56122
1995	68	354	43709	9039	35	720	1824	55749
1994	68	394	40140	8901	24	672	1774	51973
1993	61	407	43102	9959	26	543	1810	55908
1992	70	378	42518	11193	44	635	1834	56672
1991	78	412	43786	11863	60	783	2153	59135
1990	84	432	44803	12803	44	1037	2045	61248
1989	69	434	41974	12272	38	807	1804	57398
1988	85	446	40373	12495	29	872	1723	56023
1987	93	452	41253	12575	36	1081	1733	57223

1. SA, Stranger Abduction; PA, Parental Abduction; ACC, Accident; WANDER, Wandered Off

Source: CPIC Annual transaction for 2000

M.L. Dalley, MCR; Winter, 2001

Figure 8, 9 10

Frequency of Missing Children Cases Reported on CPIC By Category By Province 2000

Females

Profile	YT	NT	NV	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PE	NS	NF	Totals
Stranger	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	12	11	0	0	0	0	30
Accident	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	9
Wandered	0	0	0	34	143	9	14	77	8	1	2	0	1	289
Parental	0	0	0	35	18	6	6	98	32	3	0	1	0	199
Runaway	12	14	0	9597	5843	947	2061	7770	3174	239	26	217	69	29969
Unknown	0	0	0	1449	237	333	237	2712	542	16	11	88	10	5635
Other	1	0	0	309	36	17	13	597	166	1	1	13	0	1154
Total	13	15	0	11433	6280	1312	2331	11268	3934	260	40	319	80	37285

Males

Profile	YT	NT	NV	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PE	NS	NF	Totals
Stranger	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	3	4	0	0	0	0	12
Accident	0	0	0	16	2	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	1	26
Wandered	0	0	0	45	108	16	23	97	16	0	0	3	0	308
Parental	0	0	0	37	15	5	11	91	55	1	0	2	0	217
Runaway	3	8	0	5749	4030	708	1127	5236	3472	148	8	123	52	20664
Unknown	0	1	0	1107	134	261	181	1959	681	10	3	52	7	4396
Other	0	0	0	185	26	22	13	408	138	5	0	6	1	804
Total	3	9	0	7140	4317	1014	1355	7801	4366	164	11	186	61	26427

Total

Profile	YT	NT	NV	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PE	NS	NF	Totals
Stranger	0	0	0	7	3	2	0	15	15	0	0	0	0	42
Accident	0	1	0	19	4	0	0	9	1	0	0	0	1	35
Wandered	0	0	0	79	251	25	37	174	24	1	2	3	1	597
Parental	0	0	0	72	33	11	17	189	87	4	0	3	0	416
Runaway	15	22	0	15346	9873	1655	3188	13006	6646	387	34	340	121	50633
Unknown	0	1	0	2556	371	594	418	4671	1223	26	14	140	17	10031
Other	1	0	0	494	62	39	26	1005	304	6	1	19	1	1958
Total	16	24	0	18573	10597	2326	3686	19069	8300	424	51	505	141	63712

SOURCE II

MISSING CHILDREN'S REGISTRY, Royal Canadian Mounted Police **Manual Transaction Analysis Internal Activity**

The Missing Children's Registry collects data from an opened and closed file internal data collection system. Requests are received for investigative assistance from Canadian and International law enforcement agencies. In the last five years, an average of 640 requests for active investigative assistance were received. This number does not include the numerous telephone calls and e-mail communications received by the Registry for information regarding the investigative process, interpretation of related laws, advice on the mechanics of processing a Hague application and extradition, travel arrangements for the return of abducted children, contact with protection and not-for-profit agencies, and the work necessary to facilitate photo age enhancement requests.

Since 1988 the Missing Children's Registry opened 5,844 Canadian, International and other types of assistance files (Figure 11). Of this total, 4,309 were closed. The number of files at the end of December 2000 was 1,535.

For the year 2000, 588 (Figure 12) were opened and 582 (Figure 13) were closed. However, the closed files include those from *previous years* (See Figure 14, month of February for an explanation).

Open Missing Children's Registry Files 2000 Canada

Figure 11

1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	total
60	234	132	454	315	388	533	528	597	719	679	617	588	5844

Figure 12

Missing Children’s Registry Open Files 2000

<u>OPENED</u>	<u>CANADIAN</u>	<u>USA</u>	<u>INTERN'L</u>	<u>BUSINESS</u>	<u>BULK</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<i>January</i>	6	66	7	0	1	80
<i>February</i>	17	22	14	0	1	54
<i>March</i>	12	20	12	0	1	45
<i>April</i>	14	7	12	3	1	37
<i>May</i>	9	17	10	3	1	40
<i>June</i>	14	17	11	1	1	44
<i>July</i>	7	37	21	7	1	73
<i>August</i>	17	26	9	0	1	53
<i>September</i>	17	40	16	1	1	75
<i>October</i>	12	5	16	1	1	35
<i>November</i>	5	8	10	0	1	24
<i>December</i>	12	10	5	0	1	28
TOTAL	142	275	143	16	12	588

Figure 13

Closed Missing Children’s Registry Files, Canadian and International, 2000

<i>January</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>Total</i>
45	43	59	21	68	82	14	70	45	35	58	42	582

The number of closed files does not necessarily indicate that these files were also opened in the same month or year. As an example, for the files closed in the month of February, a breakdown is shown to demonstrate in which years these files were originally opened.

Figure 14

Opening Dates for MCR Canadian and International Files Closed in February 2000

1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	TOTA
0	1	0	2	1	0	4	3	2	7	4	14	5	43

* As indicated in the chart above, only 5 of the files closed in February 2000 were opened in the same year.

Domestic Law Enforcement Assistance

An analysis of the 142 Canadian Missing Children's Registry (MCR) files revealed that there was a total of 172 children missing. (See Figure 15). Ontario law enforcement requested assistance in the search for 84 missing children, followed by British Columbia for 30 children, and Quebec for 24 children.

Investigative and Other Types of Assistance Requested By Canadian Police Agencies 2000

Figure 15

ON	BC	PQ	AB	MB	NB	NF	Missing children
84	30	24	22	4	5	3	172

The average age of missing children was 8 years. Children age 2 years and under, comprised 14% (24) of the total number, most often classified as parental abductions. More children were reported missing at the end of August than any other month. These findings concurred with other research findings. To explain further, children often spend their summer holidays with the other parent who often do not return them in time to start school. [It is interesting to note that the Missing Children's Registry Travel Program was used more often during the month of September.]

Analysis of the Missing Children's Registry Cases, Canada

An analysis was made of 88 missing children files opened in the last part of 2000. The findings showed that the Registry was requested to assist with 44 parental abductions, 2 stranger abductions, 20 runaway child investigations and 22 other requests with varying characteristics. The Travel Reunification Program was requested to return a child home, six (6) times over a six month period. An analysis of the time taken to close a Canadian file revealed that 50% of the files were closed within 1 month. With regard to parental abduction files, it was found that mothers abduct as often as fathers.

International Law Enforcement Assistance

The Missing Children's Registry (MCR) is mandated to promote networking and develop investigative linkages to all countries, but especially those countries belonging to the Interpol network and those which are signatories to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. Over the years, the program staff has developed an expertise which enables them to quickly and expediently investigate cases involving abducted children from Canada to other countries, and as well, abducted children from other countries believed to be residing in Canada. Figure 16 shows the number of cases opened (143) in 2000 and lists the countries that requested assistance.

The Missing Children’s Registry and the our missing children (OMC) program partners work closely with law enforcement agencies in the United States and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children as well as law enforcement agencies in other foreign countries. This collaborative investigative effort has extended over a 15 year period. In 2000, MCR/OMC assisted the United States with 275 investigations and foreign countries with 143 cases.

Figure 16

Number of International Cases Opened By Country 2000

Country	No.	Country	No.	Country	No.	Country	No.
Andorra	2	Croatia	1	Kuwait	2	Spain	8
Antigua	1	Czech Republic	2	Latvia	2	Sudan	2
Argentina	3	Denmark	1	Lebanon	1	Sweden	4
Armenia	3	Ecuador	2	Luxembourg	1	Switzerland	6
Austria	1	France	8	Mexico	6	Thailand	1
Azerbaijan	1	Germany	6	Netherlands	3	Tunisia	1
Barbados	1	Greece	1	Panama	1	Ukraine	2
Bahamas	1	Haiti	1	Peru	2	United Kingdom	6
Belgium	7	Hungary	9	Poland	1	Uruguay	1
Brazil	1	India	3	Portugal	2	Venezuela	1
Bosnia	2	Iran	1	Russia	5	West Indies	1
Bulgaria	5	Ireland	1	Saudi Arabia	1		
Chile	11	Israel	1	Slovak Republic	1		
China	2	Italy	3	South Africa	1	TOTAL	143

Summary and Conclusions

The number of stranger abductions reported to Canadian police agencies was 42 in 2000. This is not a large number, considering the population of children in Canada. Nonetheless, one child missing shocks a nation and is considered by many to be *too many*. With some concern, it has been shown that children are more likely to be abducted by their parent than by a stranger. In 2000, 416 parental abductions were reported to police. It is important to note that some parental abductions are dealt with at the Civil Court level and therefore, are not recorded in this number. This number represents parental abductions, where mostly criminal charges are laid for the act of abducting.

In retrospect, runaway children make up the greatest number of missing children. The exact number is not known, as each time a child/youth runs away and is reported to police, a new transaction (file) is generated and recorded on the Canadian Police Information Centre system. In essence, the 50,633 runaway transactions do not indicate the number of children running away. However, this number is concerning as it has increased since last year.

In addition to the troubled children generating this number, there are a number of children living on the streets of Canada who have been abandoned by their parent, commonly referred to as “throwaway” children. These children no one cared about enough to even report them to police as missing. Unfortunately, the exact number of throwaway children are not known either. All the same, it is concerning to realize that this number, if known, would add to the 50,633 total.

The reasons for running away vary. Runaway children leave homes that have been torn apart by family conflict, exacerbated by physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect, the overuse of drugs and alcohol by either /or both, parent and child and poor communication skills. In essence, researchers report that children run from what children consider to be an intolerable home situation.

Since data collection began in 1988, 5,844 files have been opened and assistance provided to a requesting agency. In 2000, assistance was provided in the search for 172 Canadian missing children (142 files). To facilitate the return of the child to Canada, transportation arrangements were made by the Registry for approximately 10 families. An analysis of 88 MCR files revealed that it took one month to close a Canadian file. Sometimes criminal charges were laid and in other incidents, the child was returned home voluntarily and/or the parents were able to reconcile their differences over custody arrangements.

With regard to investigations, the Missing Children’s Registry and its program partners have developed an expertise in handling missing children investigations, which extends worldwide. In 2000, assistance was provided on 418 international cases. Since the Registry and its program partners work closely with the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, ongoing assistance was provided to the National Center.

In conclusion, the picture of the missing children situation in Canada is not as clear a picture as many would like it to be. However, Canadians can be assured that there are effective law enforcement programs, procedures and linkages in place. Together the Missing Children’s Registry RCMP and its our missing children program partners, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade are equipped to put the search and recovery process in motion, swiftly and expediently. Canadians can feel, with a certain degree of assurance, that the safety and well being of children will be protected at all costs.

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