

Canada's Missing Children Annual Report

2001

National Missing Children Services
National Police Services
Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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Message From the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police

In August 1986, the RCMP's National Police Services Directorate established the Missing Children's Registry as part of the Solicitor General's Brighter Futures initiatives. The Registry was designed to deal with the issues associated with missing and runaway children. In 2001, it became the National Missing Children Services (NMCS) to better reflect this mandate.



Since its creation, the NMCS has continued to be the primary source of information on missing children in Canada. NMCS supports the efforts of Canadian and international police agencies in the search for and recovery of, abducted and runaway children and youth. It also develops and shares training techniques with law enforcement professionals to help them respond better to cases of missing and abducted children. Its original research studies and annual reports — like this one — can be used by law enforcement as well as private and public agencies to support the need for changes in policy, prevention and policing approaches.

But *what* the program does is just as impressive as *how* it works. **RCMP's National Missing Children Services is one of the best examples of integrated policing in action.** Integrated policing refers to the cooperation and coordination across Canada's law enforcement community using shared intelligence, tools and innovations. It means sharing information more effectively with other government departments, not-for-profit agencies, academics, the private sector and, of course, our international partners.

One good example of integration at the international level is NMCS's membership on the Interpol Standing Working Group on Crimes Against Children and the National Committee Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth.

RCMP's National Missing Children Services Branch is part of Canada's national our missing children program, which involves four other government agencies: Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the Department of Justice Canada. The program also works with not-for-profit search agencies, all with the main goal of ensuring the safe and early return of missing and abducted children to their families.

Although international and national integration is important, the critical link to success is integration at the local level — where the rubber meets the road. As police, we have millions of interactions with Canadian citizens every year. We're in more communities than almost any other federal department or agency.

And that's why we must continue to **build bridges** with runaways on the streets to refer them to the appropriate services. We must continue to demonstrate the **values** of professionalism, compassion and respect when handling all cases dealing with missing or abducted children. We will continue to share **intelligence** to help parents better protect their children through community groups like Crimestoppers and Block Parents and, of course, continue to report all cases of missing children to the Canadian Police Information Centre system. Ultimately, police are **accountable** for the safety and security of all Canadians — especially that of our country's children.

So we're taking it one child at a time. When we help to look after the children in our communities, we are investing in our future and contributing to a safer and healthier nation for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Zaccardelli".

Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli

Acknowledgments

National Missing Children Services (NMCS) would like to extend our appreciation to all the law enforcement agencies who took the time to enter information and data about missing children on the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system and keep the database current. Special appreciation is extended to Karen Swanson, B.Soc.Sc., Operational Data Analyst, who developed an internal data collection mechanism and kept records of our assistance files. This information enabled analysis to be completed on the NMCS workload for 2001. Appreciation is also extended to Jenna Ruscoe, B.A., M.Sc. Investigative Psychology, Research Assistant, who assisted with the Stranger Abduction study and the Operation Go Home, Ottawa Branch, study. These efforts have helped us to understand better the characteristics of runaway children and youth. Your contributions were greatly appreciated.

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National Missing Children Services

National Police Services, RCMP

by Dr. Marlene Dalley, Ph. D.

Introduction

At one point or another in children's lives they may "go missing" for a brief period. Most often, they reappear on their own, but during that period of time, parents experience their worst fear— a missing child. Fortunately, the majority of children return safely and the parents can utter a "sigh of relief." Sometimes, however, a child does not return as quickly as expected. Although most of these children are eventually found unharmed, some may have had a traumatic or even a fatal experience – they are victims of assault, confinement, accident or even murder.

Those individuals, predators, who harm children, are most often persons known to the child. This puts more pressure on parents to screen the character and reputation of all persons supervising and caring for their child, such as babysitters, coaches, clergy, private teachers and any adults who show a special but unusual interest in their child. Because children of all ages typically are vulnerable to victimization, it is important for law enforcement officials, parents, educators and community leaders to help educate parents and children on how to *stay safe*.

On occasion, a child is abducted by a parent, relative or caregiver and reported to the police as missing. Some children remain missing under these circumstances for many years, while others are merely missing temporarily because a parent is late in returning the child from an access visit. Rarely is a child harmed by a parent, but sometimes, the abducting parent, feeling overwhelmed, harms or murders the child. This act is usually followed by the abducting parent's suicide. For the protection of the child, parental abduction must be taken seriously whether or not there is a custody order in place.

In 2001, a total of 66,994 missing-child reports were made to Canadian police agencies, of which 53,434 were classified as runaways, 387 as parental abductions and 48 as stranger abductions. The majority were children with repeat and/or chronic episodes of running away. It is important to note here that each time a child runs away, a new transaction report is generated by police. Thus, the runaway category represents the total cases, not the number of individual children missing. Consequently, the exact number of runaway youth is difficult to determine. Parental abduction report statistics remain fairly consistent from year to year, but the number has decreased somewhat in 2001. With regard to stranger-abductions, the actual number is much lower than the numbers reported to police. As more investigative information surfaces, most stranger abduction reports are reentered in another category or removed.

Canadian Milestones: Missing and Exploited Children

Over the years, many steps have been taken to address the issue of missing and exploited children and youth. Here are some of the more significant milestones in the Canadian experience.

- 1980 Canada becomes signatory of the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.
- 1983 Canada ratifies the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.
- 1983 The Criminal Code of Canada is amended to include parental abduction as a new offence.
- 1985 The Missing Children Research Project is initiated.
- 1986 The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Task Force on missing and exploited children is created.
- 1986 A research report is published on Canada's missing children, titled "A Focus on Runaways."
- 1986 Canada Customs initiates the first border agency missing children program, International Project Return.
- 1987 The first national conference relating to missing children issues is held in Toronto, Ontario, by the Government of Canada.
- 1988 The official opening of Canada's national clearinghouse, the Missing Children's Registry, Canadian Police Services, is held at RCMP Headquarters, Ottawa, Ontario.
- 1990 The Missing Children Registry initiates the development of a computerized photo-age-enhancement service and the training of a forensic artist.
- 1991 The Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General of Canada announce a Travel Program for the safe return of abducted children. This program, administered by the Missing Children's Registry, RCMP, provides transportation arrangements to parents in order to travel to and return home with their child.
- 1992 The federal government's *Brighter Futures, National Child Development Initiative* is implemented including funding for the Missing Children's Registry, RCMP.
- 1993 The **our missing children** program is launched including Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as its first partners.

- 1993 Citizenship and Immigration Canada joins the **our missing children** program.
- 1994 The Missing Children's Registry publishes two reports on Parental Abduction, two of the first studies involving interviews with Canadian victims.
- 1995 The award-winning crime prevention video *Safe Children* is produced – a cooperative project of the Missing Children's Registry and Community Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services, RCMP. The video receives the **Can Pro Award** and **International Crime Stoppers Award**.
- 1996 The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade joins the **our missing children** program.
- 1996 The Treasury Board of Canada **Award of Excellence** is presented to the Missing Children's Registry for service to the public.
- 1997 The RCMP initiates an ad hoc working group on issues relating to the sexual exploitation of children, including participation from Criminal Intelligence Services Canada, Solicitor General of Canada, Department of Justice Canada, Revenue Canada Customs, Ontario Provincial Police, Sûreté du Québec, Coordinated Law Enforcement Unit (BC) and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.
- 1997 A national multidisciplinary conference on issues relating to the sexual exploitation of children, jointly sponsored by the Solicitor General of Canada and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police is held in Aylmer, Ontario.
- 1998 A National Coordinated Law Enforcement Strategy Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children developed by the RCMP's ad hoc working group is published by Criminal Intelligence Services Canada, National Police Services and Community Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services of the RCMP; the latter also publishes "Guidelines for Law Enforcement– Sexual Exploitation of Children."
- 1998 The Missing Children's Registry (MCR) chairs the Steering Committee on Offences Against Minors, and both MCR and Criminal Intelligence Services Canada take part in meetings of the Interpol Standing Working Group on Crimes Against Children.
- 1998 The *Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, International Child Abduction: Issues for Reform* is published, with recommendations for change.
- 1999 The Government Response to the Report of the Special Joint Committee on Custody and Access is published.

- 1999 The *National Working Group in Pursuit of Child-Centred Investigation Strategies* and the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police co-host a conference on the Sexual Victimization of Children: A Crime Too Long Hidden, in Regina, Saskatchewan.
- 1999 The **our missing children** program receives the International Association of the Chiefs of Police **Webber Seavey Award for Quality in Law Enforcement**.
- 2000 The RCMP Directional statement includes Youth as a national strategic priority, and the RCMP launches its National Youth Strategy.
- 2000 The **our missing children** program partners host the first international conference on missing and exploited children, in Montreal, Quebec.
- 2001 Community Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services and Criminal Intelligence Services Canada host a law enforcement training workshop on the Sexual Exploitation of Children Via the Internet.
- 2001 The Department of Justice Canada officially joins the **our missing children** program.
- 2001 A national Stranger Abduction Investigation Training Workshop is held in Vancouver, British Columbia.
- 2001 A National Roundtable meeting on the issue of “Separated Children Seeking Asylum in Canada” is hosted by Senator Landon Pearson and sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Child Welfare League of Canada and International Social Service Canada.
- 2001 National Missing Children Services (formerly the Missing Children’s Registry) and the **our missing children** program’s functions, services and activities are presented at the World Congress on Family Law and the Rights of Children and Youth, in Bath, England.

The our missing children Program

The our missing children program is fundamental to the search for, recovery and return of a missing child to a searching parent. Five agencies and departments, each with a unique function, work together under this program to find missing children.

The Agencies and primary responsibilities are as follows:

1. ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE, NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN SERVICES

As Canada's clearinghouse for reports of missing children, National Missing Children Services (NMCS) provides investigative services to Canadian and foreign police agencies. NMCS Interpol connections allow investigators to link and trace quickly and expediently the path and/or whereabouts of an abductor, or missing child. Photo-age-progression services, travel arrangements for families in financial need, advice on reuniting family members and cooperative work with the other partners complement the investigative process. The NMCS Research Officer conducts original research studies, publishes reports and newsletters, identifies trends in the nature and scope of missing children, and disseminates information to the public and media, nationally and internationally.

2. CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency places border alerts, detects and recovers missing children crossing international borders and provides training to its coordinators and officers.

3. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA

Citizenship and Immigration Canada identifies, intercepts and recovers missing children at national borders and within Canada. Immigration officers play a role in all cases involving non-Canadians and non-resident visitors.

4. THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

The Consular Affairs Bureau provides assistance to agencies and families regarding international child abductions. The department seeks to ensure that children who have been or who are at risk of being abducted and transported across borders receive appropriate protection and assistance.

5. THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CANADA

The Department of Justice Canada provides assistance with critical legal matters. It also provides legal advice on Hague applications for the return of a child from a foreign country, as well as conducts reviews and makes decisions on National Missing Children Services extradition requests.

Not-for-Profit Organizations

1. Canada

National Missing Children Services, RCMP, liaises with recognized *not-for-profit* agencies, thus further advancing the investigative process. Some of these agencies are very involved in the actual search for a missing child, whereas others focus on crime prevention activities such as giving child-safety talks in schools and shopping malls. They also assist police agencies as well as provide support to parents.

Recognition and Support of Services

The our missing children program works in cooperation with and supports those agencies which have an acceptable reputation for serving Canadians on this issue. This includes only those agencies who submit to a review. It is important to note that there are many other child protection and searching agencies legally operating in Canada.

Those agencies meeting the preset criteria for year 2001 recognition are as follows:

- Child Find Canada
- International Social Service Canada
- the Missing Children's Network of Canada
- the Missing Children's Society of Canada
- Operation Go Home
- Victims of Violence: Canadian Center for Missing Children
- Fax Find Society of British Columbia
- the National Missing Children Locate Centre

Provincial agencies affiliated with these agencies are included in this list as well. A committee will review these and any other agencies that apply for recognition status in the year 2002 and make recommendations regarding their acceptance.

Criteria for Recognition

The **criteria for recognition** are as follows:

The organization must have been in full operation for at least three years. Each organization must provide NMCS with a copy of the screening results of all board members and staff and submit a copy of its charitable registration documents, its by-laws, its business plan and its mission statement.

Each recognized organization must demonstrate ongoing financial stability each year. All services and programs must continue to be performed in a legal manner.

Organizations are prohibited from using the National Missing Children Services or the **our missing children** program name or logo in any of their promotional materials or for fund-raising purposes without the written authorization of National Missing Children Services and/or a member department of the **our missing children** program.

All telemarketing or door-to-door solicitation fund-raising activities should be reported to the National Missing Children Services (NMCS). If requested, NMCS will alert all police agencies within the specified fund-raising target area.

If the above conditions are not met, the **our missing children** program committee reserves the right to refuse status recognition. Any complaints received by a member department of the **our missing children** program will be recorded and provided to the committee for review of the agency's continuing status.

our missing children program toll-free number: 1-877-318-3576

website address: <http://www.ourmissingchildren.ca>.

2. **United States**

The **our missing children** program also links to the **United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children**. This agency coordinates the efforts of law enforcement, social-service agencies, elected officials, judges, prosecutors, educators and the public and private sectors in an effort to break the cycle of violence that historically has perpetuated crimes against children. Additionally, it assists National Missing Children Services with computer-aging of the faces in photos of missing children. These updated photos are used to feature a missing child on a poster and on the NMCS Internet website. The US agency's state-of-the-art equipment greatly assists with this undertaking. The US Center operates a 24-hour toll-free Hotline, at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) available in Canada and the United States. For those requiring information on missing and exploited children, a CyberTipline is also available at: <http://www.cybertipline.com>

DETAILS OF DATA

For Each Major Category of Cases of Missing Children

The data describing the nature and scope of cases of missing children originate from two sources: the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system and the ¹MCR system, which includes both an automated and a manual system.

SECTION 1 Parental Abduction

Parental abductions may occur during or after separation and/or divorce. In general, mothers tend to abduct their child(ren) after a court order is issued, whereas fathers tend to abduct before a court order is made. This action has been attributed to the uncertainties associated with separation and divorce. When parents separate, it is a major disruption in a child's life. As well, it is an emotional and frustrating experience for the parents. In many instances, a power struggle occurs, resulting in parents losing focus on the arrangements that need to be made in the *best interest of the child(ren)*.

Parents abduct their own child(ren) for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons are: a need to have the child exclusively; various psychological problems; lack of respect for, and frustration with, the Court system; fear of losing access to the child; and a desire to provide protection and safety for the child. However, the most common reason is a power struggle between parents, which may be described as a struggle motivated by revenge.

Revenge is a powerful motivator that may lead to extraordinary consequences. On a **rare** occasion, the abducting parent may even murder their child rather than returning the child to the other parent. A Canadian study conducted in 1997 revealed that during a custody dispute, parents killed their children in only five percent (5%) of cases (M. Dalley, 1997). An Australian study showed that thirty-five percent (35%) of children killed by their parents was a result of a family dispute. The familial distress resulting from the parents' disputes and their deaths usually terminated their relationships.

Although revenge is considered one of the prime motivators, H. Strang (1996) has pointed out that a fundamental structural change in society, namely the increasing rate of marriage breakups, is also a factor. A failed or failing marriage can be a source of rage and/or depression in an offender. Although these studies and others have shown that a family discord is often the major factor, various psychosocial stressors were also cited as critical elements. These stressors were identified by Bourget and Bradford (1990) as family stress, marital separation, unwanted or

¹MCR is the Missing Children Registry database. National Missing Children Services is formerly known as the Missing Children Registry.

difficult pregnancy, caring for a disabled child, dealing with difficult child behaviour and financial problems.

NMCS investigators recently assisted on an international case of parental abduction during which a father killed his six-year-old daughter and then committed suicide. It was reported that the father became overwhelmed when he spotted a policeman approaching the cottage where he and his daughter were living and hiding. Although an incident like this is rare in Canada, such tragic outcomes beg an answer to the question, “How could this search or investigation have proceeded differently and in the best interest of the child? What is the best way to protect the child while providing optimum options for the parent? Experts and agencies struggle to find suitable answers to these critical questions.

Travel Program

National Missing Children Services operates a Travel Program to help parents who cannot afford to travel abroad or within Canada to reunite and return home with their child. Air Canada and VIA Rail provide transportation when certain requirements are met. Currently, it is important to note, a few days’ notice is required to process a request. In 2001, four children were returned to Canada from Mexico, China, Spain and the United States.

Discussion of Data on Parental Abductions

Data Source 1 Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) System

For data collection purposes and report entry on the CPIC system, a **parental abduction** is defined as *a case where a parent abducts his or her own child (ren)*. This category is divided into those cases where a custody order has been granted, and those where no custody order exists.

In 2001, there were 387 reports of parental abduction, 164 (42%) with a custody order and 223 (58%) without a custody order. It is interesting to note that the non custodial parent was the abductor more often. Most often, these cases involve the processing of some criminal charges, which may entail up to 10 years of imprisonment. However, some cases are processed in civil courts; the number of such cases is not known.

The number of parental abductions has remained fairly consistent each year over the past decade. However, there is a slight drop in the number for 2001 as compared with the year 2000.

Parental Abductions 1992-2001

| 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | Average |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| 378 | 407 | 394 | 354 | 409 | 426 | 426 | 358 | 416 | 387 | 396 |

Data Source 2 National Missing Children Services (NMCS)

In the past, due to the tendency for Canadian courts to grant custody to the mother, fathers more often abducted their children. However, in 2001, the trend changed. Mothers were abductors in 66% (44 incidents) and fathers in 33% (22 incidents) of the cases. In addition, of all the cases (367) handled by NMCS both nationally and internationally, the majority of parental abductors 61% (223 incidents) were mothers, and only 37% (135 incidents) were fathers.

Since the NMCS is an assistance agency, Unit investigators most often become involved with the more complex cases, those, involving warrants for arrest and extensive national or international agency liaison. In 2001, of the total number of abduction cases (664) handled by the Unit, parental abductions made up over half (367). The greatest numbers of requests for assistance were received in February, August and October. This may be due to factors relating to a child's late return from an access visit following a winter break, summer vacation or Christmas holiday.

The following table shows the monthly figures for 2001.

National Missing Children Services Case Profile Analysis 2001 Parental Abduction, Canadian and International Cases

| Month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Av. |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| n | 31 | 49 | 33 | 31 | 29 | 16 | 24 | 35 | 28 | 43 | 27 | 21 | 30.6 |
| * % | 48 | 61 | 60 | 54 | 57 | 38 | 57 | 61 | 48 | 65 | 54 | 50 | 54% |

* Percent of total cases handled by NMCS, RCMP

SECTION 2 Stranger Abduction

Although parents rank "the fear of their child being abducted by a stranger" as high compared with other fears, more often the abductor is someone known to the child. Children often go willingly with someone they know, have met with their parents or have seen visiting their family home. Only on a very few occasions each year is a young child kidnaped by a *complete* stranger.

However, parents must be cautious as their children can be harmed by a predator in many other ways. They may be assaulted and/or traumatized by a number of unpleasant circumstances. Most often, offenders lure a child after convincing them they will be safe. Common lures include: requesting a child to help find a lost animal; extending an invitation to go for a car ride; faking an emergency; calling the child by name, thus establishing a more friendly atmosphere to talk together; and impersonating a nurse, teacher, police officer or other person in a position of authority. Many parents ask, then, who can a child trust in an emergency? There are many answers to this question, all speculative. Although persons in a position of authority may pose a slight risk to a lost child, most believe such persons are still the best to approach for help if a child

is lost in a store, park or elsewhere. It is parents' responsibility to talk with their children and teach them *how to be and stay safe*. Some ways this can be accomplished are by playing the "What if?" game with your child, identifying the *safe houses* in your neighbourhood, and talking about whom they can trust or not trust. Most important, acquaintances must be distinguished from true friends.

The United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported recently that in one case, five children between the ages of four and eight were lured into a stolen ambulance. The abductor told the children that the ambulance was a playroom. Fortunately, before the suspect drove off, four children escaped unharmed. The abducted child was located within hours in a nearby neighbourhood, mainly due to the operation of a well-organized neighbourhood watch program. Thus, in addition to teaching child safety, it is important to implement such programs in our communities.

Today, Internet communications can also pose a risk to children–youth in particular. It is a well-known fact that adolescents spend considerable time talking to friends. This is developmentally healthy, as friends are very important during this stage. Adolescents only become at-risk when they talk to or become intimate with someone they do not know–and even more at risk of harm when they arrange a meeting with this person in some out-of-the-way place, like a hotel room or a park. Because of this possibility, parents must talk with their children and know their Internet friends. Keep in mind, too, that educating children about safety in cyberspace does not differ greatly from any other approach to safety.

Cyberspace Hints

Some helpful cyberspace hints are as follows: Sit down with your child and explore the Internet together. Talk and have fun! In addition, be alert to unusual telephone calls, mail, gifts and packages directed to your child. Be wary if your child turns off the home computer when you walk into the room, as if hiding something from you. Watch for signs of behaviour change. Be concerned when a child spends too much time on the computer and ignores his/her friends and other enjoyed formerly leisure activities. Check the computer's hard drive and diskette collection periodically. Get to know your child's Internet pals. Hopefully, if your child meets a new friend, s/he will share the information and circumstances with you. The best way to protect your child is by talking and listening, and by using *your watchful eyes*.

Discussion of Data on Stranger Abduction

Data Source 1 Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) System

For data collection purposes and report entry, a **stranger abduction** is defined as *an abduction by individuals other than the subject's parent or guardian*. The abductor may, for example, be an uncle, sister, cousin, grandfather, neighbour or close friend. This definition of abduction also includes cases in which a child is briefly restrained from his/her intended destination and, for

example, is sexually assaulted and then released.

In 2001, there were 48 stranger abduction cases entered on CPIC. Further analysis of these cases revealed that very few were *actual* abductions. Therefore, most of the cases were removed or reentered in another category as more investigative information surfaced. National Missing Children Services will publish these findings in a stranger abduction report in 2002, (M. Dalley).

Data Source 2 National Missing Children Services (NMCS)

In 2001, NMCS assisted investigators with five **Canadian** cases of stranger abduction; three cases originated from Ontario, one from Alberta and one from British Columbia. Four females and one male child were abducted, ranging in age from four to 15 (ages 4, 5, 5, 7 and 15 years). The 15-year-old youth was a reentry into the system from a missing-child report of a previous year.

NMCS also assisted **national and international** law enforcement agencies with the investigation of 35 stranger abduction cases in 2001. An analysis of these cases showed the following: more females than males were abducted; the majority of the children were between the ages of 1 and 12 ; 40% were under 5 years old; and most of these cases originated from the United States.

Section 3 Runaway Children

Background

Some Causes

Since the majority of children who run away are adolescents, it is important to consider that this stage between childhood and adulthood is characterized by rapid physical, intellectual and emotional changes. Young people strive to become independent, autonomous adults, while continuing to be governed by the guidance and wishes of parents. Most youth find this transition period relatively smooth, but for others, it is very frustrating. Parental expectations of success, school/academic pressures, family conflict, parents' separation or divorce, the use and abuse of alcohol and/or drugs by the youth and/or parent(s), abuse at home and/or while on the street and a variety of other factors heighten the frustrations. Additionally, adolescents strive to *fit in with* and *be accepted by* friends and peers. Sometimes this can be a very trying experience. *Studies have shown that when these stressors overwhelm a young person, he/she often responds by running away.*

Patterns and Cycles of Running Away

Sometimes youth run away to visit a friend, take a vacation, attend a party, look for work and so on. Others run away to escape hurt and pain. Some researchers have cited an "intolerable home situation" as the major motivator. For most runaways, the first episode is very scary, and in a day

or two, they return home or to a care facility with the hope that the circumstances that caused the initial situation have improved. But for most, the stressors remain after they return, and not having the coping skills to deal with the situation, the youth runs away again. These episodes often continue until the runaway either finds a mentor who can help, addresses and satisfactorily solves the problem or is referred to an appropriate assistance service.

If living on the street with a *street family* is the option of choice, runaway youth soon become engulfed in the *street life*. Consequently, in an attempt to survive and cope on the street, these youth accumulate new stressors, such as abusing drugs, exhibiting violent behaviours and breaking the law, including prostitution and other sexually deviant activities.

Breaking the Cycle

Over the years, researchers have concluded that the quicker a youth is located and referred to appropriate services, the better the chances of breaking the cycle of running away. Police officers, who are often the first point of contact for a runaway child, can help in this way. It is important to remember that returning the child home is not always the best way to solve the problem. In many situations, a child runs away from home to escape physical, sexual or emotional abuse, conditions of neglect and other serious problems.

A number of research studies have pointed out that there are four support factors that help young people cope with stressors. These are *home, school, community and peers*. Some researchers speculate that when a number of these support systems break down, the youth's urge to run away increases. In an attempt to help runaway youth, who account for over 50,000 missing-children police reports each year in Canada, significant effort should be targeted at strengthening the services that relate to these four areas.

Running Away Indicators

It is always difficult to recognize mounting frustration in any situation. However, it is well known that keeping the lines of communication open is exceedingly important. In addition, the following indicators may help service providers to identify potential runaways:

- General and observable lack of interest in school
- Excessive incidents of skipping school
- Noticeably poorer school grades
- More frequent *late for school* reports
- *Sleeping in* more often than usual
- Sleeping a lot during the day—this may be a sign of depression or suicidal thoughts or an indication that the youth is staying up most of the night and is involved in activities such as late-night partying or prostitution
- Noticeable changes in preferred music and lyrics—this may indicate the youth has new friends or has become more interested in Satan, death, abusive sexual activity and so on
- Observable personality changes, including character and behavioural changes

- *Excessive* image changes – shaven head, coloured hair, body piercing, tattoos or wearing skimpy clothing
- *Dressing out of character*
- Appearing *tuned out* or seemingly *spaced out* during conversations
- Lack of interest in formerly enjoyed activities
- Noticeable change in relationships with and attitudes toward friends, family and siblings
- Noticeable and uncharacteristic changes in health and hygiene (M.L. Dalley, “The Danger Signs”, *The Province*, BC newspaper, December 2001).

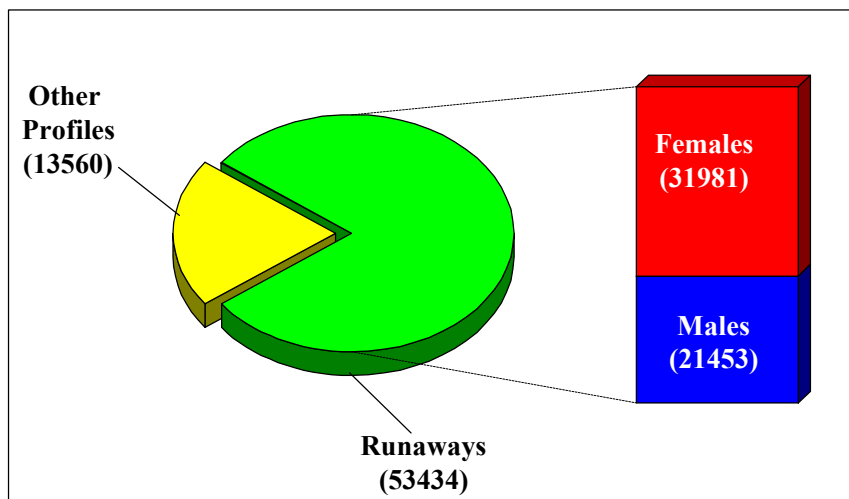
Discussion of Data on Runaway Children

Source 1 Canadian Police Information Center (CPIC) System

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

In 2001, a total of 53,434 cases of runaway children were reported to Canadian police agencies. (Over 70% of all missing-children cases have repeat and habitual characteristics of going missing, indicating that most likely, this number of cases includes reports taken by police agencies for the **same child more than one time.**) This statistic has remained fairly consistent over the past decade, with a slight increase in 2001. The average annual number of reports over the past 14 years was 50,633. The majority of runaways were female.

2001 Runaways entered in CPIC – Gender comparison



Source 2 National Missing Children Services (NMCS)

In 2001, NMCS assisted law enforcement agencies with the investigation of 36 runaway cases. More cases of runaway females (81%) were referred to NMCS than males (19%). Ages ranged from 13 to 17, with the majority (58%) being 15 to 16 years old.

Source 3 Additional Study

Operation Go Home, Ottawa Branch

Operation Go Home has a mandate to reunite youth with their families or connect them with an agency that can best help them meet their needs and become productive citizens. This may involve contacting parents, maintaining communication and reuniting the family, providing transportation, referring youth to appropriate services and agencies, providing information to youth, conducting public awareness programs, or providing outreach intervention [the toll-free number for Operation Go Home is 1-800-668-4633].

In 2001, data from 250 cases were gathered. Cases were divided into two main groups: those who were considered runaway youth (70) and those who left home for other reasons (173) such as to travel, to find work, to go to a party, to visit friends, to locate someone, to find their biological parent(s) and so on. Seven (7) cases were not included in the analysis as there was insufficient information to classify them appropriately.

The factors used to classify runaway youth were: repeat episodes of running away; forced out of their home; left home with a friend; left as parent(s) did not want them; experienced problems with the law; were victims of abuse and/or neglect; left home to live with a friend or relative; and had difficulty getting along with parent(s).

The majority of the youth were 16 (29%) and 17 (26%) years of age. More males (56%) than females (44%) used the Operation Go Home services. Of the runaways, 24% had been “kicked out” of their home, while 23% left for “no reason.” However, a file analysis of those youth with “no reason” for running away showed that they were repeat runaways, pregnant, drug users, very troubled or wanted to get away from home and start a new life for themselves. Also, of the 70 runaway files analyzed, 19% were clearly youth who had run away many times before, 10% had had a *brush with the law* and 9% were pregnant or had to care for a child (M. Dalley & J. Ruscoe, 2001).

DETAILS OF DATA

For All Categories of Missing Children Combined

The following table shows the number of missing-child reports entered on the Canadian Police Information Centre System (CPIC) over the past 10 years.

2001 Canadian Case Summary of All Categories of Missing Children CPIC Transaction Reports for 10 Years

Frequency by Year by Profile of Missing Children

| Profile/ Year | SA | PA | Run | Unknown | Acc | Wander | Other | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|----------------|------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Average | 56 | 396 | 45875 | 9821 | 35 | 636 | 1950 | 58769 |
| 2001 | 48 | 387 | 53434 | 10364 | 49 | 742 | 1970 | 66994 |
| 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 |

1. SA, stranger abduction; PA; parental abduction; Run, runaways; Acc, accident; Wander, wandered off.

Source: CPIC annual transaction report for 2001, M.L. Dalley

2001 Canadian Case Summary of All Categories of Missing Children
Frequency of Missing Children Cases
CPIC Transaction Reports by Category by Province or Territory

Females

| Profile | YT | NT | NV | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | PQ | NB | PE | NS | NF | Totals |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| Stranger | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| Accident | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Wandered | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 178 | 9 | 41 | 78 | 12 | 3 | 0 | 0 | | 367 |
| Parental | 0 | 0 | 0 | 46 | 36 | 8 | 6 | 85 | 23 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 207 |
| Runaway | 3 | 4 | 2 | 10080 | 6533 | 926 | 2226 | 8536 | 3075 | 304 | 20 | 199 | 73 | 31981 |
| Unknown | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1551 | 320 | 318 | 119 | 2775 | 638 | 22 | 3 | 88 | 6 | 5843 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 300 | 30 | 13 | 14 | 561 | 177 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 1111 |
| Totals | 5 | 5 | 2 | 12040 | 7105 | 1275 | 2407 | 12045 | 3930 | 335 | 24 | 297 | 81 | 39551 |

Males

| Profile | YT | NT | NV | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | PQ | NB | PE | NS | NF | Totals |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| Stranger | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 |
| Accident | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 29 |
| Wandered | 1 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 145 | 22 | 54 | 86 | 19 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 375 |
| Parental | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 | 26 | 7 | 7 | 73 | 38 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 180 |
| Runaway | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5987 | 4188 | 702 | 1193 | 5497 | 3509 | 200 | 8 | 116 | 50 | 21453 |
| Unknown | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1178 | 244 | 263 | 105 | 1917 | 722 | 22 | 1 | 58 | 9 | 4521 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 207 | 24 | 16 | 11 | 421 | 165 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 859 |
| Totals | 2 | 4 | 0 | 7471 | 4627 | 1010 | 1370 | 8006 | 4465 | 232 | 10 | 187 | 59 | 27443 |

Totals

| Profile | YT | NT | NV | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | PQ | NB | PE | NS | NF | Totals |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Stranger | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 18 | 16 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 48 |
| Accident | 0 | 0 | 0 | 39 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 49 |
| Wandered | 1 | 0 | 0 | 89 | 323 | 31 | 95 | 164 | 31 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 742 |
| Parental | 0 | 0 | 0 | 72 | 62 | 15 | 13 | 158 | 61 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 387 |
| Runaway | 4 | 6 | 2 | 16067 | 10721 | 1628 | 3419 | 14033 | 6584 | 504 | 28 | 315 | 123 | 53434 |
| Unknown | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2729 | 564 | 581 | 224 | 4692 | 1360 | 44 | 4 | 146 | 15 | 10364 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 507 | 54 | 29 | 25 | 982 | 342 | 10 | 2 | 17 | 2 | 1970 |
| Totals | 7 | 9 | 2 | 19511 | 11732 | 2285 | 3777 | 20051 | 8395 | 567 | 34 | 484 | 140 | 66994 |

Analysis of All Categories of Canadian Missing Children
Data Source: Canadian Police Information Centre System (CPIC) System

The CPIC data gathering mechanism does not separate certain variables by category. Therefore, the results obtained in this section include data collected and grouped together for **all** categories of missing children and youth.

Analysis of Data

The following results are derived from Canadian Police Information Centre system records of **all** missing-children categories:

- Of the total 66,994 missing-children cases, 73% had repeat or habitual characteristics.
- More females (59%) than males (41%) were reported as missing.
- Of 66,994 cases removed from the system, 86% were removed within a week and 62% within one day. *Some cases from previous years were included in these statistics.*
- The majority of missing children were runaways. This number increased from 50,633 cases in 2000 to 53,434 in 2001. More females were reported and categorized as runaways than males.
- More males (26) than females (22) were reported and entered on CPIC in the kidnapped/foul play category.
- More females (207) than males (180) were abducted by a parent or guardian.
- Most (96%) of the missing children were between the ages of 12 and 17 (49% were age 14 to 15 year old; 30% were age 16 to 17 year old).
- Children under the age of 5 represented only 0.9% of the total cases.

Other Categories of Missing Children

1. Unknown

The **Unknown** category is used when *a 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.”

Source 1 Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) System

In the year 2001, a total of 10,364 cases (5,843 females and 4,521 males) were reported to police and entered in this category.

A sample of 307 cases entered in the Unknown category were extracted and analysed. The analysis showed that more girls (58%) than boys (42%) went missing; 76% were between the ages of 14 and 17; and 78% were reported by police as *returned* or *located* in the same year. Fifty-three percent (53%) had a repeat or chronic history of going missing, most likely runaway youth.

Source 2 National Missing Children Services (NMCS)

In 2001, NMCS assisted with 10 Canadian cases classified as Unknown, involving 13 missing children. Six of the children were 17 years of age, four were under 4 years old, two were 8 years old and one was 7. Seven cases originated from the province of Ontario and three cases from Quebec.

2. Accident

This category is used *when the probable cause for the child's disappearance is an accident – presumed drowning in a swimming or boating mishap, airplane accident, fire, avalanche, hiking fall, and so on, and the child's body has not been recovered.*

Source 1 Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) System

In 2001, a total of 49 children, 20 females and 29 males, went missing as a result of an accident and were reported to police.

3. Wandered Off/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 or hunting, has wandered away or become lost from the family location or did not return when expected from school, a friend's house, a meeting and the like.*

Source 1 Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) System

In 2001, for a total of 742 children, 367 females and 375 males, wandered off or were lost were reported to police.

4. Other

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

Source 1 Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) System

In 2001, a total of 1,970 children, 1,111 females and 859 males, went missing in the above manner and were reported to police.

A sample of 101 cases were extracted from the **Other** category. More females (52%) than males (48%) went missing. Most (84%) were youth between the ages of 13 and 17. The majority were reported as returned or located within the same year. Most were eventually located at a later date.

Source 2 National Missing Children Services (NMCS)

The NMCS definition for **Other varies from the CPIC entry** in that most of the cases are requests from Canadian police services and other government agencies to confirm whether the children were reported missing from any other country via Interpol. The **Other** cases, for NMCS, are used for **trace and locate** requests, whereby a police agency seeks only to confirm the child's location.

NMCS assisted with 22 cases, involving 32 children. The majority were under 5 years of age (47%), followed by elementary school-age children up to 12 years old (36%). The same number of boys as girls were entered in this category. Relative to the total of missing children, requests for assistance originated from Ontario (18), Québec (5), British Columbia (5), Manitoba (1), Nova Scotia (1), New Brunswick (1) and Alberta (1).

DETAILS OF DATA

National Missing Children Services (NMCS)

| FILES OPENED | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Statistics January - December 2001 | | | | | | |
| OPENED | CANADIAN | USA | INT'L | BUSINESS | BULK | TOTAL |
| January | 11 | 40 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 65 |
| February | 10 | 56 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 82 |
| March | 8 | 25 | 20 | 0 | 2 | 55 |
| April | 6 | 33 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 58 |
| May | 16 | 21 | 12 | 2 | 1 | 52 |
| June | 7 | 23 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 41 |
| July | 14 | 14 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 42 |
| August | 13 | 34 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 57 |
| September | 11 | 30 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 58 |
| October | 18 | 34 | 12 | 0 | 2 | 66 |
| November | 15 | 27 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 50 |
| December | 13 | 22 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 42 |
| TOTAL | 142 | 359 | 136 | 15 | 16 | 668 |

INT'L = International Source: NMCS annual transaction report for 2001, K. Swanson

Canadian Law Enforcement Assistance Cases: 2001

The following table shows the number of NMCS law enforcement assistance requests received by province and by category during the year 2001.

| Province / Profile | BC | AB | SK | MB | ON | PQ | NB | NS | NF | Totals |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| Parental Abduction | 10 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 34 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 66 |
| Runaway | 6 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 36 |
| Other | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 22 |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Stranger Abduction | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Wandered Off/Lost | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Totals | 23 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 68 | 26 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 139 |

1. No law enforcement assistance requests came from: Prince Edward Island, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Nunavut Territory

International Law Enforcement Assistance Cases 2001

National Missing Children Services is mandated to promote networking and develop investigative linkages with all countries, but especially those belonging to the Interpol network and which are signatories to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. Over the years, the NMCS program staff have developed an expertise that enables them to investigate quickly and expediently cases involving children abducted from Canada to other countries as well as, children abducted from other countries and believed to be residing in Canada. Excellent computer linkages help to facilitate this process.

National Missing Children Services 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 2001, NMCS/OMC assisted the United States with 359 investigations and assisted other foreign countries with 136 cases.

In 2001, international assistance to countries other than the US was given by NMCS on 136 missing-children and youth cases, involving a total of 180 children. More females than males went missing. Most often, the missing children were between the ages of 4 and 6. Both mothers (44) and fathers (41) abducted their children.

The following table shows the number of NMCS international law enforcement assistance cases for the year 2001 by country, excluding the United States.

Case Assistance by Country (excluding the United States)

| Country | No. | Country | No. | Country | No. | Country | No. |
|----------------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------------|-----|---------------------|------------|
| Algeria | 1 | Ecuador | 1 | Israel | 1 | Slovakia | 1 |
| Argentina | 2 | El Salvador | 1 | Italy | 5 | Slovenia | 2 |
| Australia | 1 | Fiji | 1 | Japan | 2 | South Africa | 2 |
| Azerbaijan | 2 | France | 7 | Kazakhstan | 1 | Spain | 2 |
| Belgium | 10 | Germany | 6 | Lebanon | 1 | Switzerland | 1 |
| Brazil | 2 | Greece | 2 | Mexico | 9 | Sweden | 10 |
| Bulgaria | 2 | Grenada | 1 | The Netherlands | 6 | Syria | 1 |
| Chile | 7 | Guatemala | 1 | Oman | 1 | Trinidad and Tobago | 1 |
| China | 1 | Haiti | 1 | Panama | 2 | Uganda | 1 |
| Cyprus | 1 | Hungary | 12 | Portugal | 3 | Ukraine | 1 |
| Czech Republic | 5 | Iran | 2 | Romania | 1 | United Kingdom | 8 |
| Denmark | 3 | Iraq | 1 | Senegal | 1 | TOTAL | 136 |

International Case Assistance By Category(excluding the United States)

| Parental Abduction | Stranger Abduction | Runaway | Other | Unknown | Total |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 87 | 4 | 5 | 21 | 19 | 136 |

United States Law Enforcement Assistance Cases 2001

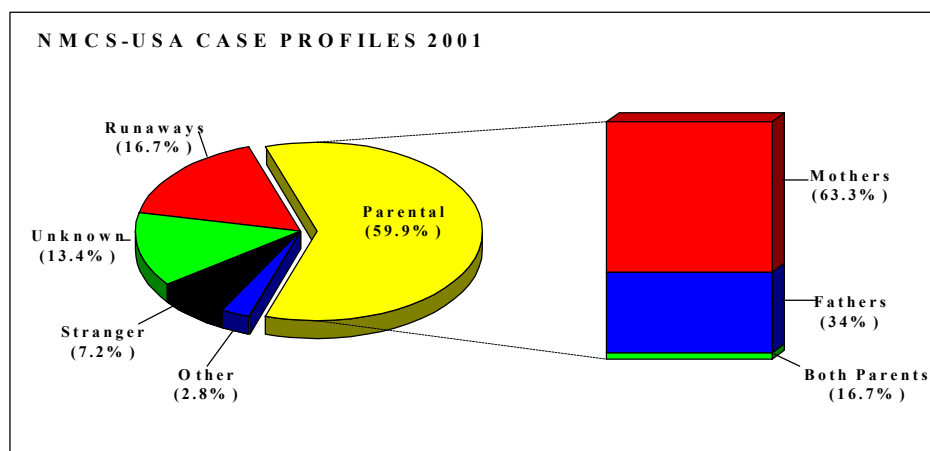
In 2001, law enforcement assistance was given by NMCS on 359 missing-children and youth cases, involving a total of 437 children. More females than males went missing. The majority of the children were of preschool age, with a second peak in the numbers during the teenage years. Mothers abducted their children more often than fathers.

United States Law Enforcement Assistance Cases 2001

| State | No. | State | No. | State | No. | State | No. |
|----------------------|-----|---------------|-----|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| Alabama | 8 | Illinois | 8 | Montana | 3 | Puerto Rico | 2 |
| Alaska | 1 | Indiana | 9 | Nebraska | 1 | Rhode Island | 0 |
| Arizona | 10 | Iowa | 1 | Nevada | 6 | South Carolina | 3 |
| Arkansas | 4 | Kansas | 1 | New Hampshire | 2 | South Dakota | 0 |
| California | 80 | Kentucky | 9 | New Jersey | 10 | Tennessee | 6 |
| Colorado | 9 | Louisiana | 2 | New Mexico | 2 | Texas | 22 |
| Connecticut | 3 | Maine | 2 | New York | 21 | Utah | 4 |
| Delaware | 1 | Maryland | 6 | North Carolina | 9 | Vermont | 3 |
| District of Columbia | 3 | Massachusetts | 8 | North Dakota | 1 | Virginia | 6 |
| Florida | 22 | Michigan | 12 | Ohio | 2 | Washington | 12 |
| Georgia | 8 | Minnesota | 3 | Oklahoma | 3 | West Virginia | 2 |
| Hawaii | 3 | Mississippi | 1 | Oregon | 7 | Wisconsin | 5 |
| Idaho | 3 | Missouri | 3 | Pennsylvania | 7 | Wyoming | 0 |
| Total | | | | | | 359 | |

Case Assistance By Category

| Parental Abduction | Stranger Abduction | Runaway | Other | Unknown | Total |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| 215 | 26 | 60 | 10 | 48 | 359 |



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Since 1986, Canada has made good progress in addressing issues related to missing and exploited children. Many significant milestones have been identified in this report, including the 1983 amendment of the Criminal Code to include parental abduction as an offence with a possible sentence of 10 years' imprisonment; the establishment of a national centre under the National Police Services of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, now called the National Missing Children Services (NMCS); the implementation of mechanisms for computerized age-progression of photos of missing children, and a travel assistance program for parents and children.

As well, the **our missing children** program was established, including as partners the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of Justice Canada. An additional important milestone was the action taken by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on international child abduction which resulted in the publication of a report, *Issues for Reform*. NMCS has also conducted and published several missing-children research studies. Criminal Intelligence Services Canada developed best practices' guidelines in collaboration with the RCMP National Youth Strategy and provided law enforcement investigative training on the issue of sexually exploited children and youth.

Research has shown that parental abduction typically happens before, during or after divorce. Children are caught up in the struggle between parents for custody and access rights. As many parents seek revenge, their struggle for power results in many unfortunate consequences to their children. These include abduction, psychological and emotional harm, developmental delays, stress, trauma and, on rare tragic occasions, the death of a child and suicide of an abducting parent.

In 2001, the number of parental abduction cases (387) was less than in the previous year (416). The 2001 figure was also below the annual average over the past 10 years (396). National Missing Children Services assisted with 66 Canadian parental abduction cases. More Canadian mothers than fathers abducted their children. The Travel Program was used to return Canadian children from Mexico, China, Spain and the United States. An analysis of all NMCS parental abduction cases for Canada, the United States and other foreign countries showed that more mothers than fathers abducted their children.

Although the fear of a child being abducted by a stranger ranks high compared with other parental fears, children are more often abducted by someone they know. Only on a rare occasion is a child abducted by a complete stranger, and this type of incident most often results in the child's death within a few hours. Although 48 children were entered by police agencies as cases of **kidnaping/foul play** on the national police database (CPIC) in 2001, further analysis revealed that the actual number of stranger abductions is very considerably lower. National Missing Children Services assisted police with five Canadian stranger-abduction cases. Three of the

children were girls, ages 4, 5 and 7, another was a 5-year-old boy, and one was a teenager reentered from a previous year.

Runaway youth created the most missing-children cases. More females than males were reported missing in this manner. The majority of cases were closed within a week. Seventy percent were repeat or chronic runaway youth. For the most part, children run from intolerable home situations. After finding street life difficult and dangerous, they return home, hoping the situation there has changed. Most often, it has not, and so they run away again. This pattern continues until *help* arrives, most often in the form of a referral to a special service organization.

National Missing Children Services assisted Canadian law enforcement agencies with 36 runaway cases in 2001. More cases of missing females were referred to our services than males. The majority were 15 to 16 years old. Contrary to the CPIC transaction analysis, however, the Ottawa Branch, Operation Go Home case-file study showed that more runaway males used their services than females.

In 2001, the **total number of Canadian missing-children cases** increased from the year 2000 total of 63,712 to 66,994. All categories increased in number of cases with the exception of parental abductions. Children under 5 years of age represented less than one percent (1%) of the total cases for all categories of missing children.

An analysis of a sample of the **Unknown** category (no previous history of missing) revealed that most were female youth, ages 14 to 17. The majority were located the same year they were entered. National Missing Children Services assisted Canadian law enforcement agencies with 10 such cases.

An analysis of a sample of the **Other** category (missing from a detention home or institution) showed that most were female youth. The majority of them were returned or located the same year they were reported missing.

National Missing Children Services assisted other law enforcement agencies with 664 files: 136 international cases (excluding the United States), 359 United States cases and 139 Canadian cases. Most cases involved missing females, with the number rising in the preschool years and then again in the teenage years for both Canada and the United States.

In conclusion, the statistical picture of missing children is not as clear as we would like it to be. Researchers are clarifying the picture by conducting further analysis from other data sources. The numbers have increased for all categories of missing children with the exception of parental abductions. It is a known fact that a single runaway child can generate as many as 50 files per year, each recorded as separate transactions. Thus, the 53,434 recorded runaway cases do not represent 53,434 individual children. With regard to recorded stranger abductions, after corresponding with all police agencies, researchers determined that the actual 2000 and 2001 figures were considerably lower. (NMCS will produce a report on stranger abductions in 2002.) Some entries were made in error, while others were reentered in another category when more

information on the individual case surfaced.

National Missing Children Services will continue to support law enforcement officials with their investigations and provide relevant national statistics. Together with the **our missing children** program partners, every effort will be made to find missing children and return them home or refer them to the appropriate services.

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APPENDIX A

Attributes of Abducting Child Molesters

Unlikely to have established a long-term relationship with the abducted child.

Abduction is usually the only encounter between the abductor and the child.

Nature of offence is primarily predatory.

Less likely to view child as a “love” object.

Interaction with child is superficial, minimally empathetic, more prone to injurious behaviour.

Little contact with the child outside of the current offence.

Likely to possess low social and interpersonal skills.

Less likely to be married.

Most frequently, there is use of or presence of a weapon.

Abductor was usually a victim of sexual assault.

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

APPENDIX B

Characteristics of Parental Abductions

Male and female children were equally likely to be abducted.

The majority of abducted children were under 8 years of age.

Children were more likely to be abducted from their homes and less likely to be taken from schoolyards or from another residence.

Children tended to be abducted during weekends or summer or winter holidays.

The abducting parent tended not to use physical force.

Both separated mothers and fathers were abductors. (In 2001, more mothers than fathers abducted their children.)

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 age and duration of the separation, experienced emotional trauma, often characterized by anxiety, fear, depression, paranoia or other emotional complications.

The 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, J., Jayewardene, C.H.S. & Dalley, M. 1994; MacDonald, J.L. 1998; Swaren, S. & Dalley, M. 1993]

APPENDIX C

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's and/or youth's abuse of drugs and/or 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 or expelled or before dropping. 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 lacking in self-esteem and self-worth. Internal conflict, psychological problems, inadequate social skills and 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 he or she became and the more likely to be involved in delinquent types of activities.

Typically, runaways had dropped out of school and were not involved in school or community sports or other types of socially acceptable recreation activities.

Approximately half the youths ran away again soon after the first runaway episode.

Most runaways did not travel far from home: 75% stayed within 50 miles of home.

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

[Dalley, M., National Missing Children Services, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "A Runaway Profile," 1993.]

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