

Wandering & Attractive-Nuisance Safety Plan

This is a complete plan to help keep a child who wanders safe, and to be ready if they ever go missing. Wandering (also called elopement) is when a child leaves a safe place on their own. It is common, and it can be dangerous. **The number one danger is drowning, so water always comes first.** Make this plan now, before you ever need it. Fill it in, keep it where everyone can grab it, and share it with anyone who helps care for your child.

What is an "attractive nuisance"?

It is something that is both **dangerous** and **interesting to a child**. It pulls a child in, and they may be too young or too focused to see the danger. A pool is the clearest example. It does not matter whether the child is "allowed" to be there. If something attracts children and can hurt them, it needs a plan.

How to make your plan (start here)

1. **Walk your yard and your neighborhood** and find every attractive nuisance, water first. Use the worksheet in this packet.
2. **Secure water first:** fence, cover, lock, or alarm it.
3. **Decide who will check and fix each hazard, and by when.** Write their name on the worksheet so nothing is left undone.
4. **Build your search circle** (next page): the people who will help if your child goes missing. **If you do not have anyone, read the green box on the next page. You still have a plan.**
5. **Take a quick photo of your child every day** (see the box below).
6. **Tell your local police and fire now,** before any emergency, and ask if they keep a child's information on file.
7. **Keep this packet** on the fridge or by the door, and give a copy to caregivers and the school.

Take a quick photo every day. If your child wanders, take a quick full-length photo of them each morning, and again at the start of any outing. A photo from today shows exactly what they are wearing right now. If they go missing, this is one of the most useful things you can hand to searchers and police. Clothing changes daily, and a description from memory is never as good as a current photo.

Who is in charge of this plan

Plan kept up to date by	Phone	Date made / reviewed

If your child is missing right now: call 911 first. Do this **whether or not you have anyone to help.** You do not need a team or a finished plan. Call **911**, say your child is autistic and may go to water, and ask them to **search the nearest water first.** Everything below is for after you have called.

After you call 911, who can help search? (plan this now)

Calling 911 is always the first step. After that, helpers make a search faster. In an emergency you will not have time to think, so decide the jobs now and write down who does each one. One person **stays on the line with 911.** One **checks the nearest water first.** One **stays at home** in case your child comes back. **If you do not have anyone, you still call 911, and the green box below is for you.**

Job in an emergency	Who will do it (name)	Phone
Call 911 and stay on the line		
Check the nearest water FIRST		
Stay at home in case the child returns		
Knock on neighbors' doors / check nearby		
Drive to search a wider area		
Other helper / backup		

Neighbors to tell ahead of time

Tell the neighbors closest to you now, even if you do not know them well. Give them a photo and your number, and say your child may head for water. They can act in seconds if they already know.

Neighbor (which house)	Name	Phone
Next door, one side		
Next door, other side		
Across the street / behind		
Has a pool or pond nearby		

What if I do not have anyone? You are not alone in this, and you still have a real plan.

- **You do not need your own search team to get a search.** Call **911** right away. Police and fire will come and search, and they can call in more help (more officers, K9 dogs, and others). This is exactly what they are for. You are not bothering them.
- **Call 911 the moment you cannot find your child.** Do not wait. Say your child is autistic and may go to water, and ask them to **search the nearest water first.**
- **Set this up now, even on your own:** visit or call your local police and fire, introduce your child, and ask if they keep a child's photo and information on file. Tell at least one neighbor. Hand them a photo and your number.
- **Ask for help building support.** The South Coast LGBTQ+ Network can help you connect with people and resources. Community Autism Resources helps families across our region. You do not have to do this alone.

South Coast LGBTQ+ Network: (774) 775-2656 · Community Autism Resources: 508-379-0371 · Emergency: 911

1. Water in or near your yard — check these FIRST

Water hazard	Here?	Where it is	Plan (fence / cover / lock / alarm)	Who will do it & by when
Pool (in-ground or above-ground)	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			
Kiddie or paddling pool	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			
Hot tub or spa	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			
Pond, water feature, fountain	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			
Rain barrel, bucket, container	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			
A neighbor's pool nearby	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			
Ditch, drainage, retention pond	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			
Other water:	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N			

2. Ways out of the yard

Exit point	Secure?	Plan	Who will do it & by when
Gates (latch height, self-closing)	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Fence gaps, low spots, or no fence	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Front door and back door	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Garage door	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Windows a child can open or climb	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		

3. Other yard and home hazards

Hazard	Here?	Plan	Who will do it & by when
Shed or garage (tools, sharp objects)	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Chemicals, gas, lawn or pool chemicals	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Grill or fire pit	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Driveway and street access	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Deck, balcony, stairs, or a drop-off	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Old fridge/freezer, cooler, car that latches	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		
Trampoline, ladder, things to climb	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N		

4. Your top three to fix first

Pick the three most dangerous, easiest, or most likely. Do water first. Write who will do each one.

What to fix	Who will do it & by when

Use a satellite map to double-check for water

Search your home address on Google Maps in satellite view to spot pools and water you may not see from the ground. **Do not fully trust the map.** Satellite pictures can be months or years old, and may miss a new pool, a kiddie pool, or water hidden under trees. Always confirm in person, and add anything you find to the water table.

If your child ever goes missing: Call **911** first and stay on the line. Say your child is autistic and may go to water. **Tell them to search the nearest water FIRST**, then the other places on this sheet. Use your search circle from page 2. Hand responders your child's photo and this packet.

A resource from the South Coast LGBTQ+ Network. Reach us at (774) 775-2656. This is safety information, not medical or legal advice. Draft for review: before publishing, this plan should be reviewed by autistic community members and by local first responders (police, fire, and EMS).
Date completed: _____