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Law Enforcement
Policies and Practices
Regarding Missing Children
and Homeless Youth

Final Report

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Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth

Final Report

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This study required the cooperation, literally, of hundreds of individuals and law enforcement agencies. During the first phase of the study, approximately 800 State and local departments completed a 30-page questionnaire. Thirty agencies (listed below) participated in 2- or 3-day site visits that required the time of 10 to 30 persons in each department:

Albuquerque, NM	Nashville, TN
Buffalo, NY	New Orleans, LA
Chicago, IL	Newport News, VA
Denver, CO	New York, NY
Fayetteville, NC	Oak Park, IL
Great Falls, MT	Philadelphia, PA
Hagerstown, MD	Radnor Township, PA
Independence, MO	Sacramento County, CA
Las Vegas, NV	San Antonio, TX
Lincoln, NE	San Francisco, CA
Los Angeles, CA	Seattle, WA
Louisville & Jefferson County, KY	Sioux Falls, SD
Marion County, IN	Suffolk County, NY
Metro-Dade County, FL	Victoria, TX
Minneapolis, MN	Wichita, KS

Seven of these agencies invested even more time by participating in the third phase of the study. The participation of the law enforcement agencies and individuals was essential and is much appreciated by the Research Triangle Institute and the authors of this report.

The study had the benefit of an expert and active advisory board:

- Dorothy Bracey, Professor
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Dale Carson, Sheriff (retired)
Duval County Florida Sheriff's Office
- Karin DeGhia
Children in Crisis International
- Carl Harbaugh, Director
Jerome Needle, Acting Manager
Police Organizational Services
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- Malcolm Klein, Professor
University of Southern California
- Robert P. Owens, Public Safety Director
Oxnard, California
- Darrel Stephens, Executive Director
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

This report summarizes the results of the "National Study of Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children." The study was funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which is part of the U.S. Justice Department, and conducted by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and the URSA Institute. There were three major components or phases of the study:

- a mail survey of a national probability sample of police departments to determine how departments respond to missing children cases (Phase 1);
- two-day visits to 30 police departments to gather detailed qualitative information about responses to missing children cases (Phase 2); and
- interviews in six major metropolitan areas with parents who reported a missing child to the police, and with children who had returned home after a missing incident (Phase 3).

This report emphasizes the results of the parent interviews, although it integrates findings from the mail survey and police department visits as well.

For many years, the term "missing children" has been used to describe very different phenomena--children who left home voluntarily, those who were abducted, and those who were lost. Ambiguities associated with the term "missing children" have made clear understanding and estimation of the magnitude of the phenomena difficult. Appropriate public responses and resource commitments were likewise difficult to formulate. Recently, many of the conceptual and estimation problems have been dealt with in ways that permit the initial formulation of public and private responses to the divergent problems. The responses themselves are largely in the formative stages, but many of the problems that need to be addressed are now visible.

In the chapters that follow, we will deal separately with runaway, throwaway, family abduction, and nonfamily abduction cases known to police because police responses differ according to case type. Although detailed definitions are given in Chapter 3 of the report, the following brief

definitions of each case type are given for general discussion purposes. Runaways are children and youths who have left (or have not returned to) a parent's or caretaker's supervision without authorization; throwaways are children and youths who have been forced to leave their place of residence or who have not been permitted to return; family abductions usually involve the taking of a child or youth from a parent or caretaker by a relative (usually a parent) commonly in the midst of a custody or visitation dispute; and nonfamily abductions involve the coercive taking or movement of a child or youth by a nonrelative often for the purpose of sexual assault. Another category is called "otherwise missing"; typically, such children are lost or injured. This report will not deal with lost, injured, or otherwise missing cases because (1) too few of them were reported to police during our data collection period, and (2) the cases that were reported were too diverse even to support a qualitative analysis.

According to a recent national survey, the highest number of missing children cases involve runaways; a similar number are lost or otherwise missing (450,700 and 438,200 per year, respectively). Family abduction cases are more frequent than most researchers have believed until recently--perhaps numbering about 350,000 a year. Throwaways probably total more than 125,000 a year. There are probably between 3,200 and 4,600 nonfamily abductions a year. These estimates are taken from a recently completed national incidence study (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1990a). A very substantial percentage of these cases precipitate a request for help from the police, probably more than a half million requests for service a year. Most of the cases require the police to send an officer to take an incident report in person. Many cases will require a substantial investigative response.

The present report addresses the police handling of runaway, throwaway, and abducted children cases that were reported to them. Its goals are to describe the police response, the factors associated with that response, and parent/caretaker satisfaction with the police handling of cases. The analyses also focus on the profiles of cases and their outcomes, as well as the relationship between police responses and case outcomes. Implications of the findings will address police decisionmaking and resource allocation for the various categories of children.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The problem of runaway youths emerged on the national agenda in the early 1970s. In 1974, the U.S. Congress passed the Runaway Youth Act (P.L. 93-415). This act authorized the then Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to establish a grant program to develop local facilities to meet the needs of runaway youths. The act also recognized the need for (a) statistics on the prevalence and characteristics of runaway youths, (b) counseling services as well as shelter, and (c), given the interstate nature of the problem, a continuing role for the Federal Government. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act of 1976 recognized these youths as "creating a substantial law enforcement problem for the communities inundated."

The Federal role in the missing children problem expanded in 1980 with the passage of the Parental Kidnapping Prevention Act (P.L. 96-611). Although the magnitude of the problem was unknown, it was recognized as growing in response to the increasing number of marriages ending in divorce.

The level of public and private attention to the missing children problem escalated to new highs in the early 1980s. This attention was largely a response to a few tragic and highly publicized abduction/murder cases of young children. Several organizations were formed by parents of lost or murdered children. Examples are Child Find, the Kevin Collins Foundation, and the Adam Walsh Resource Center. In 1984, the Missing Children's Assistance Act was passed as Title IV of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. The act established funding for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) with a national toll-free hotline and a national advisory board. It also authorized the OJJDP Administrator to award grants for research, demonstration, service programs, and technical assistance related to missing children.

In the last few years, additional Federal legislation has passed. Amendments to the Runaway Youth Act of 1974 have recognized the need for services to families after a youth has returned home and have added the term "homeless" in recognition that some youths remain away from home or do not have homes to return to (P.L. 96-509, P.L. 98-473). In 1988, Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act (P.L. 100-690). In Chapter 2 of that act,

Congress addressed illicit drug use by runaway and homeless youths and the effects on such youths of drug abuse by family members. The act also authorized the Secretary of Health and Human Services to give grants for the establishment of transitional living arrangements for homeless youths or youths for whom it is unrealistic or unsafe to return home.

This brief legislative history gives some sense of the level and type of national attention that has been paid to the missing children problem over the last 20 years. The issue has become firmly established as a Federal legislative and programmatic focus. Initiatives have become more specific, for example, by recognizing drug use and homelessness as particular problems in need of attention. This process is likely to continue. The National Child Search Assistance Act, which requires law enforcement to report missing children to the National Crime Information Computer (NCIC), was accepted in the U.S. Senate as an amendment to a 1990 Crime Bill. Continuing Federal initiatives will be well served if reliable and well-grounded information about the missing children problem is available to inform initiatives.

The National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children in America (NISMART) have provided the first well-grounded estimates of the magnitude and characteristics of the problem (Finkelhor et al., 1990a). The present report augments and expands information provided in NISMART. This report focuses on the police, who are usually the agency that must initiate a public response to missing children cases. Police often must do so without sufficient information on which to base an informed response and in the context of limited investigative resources. The main goal of the report is to develop information to guide law enforcement decisionmaking so as to serve the goals of child safety and welfare most effectively and efficiently.

In the next chapter, we discuss the context and goals of the study. Chapter 3 describes the methodology. Runaway incidents and the police response to them are described in a lengthy Chapter 4. Family and non-family abductions are the subject of Chapters 5 and 6, respectively. The final chapter includes a summary and discussions of the limitations and implications of the study.

CHAPTER 2

STUDY CONTEXT AND GOALS

2.1 BACKGROUND

Police agencies fulfill a wide variety of functions; the enforcement of criminal laws is only one. Many daily activities of police departments require that police operate on the boundary separating law enforcement and provision of social welfare. They come to the aid of crime victims or individuals in need of protection; their decisions about actions to be taken are often guided not by consideration of law violations, but by perceptions about the risks of harm. The vast majority of reported missing children cases are in the latter category.

Nonfamily abductions of children are an exception in this regard. These events are unambiguously criminal and involve greater risks of physical harm to victims. Police departments respond accordingly. They commit available resources to the investigation of these cases on a high-priority basis. Findings from the police department survey, which was Phase 1 of this study, show that nonfamily abduction cases are investigated aggressively (Collins, McCalla, Powers, & Stutts, 1989, pp. 62-70). The number of nonfamily abduction cases reported to police in a year, however, is small compared with the number of runaways (Finkelhor et al., 1990a; Collins et al., 1989).

Police agencies are faced with the need to make a number of decisions when they receive a report of a missing child or youth:

- they must make judgments about the type of case being reported and the risks of harm that may be involved (i.e., case classification and risk assessment);
- they must decide what kind and level of resources will be committed to the case (i.e., the investigative response); and
- often, police must take a social service posture to respond appropriately to cases, such as by attempting to mediate family conflicts.

Moreover, decisions frequently must be made with insufficient information, in the context of inadequate or inappropriate resource availability, and about matters police are not formally mandated to concern themselves.

2.2 TYPES OF CHILDREN REPORTED MISSING TO POLICE

Public discussion of the missing children phenomenon has not been characterized by a clear understanding of the nature or magnitude of the problem. Recent research has shown that the missing children problem is in reality composed of several distinct phenomena. Most current research (Finkelhor et al., 1990a; Collins et al., 1989; Fisher, 1989) separates children into categories of runaways, throwaways, family abductions, nonfamily abductions, and otherwise missing or lost children.¹

Runaways form the largest of these groups. The most recent national estimates of the incidence of runaways provided two figures: a broad-scope definition of runaways that resulted in an estimate of 450,700 and a more restricted "policy-focal" definition that resulted in an estimate of 133,500 runaways (Finkelhor et al., 1990a). About 40% of the broad-scope cases were reported to police. Runaways are not a homogenous group; many youths are actually throwaways (i.e., youths whose parents had either actively forced them to leave or were indifferent to their return). Some youths run away from institutional facilities such as group homes or juvenile detention centers. Others repeatedly run away, thus creating doubt on the part of police as to whether actions to recover such a youth are worthwhile.

Parental abductions form the next largest group, with an estimated 354,100 broad-scope cases and 163,200 policy-focal cases per year (Finkelhor et al., 1990a). About 44% of the broad-scope cases were reported to police. Such abductions can have serious and long-term negative effects because the child is deprived of nurturance from one parent and may be at risk of neglect or harm. The parent from whom the child is taken may also suffer serious emotional distress. Because of constraints on police authority to act in noncriminal matters, these cases are especially difficult for police to respond to, particularly in the absence of a clear custody decree.

¹This report does not deal with lost, injured, or otherwise missing cases because (a) too few were reported to police during our data collection period, and (b) the cases reported were too diverse to support even qualitative analysis.

Nonfamily abductions were found to be rare events. The incidence was estimated at between 3,200 and 4,200 broad legal definition cases and 200 to 300 stereotypical stranger kidnappings per year. (These estimates were based on police records, so all had been reported to the police.) Lost, injured, or otherwise missing children considerably outnumbered those abducted by strangers with estimates of 438,200 broad-scope cases and 139,100 policy-focal cases per year (Finkelhor et al., 1990a). About 32% of the broad-scope cases had been reported to police.

2.3 CASE CLASSIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

When parents or guardians initially call the police, they often know little more than that their child is not where he or she is supposed to be. During this initial contact, which is often with a call taker or dispatcher trained to make case priority assignments, a series of questions will be asked to identify the caller, the nature of the incident, and to classify the case for further action.² Decisions about type of case and level of risk are not usually made with certainty at this point. Most departments assign a patrol officer or investigator to gather additional information before deciding on an investigative response. This officer asks reporting parents a variety of questions to permit judgments about case type (runaway, abduction, etc.) and risk of harm. For example, police assess whether the child has voluntarily left home. Younger children and those with a disability are usually viewed as being at greater risk of harm than older, healthy children. Case classification and risk assessment then shape the subsequent activities of the police.

The information provided to the police about cases is often insufficient for accurate and unambiguous case classification and risk assessment. This absence of sufficient information for clear decisionmaking requires that police exercise discretion in their choice of response. In such cases, factors such as departmental policy, resource availability, parental preferences, and the subjective evaluation of the police all influence the investigative response.

²Forst, Vivana, Garcia, and Jang (1988, pp. 37-44) describe how these initial reports are handled.

2.4 INVESTIGATIVE RESPONSE

Police decisionmaking about how aggressively to pursue reports of missing children depends on the information the police have about case type and risk of harm and their interpretation of these data. Investigative responses range from fairly straightforward information gathering, such as getting a description of the missing child, to aggressive and resource-intensive activities, such as interviewing witnesses and enlisting the help of investigative specialists. From the perspective of the police, the goal is commitment of the appropriate kind and level of investigative resources considering legal and risk factors, departmental policy and resource availability, competing higher priority demands, and other considerations.

The existing literature on the exercise of police discretion has focused mainly on the decision to arrest or commit investigative resources. Nardulli and Stonecash (1981) examined police responses to assault, property crime, and traffic accidents. They found that the response was directly related to the seriousness of the incident. Injury and heavy property loss were associated with quicker response and greater investigative effort. Sociopolitical factors, such as higher victim status, were also found to exert some influence, but this effect was usually seen later in the investigative process rather than in the initial resource commitment decisions made at the outset of a case. LaFave (1965) stated that the policy of not arresting (when doing so would be appropriate or permissible) is usually adopted to conserve police resources. Arresting everyone thought to have broken a criminal law is not possible, given resource limitations, even if it were desirable.

Nonfamily abductions aside, most missing children cases are not regarded as serious by police. Typically, they are runaways who return home safely within hours or days, are lost children who are found quickly, or involve custody disputes between estranged parents that are quickly resolved without harm. These events may be emotionally traumatic and have long-term negative consequences for parents and children. But from the police perspective, they do not involve serious law violations or risk of harm and thus do not warrant the heavy commitment of police resources. These police judgments are occasionally wrong with tragic consequences, as when a case with a routine "profile" turns out to involve serious injury or

death. The typically nonserious nature of most children cases, however, inclines the police to a low or modest commitment of their resources in the absence of evidence suggesting a case may be serious.

Police are also inclined toward the nonaggressive investigation of most runaway and family abduction cases because they are viewed as "family" or social work matters. Running away from home is not a violation of law in many places. The legal custody status of family abduction cases is often ambiguous. Family abductions, moreover, often involve conflicts between parents, or between parents and children, and they are seen as problems in the home that are not resolvable by police intervention. As will be discussed below, some of these problems do justify or require police intervention, but most are viewed by police as outside the scope of their authority.

Disagreements often occur between the police and parents or between the police and other public or private agencies about the appropriate type and level of police responses to missing children. Such disagreements arise from a lack of common understanding about police authority and from limited law enforcement resources.

2.5 PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE RESPONSIBILITY

There are sometimes differences between parent and police perceptions about how aggressively the police should investigate cases. Exhibit 2.1 illustrates typical disparities in the way that parents and police view the risks and expected police responses for the various case types. The potential for differing expectations between police and parents is significant for three of the four kinds of cases. Agreement between police and parents is likely to be high for nonfamily abductions, but for runaways, family abductions, and otherwise missing cases, a consensus may be absent. Parents often expect police to pursue cases more aggressively than police think appropriate. The major reason for the disparity in perceptions between police and parents is likely to rest on a parent's belief that a child or youth is in more danger than police think to be the case. As will be seen in later analyses, the result is parental dissatisfaction in a significant percentage of cases.

Exhibit 2.1 Potential Conflicts in Police-Parent Expectations About Responses to Typical Cases Involving Children Reported Missing

Case Type	Police	Parents
1. <u>Runaways</u>		
Risk	Minimal (unless otherwise indicated)	Medium to high
Mission	Social work, not crime fighting	Find and return child ASAP
2. <u>Family Abductions</u>		
Risk	Minimal (unless otherwise indicated)	Medium to high
Mission	Civil, not criminal matter (unless otherwise indicated)	Return child--punish offender
3. <u>Nonfamily Abductions</u>		
Risk	High	High
Mission	Return child ASAP, apprehend offender	Return child ASAP, apprehend offender
4. <u>Otherwise Missing</u>		
Risk	Minimal (unless otherwise indicated)	High
Mission	Classify case and act accordingly	Find and return child

2.6 GOALS OF THIS REPORT

This report has several purposes. It will describe a large number of cases reported to the police in six geographical areas, the police response to these cases, and parental satisfaction with police handling of cases and the determinants of satisfaction; it will also develop a profile of cases at risk of adverse outcomes and examine the relationship between police activities and case outcomes. The overall purpose is to develop information that can provide guidance for policies that address effective, efficient handling of missing children cases so as to maximize parental satisfaction as well as the quick and safe recovery of children.

This report is organized around four populations of concern: runaway, throwaway, family abduction, and nonfamily abduction. The report has several major goals:

- describe the missing children, the missing incidents and their outcomes; compare findings to the NISMART findings;
- examine police handling of cases from both parent and police perspectives; compare parent and police reports of investigative actions; analyze the determinants of parental satisfaction with police handling of cases;
- examine the effects of police actions on case outcomes, such as time gone, victimization and exploitation while gone and child involvement in illegal activities during the missing incident;
- conduct a risk analysis to identify the correlates of victimization, exploitation, and illegal activity during the missing incident; compare these correlates to case characteristics the police identified as giving cases a high investigative priority;
- develop policy and practice recommendations for the police and others involved in dealing with missing children; potential consumers of recommendations will be law enforcement agencies, legislators, and social service agencies; and
- identify questions and issues most in need of further study.

The study's methodology is described in detail in the next chapter. Briefly, this report relies on three sources of information:

- interviews with parents who reported a child missing to the police in six major metropolitan areas during the March to July 1989 time period;

- responses from a mail survey of a national sample of police departments conducted in 1987; and
- interviews with 30 police departments conducted during site visits in 1988.

Some analyses have been conducted using information collected directly from the children who had been reported missing in the March to July 1989 time period.

The analyses have been interpreted whenever possible to inform public policy and police decisionmaking. One of the Phase 1 findings of this study was that detailed written police agency policies for responding to missing child cases were associated with more proactive investigation. Based on this finding, it was suggested that if police departments wish to increase their investigative response to such cases, one option is to develop detailed written policies specifically directing such actions. We will draw similar implications from the analyses in this report.

As indicated earlier, police are required to make decisions about the type and intensity of resources that should be committed to investigate individual missing children cases. The exercise of this discretion is shaped by a variety of factors, including the perceived risk of harm to the child and the wishes and attitude of parents. The analysis to be conducted here will provide results that have implications for the way that police exercise their discretion regarding reports of missing children. The planned risk factor analysis, for example, will identify case types with an elevated risk of adverse outcomes. Police then might focus their investigative activities more efficiently on cases with a high-risk profile.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 OVERVIEW

This study proceeded in three phases and was conducted jointly by RTI and the URSA Institute. The initial phase was a large-scale mail survey of police jurisdictions, followed by a second phase during which selected sites were visited for qualitative interviews. Missing children who had returned home and parents were interviewed in the third phase of the project.

An Advisory Board comprised of representatives from law enforcement membership groups, juvenile court judges, national missing children's groups, and prominent researchers advised on all stages of the study design and protocols and reviewed products of the study.

During Phase 1 of the project, a national probability sample of 1,060 law enforcement agencies (LEAs) was surveyed using a mail questionnaire designed to obtain general information regarding the size and structure of the department, estimates of the number of missing children cases reported and practices followed in these cases, the extent to which Federal and other information sources are used, specific perceptions of impediments to investigation of missing children cases, and the handling of homeless youth cases.

Phase 2 consisted of on-site interviews and acquisition of written materials from a sample of 30 LEAs across the United States. The primary objectives of these interviews were to verify the accuracy of the mail survey responses, identify the mechanisms of coordination between law enforcement and other public and private organizations, elicit assessments regarding strengths and weaknesses of various policies and practices, describe impediments and obtain recommendations for effective recovery of missing children and homeless youths, and gather information to assist in the selection of sites for the third phase.

Phase 3 focused on individual cases of missing children by selecting six jurisdictions and identifying cases reported to police in each jurisdiction over a 4-month period. On-site staff conducted parent and child

interviews in person and by telephone and extracted information from case files.

More information about the methods used in each phase is presented below. In addition, each of the first two phases of the study included preparation of a separate report describing background information, data collection activities, and findings. These reports, titled "The Police and Missing Children: Findings from a National Survey" (Collins et al., 1989) and "National Study of Law Enforcement Policies and Practices Regarding Missing Children and Homeless Youth: Phase II Report" (Forst et al., 1988), are available from RTI (Phase 1) and URSA Institute (Phase 2). Selected findings from these reports are integrated with those secured from the Phase 3 interviews in the following chapters. Phase 1 provides valuable information about the police perspective on their investigation actions, case classification and prioritization, as well as information about obstacles to investigation of missing children reports. The Phase 2 findings add qualitative detail about police perspectives and activities.

3.2 PHASE 1 METHODOLOGY

In the following sections, the Phase 1 mail survey methodology is discussed.

3.2.1 National Sample² of Law Enforcement Agencies

A sample of public LEAs was selected to be representative of all such agencies in the United States (including Alaska and Hawaii) and thus to represent the investigative policies and practices of police agencies throughout the Nation. An agency was eligible for the mail survey if it:

- investigated cases of missing children and youths reported by the public, and
- had investigated any such case in the past 5 years.

The sampling frame chosen to represent the population for the mail survey was the Law Enforcement Agency Directory maintained by the U.S. Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Agencies classified as special police, such as park rangers, transit police, or medical examiners, were excluded from our frame.

A stratified simple random sample was designed to produce approximately 800 responding agencies. LEAs in the sampling frame were stratified jointly by two characteristics expected to affect investigative policies and practices: (a) agency size defined as its number of sworn officers (four categories: <50, 50-99, 100-299, and 300 or more) and, within that, (b) region of the country as defined by the Bureau of the Census (North-east, Midwest, South, and West). A subsample of agencies from the two smaller sized strata was "prescreened" by telephone to estimate empirically the eligibility rates of the two smaller strata (from which the subsample would be drawn).

Table 3.1 shows the allocation among sworn-size strata of the Phase 1 sample that was selected for and resulted from screening.

Table 3.1 Allocation of Phase 1 Sample Among Sworn-Size Groups

(1) Sworn Officers	(2) Agencies in Frame	(3) Agencies Initially Selected	(4) Agencies Prescreened	(5) Agencies Finally Selected	(6) Agencies Screened	(7) Agencies Eligible	(8) % of Agencies Eligible*
<50	14,185	2,010	200	378	389	307	81.2%
50-99	833	610	200	318	317	296	93.1%
100-299	525	303	0	303	303	278	91.7%
300+	211	211	0	211	208	180	85.3%
Total	15,754	3,140	400	1,210	1,197	1,061	87.7%

*Computed as Agencies Eligible (7) divided by Agencies Selected (5).

3.2.2 Questionnaire Development

The objective of the mail survey was to document law enforcement policies and practices toward missing children and homeless youths. The questionnaire was divided into several sections to help respondents make important conceptual distinctions between types of items and to facilitate administration in agencies where different persons would answer different questions.

The questionnaire began with a series of questions about procedures for investigating missing children and youth cases, including runaways,

reported to the department. The second section of the questionnaire addressed the issue of homeless youths, defined as unemancipated runaways or homeless youths living on their own without a parent or guardian. The ways that law enforcement officials encountered such youths, typical actions for dealing with them, and obstacles to returning them to their homes were the major items covered in this section. Next, there was a series of items about departmental characteristics, including size, organization, and investigative specialties. The final section of the questionnaire focused on the numbers of various types of missing children and youth cases that were investigated in 1986 and the rate of closure for these cases. Additional questions asked for information about departmental recordkeeping practices.

3.2.3 Data Collection Procedures

Telephone screening was conducted by trained interviewers using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) to determine which LEAs were eligible to receive the mail questionnaire. Screening interviews averaging approximately 5 minutes were conducted with the agency head or someone he or she designated. Interviewers began by verifying the name, address, and telephone number of the police agency. They then determined agency eligibility. Interviewers then asked eligible agencies to whom the mail questionnaire should be sent (the agency head or someone else) and determined the correct name, title, and mailing address of that individual.

Table 3.2 summarizes the number of questionnaires returned and the proportion of the total mailed. After questionnaires were received at RTI and logged into the computerized control system, data editors coded open-ended questions and reviewed the codability and completeness of responses to key questions.

The Telephone Survey Unit at RTI called each agency whose questionnaire failed edit for resolution of the problem responses. The questionnaire data were keyed twice for verification. The keyed data were converted into a SAS file format for machine editing and development of the final analysis file.

Table 3.2 Response at Each Stage of Data Collection

Date	Event	No. Mailed/ Contacted	Returned	
			N	%
5/11/87	Initial Mailout	1,060 ^a		
5/22/87	Thank You Postcard Reminder	1,060 ^a	480	45.3
6/12/87	Second Questionnaire Mailed	580	221	20.8
7/15/87	Telephone Followup	361	$\frac{100}{801}$	$\frac{9.4}{75.5}$

^aOne department refused to participate during the telephone screening.

3.2.4 Response Rates/Weighting

To make the sample data nationally representative, weights were assigned to the data for each responding agency to adjust for the disproportionate selection by sworn-size stratum and for response rate differences among the 16 size-region strata. Table 3.3 summarizes the differences in selection and response rates according to the four sworn-size strata.

Table 3.3 Allocation of Eligible and Responding Sample Among Sworn-Size Groups

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Sworn Officers	Agencies in Frame	Agencies Finally Eligible	Selection Rate ^a	Agencies Responding ^b	Response Rate ^c	Weighted Ns
<50	14,185	301	2.12%	178	59.14%	14,194.1
50-99	833	295	35.41%	220	74.58%	832.6
100-299	525	276	52.57%	233	84.42%	526.0
300+	211	177	83.89%	160	90.40%	211.0
Total	15,754	1,049	6.66%	791	75.41%	15,736.6

^aComputed as the Agencies Finally Eligible (3) divided by Agencies in Frame (2).

^bThe number responding is sometimes referred to as the "sample size."

^cComputed as the Agencies Responding (5) divided by Agencies Finally Eligible (3).

3.3 PHASE 2 METHODOLOGY

Phase 2 consisted of on-site interviews and the acquisition of written materials from a sample of 30 LEAs across the United States. The on-site data collection activities included interviews with key personnel to provide descriptive and evaluative data on current policies and practices for the recovery of missing children. Field research teams also acquired from agencies published materials, such as written policies and procedures for the handling of missing children cases.

3.3.1 Site Selection

Thirty sites were selected for intensive study. The sample size was designed to provide sufficient variability in context and organizational factors to meet the Phase 2 goals and provide valid, generalizable information on the range and practices nationwide. The 30 sites were a subset of the Phase 1 respondents found to be full-service departments. The selection of the sites for Phase 2 was based on the following criteria:

- geographic distribution,
- size of LEA,
- seriousness of the homeless youth/runaway problem,
- departmental investigative intensity,
- detention of status offenders,
- locus of investigation, and
- presence/absence of an NCIC reporting statute.

3.3.2 Instrument Development

The development of the interview schedule for Phase 2 was guided by the necessity of eliciting a range of factual and evaluative data from a variety of key respondents without impinging on the relatively limited time that law enforcement personnel have available. The interview schedule covered several functional areas: departmental policies; communication and documentation procedures; patrol functions; investigative procedures; training in missing children investigations; and youth-serving agencies and shelters.

Visits and interviews were also conducted, as appropriate, with public and private agency representatives who work with law enforcement in coordinating responses to missing children cases.

The Phase 2 instrument was reviewed and pretested prior to use in the field. Moreover, although all RTI and URSA Institute interviewers were senior staff experienced in conducting interviews, a formal 2-day training session was designed and scheduled to familiarize interview teams with law enforcement organizational structure and cultural dynamics, review the site visit instrument, provide simulated interview experience, and ensure consistent interviewing techniques.

3.3.3 Data Collection

Research staff normally made initial contact with the head of the LEA by telephone. On occasion, someone from the project's Advisory Board helped provide entry into the department. Each of the 30 sites selected, pursuant to the criteria discussed above, was included in the study; no jurisdiction refused to participate.

The number of staff researchers visiting a site depended primarily on the size of the jurisdiction. For the largest cities (e.g., New York City and Los Angeles), three-person teams were needed to conduct the necessary interviews. Two-person teams were assigned to moderately sized jurisdictions, and one researcher was able to carry out all necessary interviews in the smaller cities.

The research strategy was to interview the chief first and then other departmental personnel in the same order as they would become involved in missing children cases--that is, communications, patrol, investigation, and records. However, it was not always possible to follow this logical progression. Because officers have busy schedules, they could often meet with researchers only at specified periods during the day. The research staff therefore conducted the approximately 1-hour long interviews at the convenience of law enforcement personnel.

All interview subjects were informed that the contents of the interviews would be kept strictly confidential, unless the department had a particular program or practice it wanted publicized. This procedure was designed to elicit the most candid statements about policy and practice from all levels of departmental personnel.

Research staff interviewed approximately 10 subjects in each site, on the average, although this number varied depending on the size and complexity of the department. Thus, for the 30 sites in the study, some 300 interviews were conducted.

3.3.4 Data Reduction and Analysis

Because the Phase 2 data are predominantly qualitative, analytic procedures were developed to reduce and organize the data. First, the interview teams completed a "site summary form" at the conclusion of each site visit. Site summary forms were developed from the pretest debriefings and addressed the major objectives to be accomplished during this phase of the study. The research team then shared the completed site summary forms so that all staff were familiar with the results of site visits.

Interview data were transformed into individual case studies for each site. All 30 case studies contained, in the same order, discussion sections on the following: size and organization of the agency; the view of top administrators; the procedures for taking initial calls; patrol response; investigation; training; records; and youth-serving agencies. Each of these general sections was subdivided according to the subsections of the interview schedule. Thus, comparisons among sites could be readily accomplished by referring to the appropriate section of the case studies. The case studies varied in length, depending on the complexity of the jurisdiction, but averaged about 30 pages.

3.4 PHASE 3 METHODOLOGY

The Phase 1 mail survey and the Phase 2 site visits provided a great deal of information about runaways and abducted children and youths from the police perspective. The purpose of Phase 3 was to add to this information by collecting data about specific cases from police records and by interviewing parents or caretakers who have reported a missing child, and by interviewing children who have run away or been abducted and have returned.

Data were collected in six sites,³ and a total of 960 parent interviews and 378 child interviews were completed.

3.4.1 Site Selection and Sample Design

The sites were purposively selected. The site selection criteria for this phase of the study included the following:

- participation in Phase 2;
- willingness to participate in Phase 3;
- the ability to identify all cases of missing children reported to the department;
- numbers of cases sufficient to generate a minimum of 100 cases within a 3- to 4-month data collection period;
- a diversity across sites in case handling procedures and legal context; and
- the existence of innovative or exemplary programs in the department.

All 30 sites that were visited during Phase 2 of the study were rated according to these criteria, as shown in Exhibit 3.1.

Ten of the thirty sites were selected for a pretest site visit. Two-day site visits were conducted by professional project staff in order to discuss participation with appropriate departmental personnel, to gather information necessary to prepare a sampling plan, and to arrange data collection procedures. A protocol for these site visits was developed and distributed to those staff making the visits. A letter was sent to the appropriate individual in each department describing the requirements of participation in the study, and telephone contacts were made prior to the visit in order to schedule the visit. The tasks accomplished during the site visits included (see p. 23):

³Seven jurisdictions (sites) were originally selected for the study. However, one site was dropped from the study after completion of the data collection when the analysis file preparation revealed suspicious discrepancies, suggesting that as many as half of the interviews may have been faked. The data quality control procedures found the overall response rate to be exceedingly high, responses to certain open-ended questions were markedly similar, and percentage estimates on certain crucial variables were substantially divergent from those found in other sites. Data from this site are not included in this report.

Exhibit 3.1 Phase 3 Site Selection Criteria

	Cooperation Problematic	Sufficient Cases	Investigative Proactivity ^a	Running Away Legal Status ^b	Innovative Program ^c
Selected sites:					
Site 1 (Western city)	No	Yes	High	S	No
Site 2 (Southern suburban co.)	No	Yes	Medium	D/N	Yes
Site 3 (South central city)	No	Yes	Low	S	No
Site 4 (Northeastern suburban co.)	No	Yes	High	S	No
Site 5 (Western city)	No	Yes	Low	S	No
Site 6 (Midwestern city)	No	Yes	High	S	Yes
Other sites:					
North Carolina	No	No	Medium	S	No
Tennessee	?	Yes	High	S	No
Nebraska	No	No	Medium	S	Yes
South Dakota	Yes	No	Low	S	No
Maryland	No	No	Medium	S	No
Colorado	Yes	Yes	Medium	S	No
Montana	No	No	Low	S	No
New Mexico	No	Yes	Medium	S	No
New York	Yes	Yes	Medium	S	Yes
California	Yes	Yes	Medium	S	Yes
Virginia	No	No	High	S	No
California	No	Yes	Low	S	Yes
Washington	No	Yes	High	S	Yes
Texas	No	Yes	Medium	S	No
Texas	No	No	Medium	S	No
New York	?	Yes	Low	S	No
Minnesota	No	Yes	High/Medium	S	Yes
Kansas	No	Yes	Medium	D/N	Yes
Missouri	No	No	Medium	S	No
Illinois	Yes	No	Medium	S	No
Pennsylvania	No	Yes	Low	D/N	No
Pennsylvania	No	No	High	D/N	No
Kentucky	Yes	Yes	High	S	Yes
Indiana	Yes	Yes	Low	S	No

^aBased on departmental responses to Phase 1 mail survey.

^bD/N means dependent/neglected; S means status offense.

^cBased on study team's evaluation of departmental activities. Innovative programs were diverse in their activities and goals.

- discussion of Phase 3 participation with appropriate commanding officers, including potential legal and other problems;
- re-examination of the department call-taking and recordkeeping systems to determine a process to identify all reported missing children cases;
- consultation with departmental staff with knowledge of local recordkeeping practices regarding what case types (as classified locally) would include the study-defined case types and procedures for making these available to interviewers;
- completion of a table necessary for the final sampling plan showing all missing children cases reported to the department between February and April 1988, by eligibility and case type;
- completion of case extraction forms for 10 recent cases to determine the extent of site variation in data availability; and
- secure agreement from the department authorities for the data collection procedures.

This information was compiled in a site visit report completed after each site visit. These reports were reviewed by key project staff and used to select the final sites, develop the sampling plan, data collection procedures, and interviewer training.

As Exhibit 3.1 shows, the selected sites were distributed across the country with two in the east, two in the central portion, and two in the west. Their proactivity in investigating missing child cases (based on their responses to the Phase 1 mail survey) varied as well. Two had been found during Phase 2 to have innovative programs developed during the early and middle 1980s. Two of the sites were county police departments located in large metropolitan areas (Site 2 in the southeastern section of the country and Site 4 in the northeast). The rest were municipal departments. Sites 2, 4, 5, and 6 were located in one or another of the 15 most populous metropolitan areas in the country, and Sites 1 and 3 were smaller cities in medium-sized metropolitan areas.

Cases were sampled within sites. The sample design for the missing children study was a stratified one-stage probability sample. The study population was all reported cases of missing children in the study sites

during a 3-month period from March through early June 1989. Within each of the sites, cases were classified into three types for sampling purposes: abductions, long-term runaways/other missing (gone 72 hours or more), and short-term runaways/other missing (gone fewer than 72 hours). Crossing the six sites with the three case categories gives 18 strata. The strata and their sample rates are shown in Table 3.4.

During a pretest of data collection procedures, information was collected so that we could estimate the number of cases that would be reported during the data collection period. The sample rates were based on the number of cases reported by site and case type. Because of the anticipated small number of abductions, we decided to do a census of these case types, giving the sampling rate of 1. The sample rates for the runaways were selected to yield near-equal sample sizes in the 12 runaway strata. The near-equal sample allocations were chosen to allow for testing long-term versus short-term runaway differences within and among sites.

Table 3.4 Sampling Rates for the 18 Design Strata

Study Site	Abductions	Long-term Runaways/ Others	Short-term Runaways/ Others
Site 1	1	1/2	1/4
Site 2	1	1/2	1/4
Site 3	1	3/4	3/8
Site 4	1	1	1/2
Site 5	1	1/2	1/4
Site 6	1	1/13	1/26

3.4.2 Instrument Development and Interview Procedures

The data collection instruments were developed using an iterative approach (see Appendix C). The initial drafts were prepared in response to issues identified in the solicitation for proposals and staff knowledge of the police practices and case characteristics developed during the earlier study phases. Draft instruments were submitted to the members of the project Advisory Board as well as other individuals who are experts in law enforcement or the substantive issues related to missing children cases.

Data collection instruments used in similar research projects were also used to guide item development. In particular, certain items from the questionnaires used in NISMART were modified or incorporated verbatim.

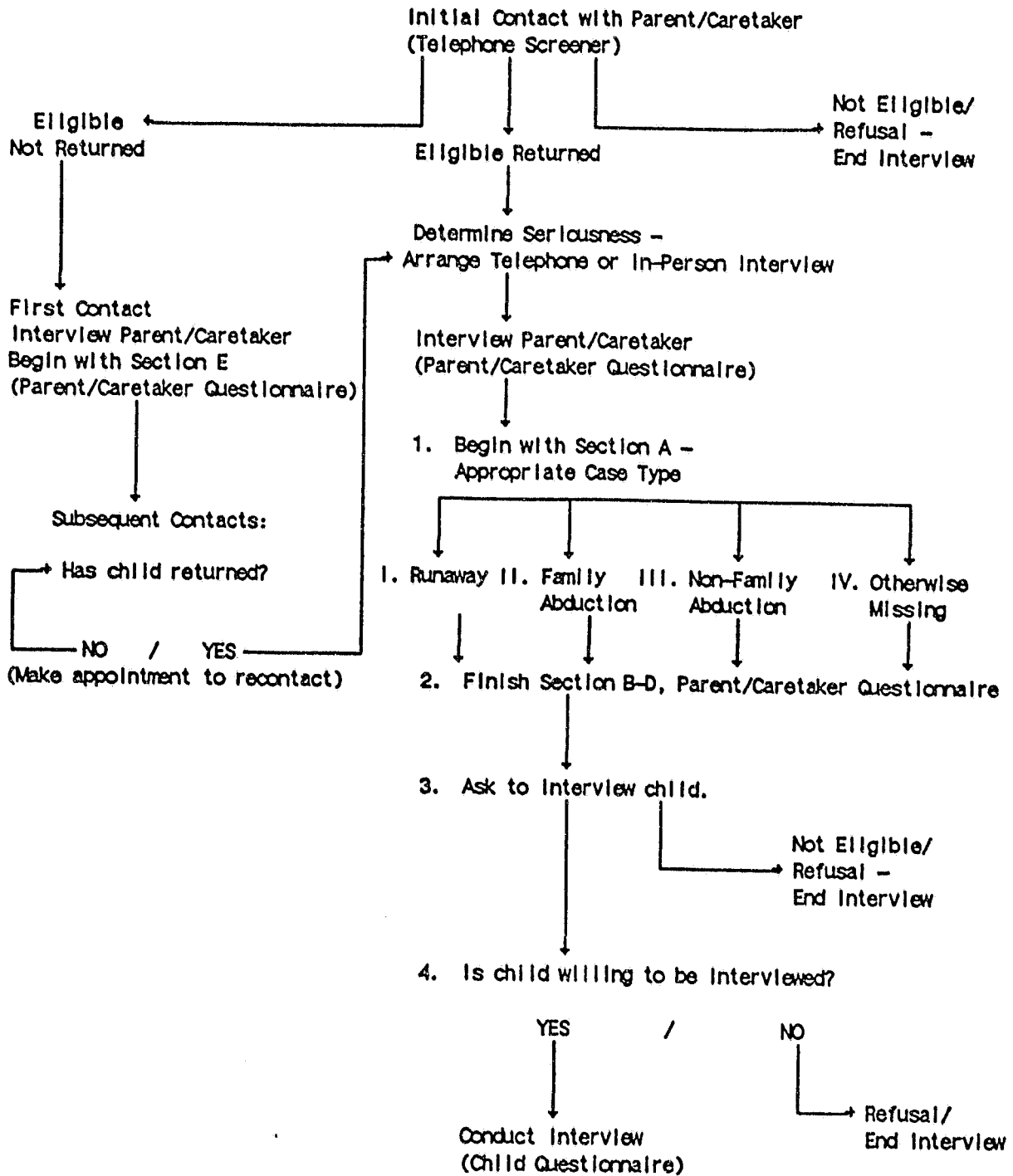
Several data collection instruments were developed. The case extraction form was used to abstract information from police records pertaining to the investigative activities and to get information necessary to contact the respondent. The telephone screener was used for the initial contact with the respondent and was intended to introduce the study, verify the case type and eligibility for inclusion in the study, and obtain permission to conduct a parent interview. For cases where the child was missing from a group home or institution, additional information about the care facility was gathered. Separate parent and child questionnaires were developed for each the four case types: runaways, family abductions, nonfamily abductions, and otherwise missing. Each parent questionnaire had a core set of questions on police responses and demographic characteristics of the family, but the sections asking for descriptions of the incident and outcomes of the case were tailored for each case type. The child questionnaire was structured similarly.

After completion of the screening, the interviewer selected the appropriate case type instrument and either interviewed the parent on the phone or made an appointment for an in-person interview, depending on the seriousness of the case and the respondent's request. After completing the parent interview, the interviewer asked permission to interview the child or youth, provided that the child/youth was at least 12 years of age. If permission was granted, the interviewer scheduled either a telephone or in-person interview with the child/youth. If the child or youth had not yet returned home, the interviewer made arrangements to call back in 2 weeks. Periodic calls were then made during the data collection period to attempt to determine if the child/youth had returned and was willing to be interviewed. Exhibit 3.2 provides a flowchart of the data collection procedures.

3.4.3 Data Collection

a. Interviewer Training. Professional interviewers were selected from the national RTI interviewer files. Qualified individuals were inter-

Exhibit 3.2 Flowchart of the Data Collection Procedures



viewed and hired by professional project staff during the pretest site visits to each data collection site.

All of the interviewers were brought to RTI for a 2-day training session held shortly before the beginning of data collection activities. Professional project staff from both URSA Institute and RTI participated in the training, and the following topics were covered:

- background and purpose of the study;
- informed consent and confidentiality procedures;
- procedures for contacting respondents and controlling interviews;
- specifications and group practice for completion of each data collection instrument; and
- refusal conversion strategies; sensitivity training, and site-specific information.

Each interviewer was provided with a field interviewer's manual that described all data collection and administrative procedures.

b. Field Interviewer Supervision. Field interviewers, as many as three in each site, were supervised by URSA Institute staff. Interviewer work activities were monitored in several ways. First, field interviewers were required to submit weekly reports of their activities. These reports provided a record of the number of calls made, the results of the call (e.g., completed, refusal), as well as the type of the interview completed (e.g., case extraction form, telephone screener, parent, or child). Based on these weekly reports, it was possible to determine if the interviewer was keeping pace with the predetermined schedule of interviews to be completed each week. Second, as part of the weekly report, each interviewer submitted an updated sampling form that indicated whether the interviewer was properly following the sampling plan that had been developed for that particular site. Third, when the interviewer submitted completed interviews, he or she was also to submit "problem sheets" that indicated in written form any problem the interviewer had with specific cases. The problem sheet allowed supervisory staff to develop a preferred strategy to handle the specific problem. Finally, each interviewer was required to report by telephone to the URSA Institute offices once a week on a stag-

gered schedule. In addition to getting a general overview of the interviewer's progress, the purpose of the weekly telephone conversation was to address the specific problems that had surfaced in the weekly report, the sampling form, or the problem sheet.

c. Interviewing Procedures. Interviewers visited police departments periodically (usually weekly) throughout the approximately 3-month sampling period (March 1 to June 6, 1989) to list all missing children cases reported since their previous visit and select a sample of these for case extraction and data collection. Cases the police knew or believed to be abductions (either by a family member or someone else) were listed on an "abduction listing sheet"; all such cases were included in the sample. All other cases were listed on a "runaway/other missing listing sheet;" a sample of these was selected.

Specific procedures that the interviewers used to identify appropriate cases varied across sites depending on local recordkeeping practices. Case classification codes for case types being studied had been determined by project staff during preliminary site visits. At that time, procedures for police to provide cases of these types to interviewers were agreed upon. Typically, interviewers used logs of missing child cases that investigation bureaus kept of incoming cases, listing all those of the relevant case types.

Interviewers then located case records for all selected cases and entered information from them on case extraction forms, including that needed to locate the missing child's parent or guardian. The parent or guardian was screened (using the telephone screener) to determine case type according to study definitions and eligibility for interview. Exhibit 3.3 shows study case type definitions and eligibility criteria.

Most interviews were conducted by telephone. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, however, under some circumstances:

- child was gone 7 days or more;
- child was victimized or injured during the episode;
- child had some sort of physical or mental disability, or a life-threatening disease requiring medication; or
- parent refused to agree to a telephone interview.

Exhibit 9.8 Case Type Definitions and Eligibility Criteria

Case Type	How Defined for Respondent	Eligible for Parent Interview if:
Runaway	Child has left home (or refused to return home) without permission of parent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 11 or less and gone at least 8 hours • Age 12 or more and gone at least overnight
Family Abduction	Child was taken from home by parent (or other family member or agent acting for parent) or not returned without permission of parent (or family member) in residence or in violation of custody agreement or legal statute.	<p>Abductor--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kept child at least overnight beyond arranged time of return, OR • Attempted to conceal child, OR • Prevented custodial parent from contacting child, OR • Made threats indicating intention to prevent contact with child permanently, OR • Transported child from State.
Nonfamily Abduction	Child was removed from home or somewhere else without permission by nonfamily member, and attempt was made to conceal location of child.	All such cases eligible.
Otherwise Missing	Child disappeared from home or from parents' supervision and could not be located.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 5 or less and gone for at least 2 hours, OR • Age 6-8 and gone at least 3 hours, OR • Age 9-12 and gone at least 4 hours, OR • Age 13-14 and gone at least 8 hours, OR • Age 15-17 and gone overnight.
Unknown Missing	Child was missing, and the facts of the case were insufficient to determine the cause.	Same as Otherwise Missing.
All Case Types		Child had any serious or permanent physical or mental disabilities or impairment or life-threatening medical conditions.

Parents/guardians who had no telephone were screened and interviewed face to face.

d. Data Receipt and Control. When the interviewer completed the case (including refusal, disconnect, etc.), he or she sent the case to the URSA Institute offices. Along with the case, the interviewer sent a completed "control form" that specified the types of interviews completed (screener, parent, child) or, if not completed, the reason for the lack of completion (e.g., refusal, subject could not be located, disconnected number).

When the case packet was received at the URSA Institute offices, all relevant information was logged into an automated data base management system. This system allowed staff to produce weekly reports to determine the number and percentage of each type of case completed per week as well as cumulatively.

e. Data Editing and Processing. After each case was logged into the system, a staff member performed a manual edit, reviewing the coding of all variables and checking for inconsistencies in skip patterns. If something out of the ordinary were found in the manual edit, the staff member would call the interviewer and attempt to resolve the issue. If this could not be done over the telephone, the case would be sent back to the interviewer, if necessary, to call the respondent again.

When the manual edit was completed, data were input using the SPSS™ data entry program. A program was also written to check for invalid ranges and inappropriate skip patterns. Cases that were improperly entered were flagged and corrected. All data were then keyed again for verification.

Data were next put through a "cleaning" program to check for valid entry specifications, valid ranges, skip patterns, and so on. All cases failing edit specifications were pulled, and appropriate corrections were made. To allow for cross machine compatibility, data were put on an SPSS "export" program and then sent to RTI for analysis.

3.4.4 Problems Encountered and Efforts to Resolve Them

Several problems worthy of mention were encountered during the data collection period.

a. Securing Cooperation from Institutional Facilities. Youths often run away from public or private residential institutions. Approximately 15% of the cases selected involved a child reported missing from some sort of juvenile facility (in most sites, a group home). In almost every site, it was difficult to secure an interview with the reporting party, who was normally a staff member of the facility. In a minority of instances, it was problematic because the reporting party was no longer employed at the facility or was a part-time employee with odd work hours. Sometimes staff members stated that they were too busy (and overworked) to take the time to participate in the interview. In most instances, however, the difficulty arose because of facilities' privacy and confidentiality regulations.

The institutions were contacted first by a form letter on URSA Institute letterhead explaining the study and inviting the recipient to participate. A local interviewer then telephoned to try to obtain an interview. Whenever the interviewer could not secure the cooperation of an institutional staff member, the interviewer would ascertain the specific reason why the interview could not be completed and specifically what needed to be done to secure the facility's assistance. The field interviewer would then telephone the Co-Principal Investigator at the URSA Institute and explain what needed to be done. The Co-Principal Investigator would then telephone the director of the facility and explain the project, the need for cooperation, and the project's ability to guarantee confidentiality for the data collected. This telephone call was followed by a written explanation to the director, including relevant supporting materials and documents.

Sometimes the telephone call and letter were sufficient to gain access to the staff member who made the report of the missing child. On occasion, the process was quite lengthy because the formal request had to be approved by a board of directors, a judge, or, in the case of a governmental entity, by an appropriate agency representative. Often, however, the formal request was turned down, usually because of a strict interpretation of privacy and confidentiality regulations. Unfortunately, the response rate from facility personnel was therefore lower than initially expected.

b. Low Child Interview Rates. The rate of completed child interviews was lower than originally estimated. Interviewers were able to interview

only 364 of the 866 youths who were eligible (12-years-old and older). The reasons appear to fall into one of three categories. First, related to the above section, it was difficult to complete interviews when the child had been reported missing from some form of facility. Sometimes the staff member who made the missing child report would consent to an interview, but the child reported missing would not be allowed to participate in the interview. The facility's clinical staff often deemed it detrimental to the child's mental health and welfare to be interviewed about the incident. Secondly, the research staff miscalculated the willingness of juveniles still living at home to participate in interviews. Many juveniles are extremely difficult to reach by telephone, even after repeated attempts. On those occasions when they could be reached, there was a higher than expected refusal rate. And third, there was a higher than expected refusal rate by the parent of the child.

Two basic strategies were undertaken to increase the response rate of child interviews (in addition to the formal letters sent to facilities, described above). First, an aggressive refusal conversion program was instituted. New refusal conversion scripts were prepared both for parents who refused to allow their children to participate and for children who refused to participate. These cases were pulled from the files and given to refusal conversion specialists at the URSA Institute offices. Second, the project's Principal Investigators decided to provide a \$10 participation fee for those juveniles who consented to the interview.

3.4.5 Sampling Weights, Adjustments, and Response Rates

To estimate population-level characteristics using the observed characteristics in the sample, it was necessary to weight the observations. The starting point for calculating analysis weights was their sampling weight, the inverse of their sampling rate. Analysis weights were calculated by adjusting the sampling weights for missing data from sources such as lost forms, inability to contact sample persons, or sample person refusals. The adjustments were intended to compensate for biases in population-level estimates that may have arisen from the missing data.

The amount of missing data in this survey is substantial, and many assumptions were necessary to develop analysis weights. Because of the

magnitude of the missing data problem, the quality of estimates based on these analysis weights is less than ideal. In our opinion, these analysis weights are the best that can be calculated with the available information. However, because of the magnitude of the missing data problem, inferences to all missing children in these study sites may be substantially biased in spite of our weight adjustments.

To accurately calculate the weights for all the final interview cases, we needed the following information.

- the number of missing children cases selected into the sample by site and sampling case type (abductions, long-term runaways/other missing, and short-term runaways/other missing);
- the results of the screening of all sample cases to determine their final case type eligibility status (according to the definitions shown in Exhibit 3.3);
- for all eligible cases, the results of the parent interview (completed, refused, unable to locate, etc.); and
- for all children aged 12 or older, the result of the child interview.

Because the records kept during the data collection process were incomplete at many steps, adjustments for final case type, eligibility status, length-of-time-gone, and nonresponse were necessary. The purpose of the weight adjustments was to compensate for the persons selected into the sample with incomplete data. Because of the very low response rates for the child interviews, their weights were not calculated. All analysis of the child interview data is anecdotal and should not be used for inferences to the larger population. The number of cases with missing data by adjustment step are shown in Table 3.5. (Ineligible cases were excluded as part of Step 5. Their exclusion does not adversely affect the quality of the data.)

At each step, the weights for cases with complete data were inflated so that their sum equaled the sum of all cases, both those with complete data and incomplete data. The adjustments were done within each stratum.

Two response rate calculations for the parent interviews are presented in Table 3.6. The "best" case calculation assumes that the cases excluded because of missing data were ineligible. This provides an overall parent

interview response rate of 76.4%, with a range of 64.2% to 86.1% among the sites. The "worst" case calculation assumes that all the cases excluded due to missing data were eligible and provides an overall parent interview response rate of 63.3%. This calculation also varies by site, ranging from 48.4% to 85.8% of completed interviews.

Table 3.5 Parent Interview Sample Weight Adjustments

Study Site	Original Sample Size	Number of Cases Excluded in Adjustment Step						Final Sample Size
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Site 1	328	42	5	0	0	27	91	163
Site 2	218	22	2	0	1	32	24	137
Site 3	223	33	2	0	0	25	34	129
Site 4	293	1	0	0	0	19	38	235
Site 5	295	29	9	0	0	19	78	160
Site 6	357	58	53	3	0	76	31	136
Total	1,714	185	71	3	1	198	296	960

Adjustment steps:

1. Excluded cases sampled as runaways/others with missing data on length of time gone (and adjusted sampling weights of remaining cases).
2. Excluded cases with positive weights from step 1 that had missing data simultaneously on final case type, time gone, and eligibility (and adjusted weights of remaining cases).
3. Excluded cases with positive weights from step 2 that simultaneously had missing data on final case type and time gone and were believed by the interviewer to be ineligible (and adjusted weights of remaining cases).
4. Excluded short-term runaways with positive weights from step 2 that simultaneously had missing data on eligibility status (and adjusted weights of remaining cases).
5. Excluded cases with positive weights from steps 3 and 4 known to be ineligible.
6. Excluded cases with positive weights from steps 3 and 4 known to be eligible for the parent interview that did not give an interview (and adjusted weights of responding eligible cases).

Table 3.6 Parent Interview Response Rates

Study Site	Response Rate (%)	
	Best	Worst
Site 1	64.2	54.2
Site 2	85.1	73.7
Site 3	79.1	65.2
Site 4	86.1	85.8
Site 5	67.2	58.0
Site 6	81.4	48.4
Overall	76.4	63.3

Note. The "best" case response rates were computed assuming all sample members with missing data on time gone, final case type, and/or eligibility status were not eligible (and, therefore, excluded from the sample to be interviewed). The "worst" case response rates were computed assuming all such sample members were eligible (and should have been interviewed).

CHAPTER 4

RUNAWAYS: POLICE RESPONSES AND INCIDENT OUTCOMES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature on runaways is surprisingly thin for a phenomenon that involves so many children and youths each year. Two studies of the incidence of running away were conducted in the mid-1970s (Brennan, Blanchard, Huizinga, & Elliott, 1975; Opinion Research Corporation, 1976). NISMART was conducted more than a decade later (Finkelhor et al., 1990a). A study was conducted in four Canadian police agencies in the mid-1980s (Fisher, 1989). Other literature has examined the motivations for running away (Tritt, 1988) and other characteristics of runaways. One generalization seems accurate: Runaways disproportionately have other problems such as suicide ideation and involvement in deviant behavior such as prostitution and drug use (Council on Scientific Affairs, 1989; Edelbrock, 1980; Hotelling & Finkelhor, 1988; Yates, MacKenzie, Pennbridge, & Cohen, 1988). Running away also tends to reoccur. In the Fisher (1989) study, 25% of the runaways accounted for more than half of the incidents.

This chapter deals with runaway cases reported to police departments in six metropolitan areas. The major purposes of the chapter are to:

- describe the runaways and the characteristics of the runaway incidents and compare these data to those from NISMART;
- describe the actions police took in response to runaway cases, examine site-by-site variation in police actions, and analyze the determinants of police actions;
- describe parental satisfaction with police responses and the determinants of satisfaction;
- analyze the correlates of intermediate (e.g., time gone) and adverse outcomes (e.g., victimization while gone) of the runaway incidents; and
- examine the relationship between police actions and the intermediate and final outcomes of the incidents.

The findings are summarized at the end of the chapter. Implications of the findings for police policy and practice are discussed in the last chapter of the report.

4.2 COMPARISON OF RTI STUDY AND NISMART FINDINGS

A comparison of some selected findings for runaways and runaway incidents from this study with the study of the incidence of runaway children and youths conducted by Finkelhor et al. (1990a) is presented below. Both studies were funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and the efforts were coordinated so that many questionnaire items were used in both studies. There are several distinctions between the studies, most notably the substantial differences in their methodologies. The incidence study used a combination of methods, including telephone screening of a nationally representative sample of households and a survey of juvenile residential facilities, to estimate the incidence and describe the characteristics of runaways for 1 year in the United States. The current study sampled respondents from police records during a 3-month period in six medium-sized to large urban and suburban jurisdictions. These six jurisdictions were selected purposively to allow variation in selected police organizational and jurisdictional characteristics thought to be related to police handling of missing child cases. Although these six sites are no doubt similar in a variety of ways to many other police departments with which they share these characteristics, the selected sites are not statistically representative of any group of jurisdictions.⁴ Comparison of characteristics of runaways and runaway incidents in these data with those from NISMART can point to similarities of results and flag any very substantial differences that might suggest an anomaly in the data.

In the incidence study, runaways for whom the data are presented in the tables below were defined as "broad scope" and were children who stayed away without permission at least overnight. The cases in our study were

⁴The sample of cases selected within each site, however, is statistically representative of the missing child cases reported to that department during the study period.

subset to match this definition for the purpose of these comparisons. The data from both studies are based on parent/caretaker interview responses.

Table 4.1 displays data for children or youths who ran away from their homes. The household runaway case characteristics for the national incidence and police records studies show close correspondence for most comparisons and few major differences. The gender distribution in both studies is almost identical: Approximately 60% of the runaways are female. Both studies also found that older children (14-years-old and older) make up the vast majority of runaways. However, the police records study does show a higher proportion of children in the middle age range, 11 to 13, which may reflect a greater tendency for parents to call the police if their runaway children are young. The racial distribution is different in the two studies, in that the household sample found a lower proportion of minorities than did the police records sample. This is probably a result of sampling differences; the police records study was not a national probability sample, but was conducted in six major metropolitan areas where the minority populations are higher than in the country as a whole.⁵ The definitions of family structure used in the two studies were not identical, yet the proportion of families with both parents present was the same.

Many of the characteristics of the runaway incidents are also similar. Over half of the runaways in each study initially went to a friend's house, and slightly over 10% spent one or more nights without a secure place to stay. Less than 10% of runaways in both studies left the State, and approximately half of the runaways in both studies were gone 2 days or less. There were no cases of "not yet returned" in the police records study because the methodology required recontacting respondents until the child had been returned or located, or until the data collection period ended. Victimization and harm rates do not differ markedly between the two studies, nor does the existence of a previous runaway episode in the past year. However, runaways in the national incidence study sample were much more likely to have been accompanied by others. This difference may be a function of the age of child reported. The older children prevalent in

⁵This difference in racial distribution may be partially related to the difference in age distribution, as black children tend to run away at younger ages than other children (reviewer's comment by D. Finkelhor).

Table 4.1 Comparison of Household Survey and Police Record Runaway Cases: Runaways from Households

Child/Incident Characteristics	Police Records Study (%) (weighted n = 3,867; unweighted n = 667)	National Incidence* Study (%) (weighted n = 446,700; unweighted n = 129)
<u>Characteristics of Child</u>		
Gender		
Male	41	42
Female	59	58
Age		
0-6	0a	0a
7-10	2a	2a
11-13	28	7
14-15	46	24
16-17	24	68
Race		
White	31	74
Black	52	20
Hispanic	11	4
Other	6	2
Family structure		
Both parents	28	28
Blended family	10	NA
Single parent	55	49
Other	6	NA
<u>Characteristics of Incident</u>		
Initial destination		
Friend's house	60	60
Relative's house	6	6
Other	13	7
Don't know	21	26
Any night without secure place to sleep	12	11
Leave the State	3	7
See notes at end of table.		(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Child/Incident Characteristics	Police Records Study (%) (weighted n = 3,867; unweighted n = 667)	National Incidence* Study (%) (weighted n = 446,700; unweighted n = 129)
<u>Characteristics of Incident (con.)</u>		
Distance		
More than 100 miles	5	10
51-100	5	6a
11-50	37	31
1-10	37	38
Less than 1	2a	7a
Don't know	14	8
Length of absence		
Overnight, but 24 hours or less	5	26
1-2 days	43	23
3-6 days	30	14
1-2 weeks	12	9a
2-4 weeks	6	12
4 weeks or more	3	4a
Not yet returned	NA	10
Don't know	NA	3
At least 1 additional episode in past 12 months	38	34
Child accompanied by others	23	79
Sexually abused		
Yes	3	3a
Attempt	0a	1a
No	78	80
Don't know	18	7a
Physically harmed		
Yes	5	1a
No	87	91
Don't know	8	8a
Mentally harmed		
Serious	4	6
Mild	2a	1
Minor	1a	8
None	80	74
Don't know	12	10

See notes at end of table.

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

Child/Incident Characteristics	Police Records Study (%) (weighted n = 3,867; unweighted n = 667)	National Incidence* Study (%) (weighted n = 446,700; unweighted n = 129)
<u>Characteristics of Incident (con.)</u>		
Child has run away before	52	NA
Child involved in prostitution or pornography	2 ^a	NA
Used drugs	5	NA
Sold drugs	1 ^a	NA
Both	5	NA
Thefts or robberies	6	NA

Note. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding error.

^aBased on fewer than 10 cases.

*Source. Finkelhor et al. (1990a, pp. 171-206).

NISMART would be more likely to have formed affiliation peer groups and done things with others.

Slightly more than half of the runaways in the police records sample had ever run away before, and between 1% and 6% of the runaways were involved with drugs, illegal sexual activities, theft, or robberies during the incident. Comparable data for the national incidence study were not published.

About 13% of the runaways ran from a juvenile facility, such as a group home or residential treatment setting, rather than from their own home. In the Canadian study, 23% of the runaways identified in police records had run away from institutions (Fisher, 1989). An earlier Canadian study in Toronto found that 40% had run from an institution (Burgess, 1986). Table 4.2 presents information for those who ran away from a juvenile facility. In the interviews, a greater proportion of facility staff than parents selected the "don't know" category on a number of incident characteristic items.

With a few exceptions, the characteristics of the facility runaways were similar in the two studies and were also similar to those who ran away from home. The gender distribution among runaways from facilities was virtually identical for both studies. The facility runaways in the incidence study tended to be older, and there were fewer minorities than in the police records study. The proportion with both parents present in the home was also very similar.

Slightly over half of the runaways from facilities in both studies were gone 2 days or less, a proportion virtually identical to those who ran from homes. Other characteristics of the runaway incidents are less comparable for the two studies. A greater proportion of the runaways in the incidence study facility sample reported having been accompanied by others. With one notable exception, victimization and illegal activities rates were not markedly different, but many of these estimates were based on fewer than 10 cases. The proportion of the facility runaways in the incidence study sample who were reported to have used drugs during the episode (33%) was much higher than in the police records study, which again may be a function of the relative ages of youths in the two studies.

Table 4.2 Comparison of Household Survey and Police Record
Runaway Cases: Runaways from Facilities

Child/Incident Characteristics	Police Records Study (%) (weighted n = 595; unweighted n = 73)	National Incidence* Study (%) (weighted n = 8,915; unweighted n = 138)
<u>Characteristics of Child</u>		
Gender		
Male	48	47
Female	52	53
Age		
0-6	0 ^a	0 ^a
7-10	2 ^a	1 ^a
11-13	46	6
14-15	32	41
16-17	20	51
Don't know		1 ^a
Race		
White	21	82
Black	49	10
Hispanic	28	6 ^a
Other	2 ^a	2 ^a
Family structure		
Both parents	29	27
Blended family	4 ^a	31
Single parent	25	23
Other	42	19
<u>Characteristics of Incident</u>		
Initial destination		
Home	NA	17
Friend's house	18	47
Relative's house	10	4
Other	6 ^a	16
Don't know	66	16
Any night without secure place to sleep	6	NA
Leave the State	0	45
See notes at end of table.		(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

Child/Incident Characteristics	Police Records Study (%) (weighted n = 595; unweighted n = 73)	National Incidence* Study (%) (weighted n = 8,915; unweighted n = 138)
<u>Characteristics of Incident (con.)</u>		
Distance		
More than 100 miles	1 ^a	8
51-100	3 ^a	37
11-50	33	25
0-10	24	19
Don't know	39	11
Length of absence		
Overnight, but 24 hours or less	4 ^a	30
1-2 days	51	24
3-6 days	33	28
1-2 weeks	9	4 ^a
2-4 weeks	1 ^a	2 ^a
4 weeks or more	1 ^a	3
Not yet returned	NA	8
Don't know	NA	1 ^a
At least 1 additional episode in past 12 months	56	40
Child accompanied by others	34	45
Sexually abused		
Yes	5 ^a	7 ^a
Attempt	2 ^a	NA
No	51	72
Don't know	44	21 ^a
Child has run away before	68	NA
Child involved in:		
Prostitution	NA	5 ^a
Pornography	NA	2 ^a
Pornography <u>or</u> prostitution	5 ^a	NA
Used drugs	1 ^a	33
Sold drugs	0 ^a	3 ^a
Both	4 ^a	NA
Thefts or robberies	7 ^a	1 ^a -3 ^{ab}

Note. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding error.

^aBased on fewer than 10 cases.

^bPercentage varied by type of crime.

*Source. Finkelhor et al. (1990a, pp. 207-225).

4.3 POLICE RESPONSES TO RUNAWAY CASES

Parents and caretakers were asked a series of questions about what police actions were taken when they reported their children had run away--both at initial contact and later in the investigation. Table 4.3 shows parent reports of police responses. Police told parents to call back later in just 3% of cases. Although the data do not allow assessment of the reason for this police response, some police departments may have waiting periods before taking official action in response to reports of missing children. In the mail survey of LEAs conducted as an earlier phase of this study, only 2% of large departments said they had waiting periods for runaway cases. The 3% "call back later" reports from parents' cases in the six departments studied here is consistent with the earlier LEA survey results. We find no evidence that many departments refuse to act officially when runaway incidents are first reported. Later in this chapter, we show that one of the six departments in the study accounts for most instances when police told parents or caretakers to call back.

At the initial contact (usually with a police call taker or dispatcher), police took basic information about the incident in about 44% of the cases and said an officer would be sent in 68% of the cases. Other responses were infrequent.

Table 4.3 indicates that in more than three quarters of the runaway cases an officer came in person to take a report. This is roughly consistent with results of the mail survey component of the study. Sixty-two percent of large departments in the mail survey during the first phase of this research said they always or usually "sent a car to the scene" in runaway cases.

The second and third panels of Table 4.3 show there was considerable variation in the police response to runaway cases. In virtually all cases, parents said police collected basic information when an officer came in person, but other actions were less common. In 63% to 75% of cases, police asked for a photograph of the child, asked for friends or relatives to contact, and/or asked about the child's haunts. In about two fifths of cases, parents said police searched the neighborhood. In about one fifth of cases, police put out an "all points bulletin" (APB) to notify neighboring police districts or jurisdictions. In about one tenth of the

Table 4.3 Parent/Caretaker Reports of Police Activities: Runaways

Police Activities	Percentage
<u>Police Actions at Initial Contact</u>	
Call back later	3.1
Took basic information	43.8
Said officer would be sent	68.0
Came to station	1.5
Suggestions for locating child	2.6
Other responses	2.5
Officer came in person	81.9
<u>Actions Taken During In-Person Police Contact</u>	
Took basic information	97.5
Asked for photograph of child	63.3
Asked for friend/relative contact	67.0
Searched house	6.7
Searched neighborhood	39.0
Asked about child's haunts	74.9
Put out APB	23.8
Called other officers	9.7
Other actions	3.5
<u>Police Actions at Any Time During Event</u>	
Suggest how to find child	37.2
Suggest calling runaway hotline	3.8
Suggest contacting NCMEC or other child agency	3.3
Suggest calling friends/relatives	45.2
Describe investigative process	32.5
Tell how to get copy of report	36.8
Give case number	57.9
Tell who (in department) to contact for more information about progress on the case	57.8
Suggest calling lawyer	1.2
Other	4.3
<u>Police Contacts After Initial Report</u>	
Any contact	76.6
Police officer called to get information	60.5
Police officer came in person to get information	48.4
Parent called police to report child's return	57.0
Parent called police officer to get information	32.4
Parent visited police department to talk to officer	9.3
Parent was told where to get child	9.5
Other	12.6

cases, they called other officers to the scene. Searching the home and other actions were uncommon during the in-person contact.

Police often did make suggestions for actions that parents might take to help locate their child. These suggestions, however, rarely included contacting a runaway hotline or missing child agency services. Police gave parents a case number and/or told parents who at the department to contact for information about progress on the case 58% of the time, described the investigative process in about 3 of 10 cases, and told parents how to get a copy of the report a little more than a third of the time.

In almost three quarters of the cases, there was one or more contacts after the initial report (police officer called or visited in person 60% and 48% of cases, respectively). Parents often initiated contact with the police, and in over half of the cases parents called police to report the child's return.

Table 4.4 compares parent reports of actions they know police took at any time during the event with police agency responses regarding the same actions from the earlier nationally representative mail survey. Percentages under the police column are for the percentage of large departments reporting they "always" or "usually" took the action in runaway cases. Comparison of parent and police reports are not commensurate for several reasons:

- police responses were to hypothetical typical cases using a mail survey instrument;
- parent responses were from samples of actual cases in six cities; and
- parents' reports of police actions were probably under-estimates because parents would not have been aware of all actions taken by the police.

In spite of the lack of comparability, it is instructive to look at similarities and differences.

Considering the likelihood of disparities between parent and police responses for the three reasons given above, there are still some police action categories where parent and police reports are similar: interview friends or siblings and obtain a search warrant. In most categories, however, there is a considerable divergence, and in all but one type of action

Table 4.4 Comparison of Parent/Caretaker and Police Reports of Cumulative Police Actions

Police Actions	Parents (%)	Police ^a (%)
Call in investigative specialists	9	28
Gather physical evidence	10	26
Question available suspects	15	57
Interview neighbors	23	38
Interview friends/siblings	39	38
Interview relatives	34	41
Interview school personnel	18	35
Check hospitals	1	29
Check runaway shelters	4	46
Check known juvenile haunts	16	63
Report to FBI	0	9
Circulate photo	5	15
Get dental records	15	17
Give copy of report to parents	41	10
Obtain search warrant	1	2
Maintain case open until return	79	95
Notify surrounding jurisdictions	10	70
Report to State missing persons file	7	85
Enter into NCIC	31	88
Report case to NCMEC	1	15

^aPercentage of large police departments responding they "always" or "usually" took each action (from Table D-7 in Collins et al., 1989).

the police reported always or usually taking an action in a higher percentage of cases than one would be led to expect based on parent responses. The exception to this pattern is "give copy of report to parents"; two fifths of parents reported receiving a copy of the report, but only 10% of departments said they always or usually did this. The overall pattern of more frequent police actions based on police reports is to be expected, both because parents will be unaware of some police actions and because there may have been a tendency on the part of police departments to overestimate the extent of their responses to runaway cases to show their department in a favorable light.

4.4 VARIATION IN POLICE ACTIONS BY SITE

Police agencies differ in their responses to runaways because of policies and practices followed by departments, because legal requirements may differ by jurisdiction, and because the responses are shaped by local conditions and resources. Table 4.5 summarizes parent and caretaker responses to runaway cases separately for household and institutional cases for the six sites included in the study.

Several things are apparent from the table. Site 1 is clearly much less active than the other five sites in the investigation of cases. Site 1 police are less likely to send an officer to take a report in person, to request a photograph, and to put out an APB; however, they are much more likely to tell parents to call back later at the initial contact. Even disregarding Site 1, there are marked site variations in actions taken for some of the other police actions. In Sites 2 to 6, the percentage of time that police searched the home or neighborhood for the child ranges from 12% to 64%; for putting out an APB the range is 11% to 79%; and in 7% to 36% of cases, police called for backup help. Parents reported followup contact with the police between 50% and 90% of the time, depending on site.

There are also some differences in police responses for household and institutional runaway cases. In five of the six sites, police were less likely to request a photo for institutional runaway cases. In four of the six sites, institutional cases were given less followup attention. In Site 4, police were more likely to search for institutional than for household runaways. Small cell sizes constrain comparisons, but it appears that

Table 4.5 Parent/Caretaker Reports of Police Actions:
Percentage of Cases

Site	Call Back	Person Visit	Requested Photo	Searched for Child	Put Out APB	Called for Backup	Followup Contact
<u>Household Runaways</u>							
Site 1	16.0	7.6 ^a	12.0	11.0	8.2	4.3 ^a	50.5
Site 2	1.5 ^a	88.3	81.9	12.0	16.2	3.7 ^a	68.9
Site 3	1.3 ^a	95.3	68.5	15.2	37.2	9.1 ^a	83.7
Site 4	0.3 ^a	89.6	86.0	41.9	78.5	12.0	97.9
Site 5	2.7 ^a	92.5	67.1	21.6	10.8	6.8	49.0
Site 6	0.0	95.5	75.2	63.7	23.9	36.3	92.0
Overall %	3.1	79.8	65.7	40.9	24.5	21.2	78.6
<u>Institutional Runaways</u>							
Site 1	53.9	0.0	0.0	7.7 ^a	7.7	7.7 ^a	38.5
Site 2	0.0	80.1 ^a	50.0 ^a	100.0 ^a	50.0 ^a	0.0	40.1 ^a
Site 3	0.0	93.9	38.7	9.8	6.5 ^a	0.0	27.3
Site 4	0.0	82.6	52.0	76.0	88.0	0.0	92.3
Site 5	0.0	100.0	14.1	19.2	11.5	3.9 ^a	33.3
Site 6	0.0	100.0	76.2	57.1	23.8	19.1	90.5
Overall %	3.0	93.1	49.0	40.6	20.6	11.5	64.8

^aBased on fewer than 10 cases.

differences among departments in the frequency of kinds of actions taken (as perceived by parents/caretakers) are more common than differences in the way departments respond to household and institutional runaway cases within the same department. The inter-site variation suggests the need to control for site variation in multivariate analyses of cases combined across sites. This is discussed further below.

4.5 DETERMINANTS OF POLICE RESPONSES

The questions addressed in this section concern what child, family, and incident characteristics shape the nature and extent of police investigative actions. To examine this question, we constructed a number of "police action" dichotomous (yes/no) variables based on parent reports of officer's actions:

- came in person,
- asked for photo of child,
- searched house or neighborhood,
- put out APB or other announcement,
- called other officers to help, and
- contacted parent after initial report.

These variables were analyzed one by one in logistic regression models that included the following independent variables:

- age: two dummy variables--ages 13 to 14 (31.6%) and 15 to 17 (56.2%) vs. 12 or younger;
- sex: females (59.1%) vs. males;
- race: whites (46.4%) vs. blacks, other races (14.5%) vs. blacks;
- previous runaway incidents: two dummy variables--2 to 5 previous incidents (37.1%) and 6 or more incidents (17.7%) vs. no previous incidents;
- institutional runaways (14.6%) vs. household runaways;
- throwaway (8.2%) vs. runaway;
- child left note (6.5%);

- child took clothes or had threatened to run away (37.4%);
- recent trouble with friends, school, or police (27.1%);
- parent very concerned about child safety (74.5%);
- parent reports good home adjustment (67.1%);
- number of parent actions to locate child before calling police ($\bar{X} = 2.6$);
- number of arguments with child in 2 weeks before incident ($\bar{X} = 2.6$);
- family income in excess of \$35,000 annually (15.1%);
- time gone: two dummy variables--gone 3 to 7 days (26.4%) and gone more than 7 days (24.3%) vs. gone less than 3 days; and
- jurisdiction: five dummy variables identifying study sites.

The analyses addressed whether various demographic factors, antecedents of the incident, and parent attitudes and actions were associated with police actions taken when variation accounted for by the other variables in the model is controlled. Most of the variables in the model represent information available or potentially available to the police at the beginning of the incident. We do not know whether much of the information we analyzed in our model was actually gathered by police. For example, we do not know if police asked parents what actions they took to find their child before contacting police, or whether police queried parents about family conflict preceding the runaway event. Our purpose was to examine police decisionmaking in the context of information that was potentially available to them and that might have influenced the kind and frequency of their actions.

Some cases that were sampled from police records in the runaway category were subsequently classified as throwaway. Throwaways were so classified if parents said they told the child to leave. This category was also based on other responses and included parents who said they did not want their child to come home or did not care, or if the child returned home in spite of opposition of someone in the household. Because there is some ambiguity concerning the distinction between runaway and throwaway categories, we have opted to include all cases satisfying our sample selec-

tion criteria for runaways in the analyses reported here. To make a distinction between voluntary runaways and those who may have been pressured to leave home, we include a "throwaway" indicator variable as a control in all of the multivariate analyses. This approach takes account of variation that may be explained by the fact that a child was pushed out of his or her home. Although the throwaway variable does not account for significant variation in police actions taken, this variable will later be found correlated with some case outcomes.

A few variables were included in the police action models primarily for control purposes. The institutional runaway variable was included not only because some departments told us during Phase 2 that these cases were handled differently from household runaway cases, but also because Table 4.5 suggested such differences. The number of days the child was gone during the incident was included in the models because the longer a case stays open, presumably, the greater is the likelihood that the police will take action.

The models were analyzed using logistic regression, a method often used to investigate the relationship between a dichotomous variable (such as a behavior occurring or not) and associated or explanatory variables. The weighted sample was used to compute logistic regression estimates. Special software was used to take account of the sample design in the computation of the variance-covariance matrix (Shaw, Folsom, Harrell, & Dillard, 1987). The design effect necessitates an adjustment for accurate estimation of F ratios and levels of statistical significance (based on unweighted Ns).

Interpretation of the odds ratios are straightforward in the case of dichotomous independent variables (e.g., for sex, institution, and throwaway states). Significant odds ratios indicate differences between the sexes, between institutional and household runaways, and between runaways who have been reclassified as throwaway and runaway where there is no indication that a child was unwelcome at home. For independent variables with three or more categories (e.g., age and site), a significant finding indicates a difference between the designated category (e.g., ages 15 to 17) and the undesignated reference category (12 or younger in the case of age). Significant findings for sites indicate a difference between the designated site (1 through 5) and the reference site (number 6 in our

analyses). Site 6 was designated the reference (comparison) site because it is the largest and because it did not differ markedly from the other sites on most comparisons of police actions between sites (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.6 gives the results of six logistic regression analyses of the various police actions. Numbers in table cells are odds ratios; they are the exponents of logistic regression coefficients. Odds ratios can be interpreted as the odds that a particular police action occurred given the existence or occurrence of an independent variable category. Odds ratios significantly higher than 1.0 indicate an increased likelihood of a police action; odds ratios significantly lower than 1.0 indicate a reduced likelihood of a police action. For example, in Table 4.6, police responding in person to take a report was associated with reduced likelihood that youngsters stayed away from home for 3 days or longer; where police had visited runaways were about one third as likely to stay away from 3 to 7 days and about one fifth as likely to stay away longer than 7 days. When the runaway was gone for more than 7 days, police were more than twice as likely to have followup contact with a parent/caretaker than they were when the youth was gone for a day or two. Levels of significance are indicated by asterisks. In the case of noncategorical independent variables (e.g., number of parent actions taken to find the child and number of family conflicts preceding the runaway event), significant odds ratios indicate an elevated or reduced likelihood of a police action for each increment of the independent variable.

Several general conclusions can be drawn from the logistic regression analyses of police actions:

- child age, sex, and race are not major determinants of police actions;
- considerable variation in police actions by site is apparent in so far as Site 1 in particular was less likely than the others to take actions; and
- parental concern about danger to the child, and the number of conflicts in the family in the 2 weeks before the incident, were associated with selected police actions.

There was not a single statistically significant relationship between sex or race and police actions, which suggests that these factors do not affect

Table 4.8 Logistic Regression Analyses of Police Actions: Odds Ratios

	Person Visit	Requested Photo	Searched for Child	Put Out APB	Called for Backup	Police Followup Contact
Age						
13-14 vs. ≤12	1.15	.33	1.02	2.43	.32*	1.23
15-17 vs. ≤12	.78	.48	1.02	2.13*	.40	1.48
Female	1.33	1.29	1.18	1.85	1.13	.92
Race						
White vs. black	1.82	1.17	1.88	2.00	1.71	1.58
Other vs. black	.82	1.13	.56	1.03	.79	1.33
Institution	.90	3.34	2.77	1.18	.80	.40
Throwaway	1.19	.79	1.05	2.07	2.44	1.09
Previous runaway incidents						
2-5 vs. 0-1	.84	.77	1.53	.63	.87	.84
6 or more vs. 0-1	1.34	1.91	.75	.89	1.29	1.01
Site 1 vs. Site 6	.00***	.03***	.02***	.12*	.04***	.03***
Site 2 vs. Site 6	.25*	1.23	.04***	.33*	.08**	.08***
Site 3 vs. Site 6	.79	.54	.03***	1.24	.14**	.24**
Site 4 vs. Site 6	.33	1.18	.20***	13.33***	.12***	2.87
Site 5 vs. Site 6	.87	.41	.07***	.18*	.12***	.03***
Left note	1.75	.40	1.39	.63	.91	3.25*
Other evidence	1.55	.79	2.08	1.20	.89	.75
Recent trouble	3.43*	1.04	1.88	1.44	1.60	.87
Parent attempts to locate	.72	1.19*	1.15	1.11	1.20	1.12
Parent worried about danger	1.15	1.33	1.91*	5.35***	1.61	1.28
Good home adjustment	1.79	1.00	.68	1.63	.67	2.10
No. conflicts before episode	1.01	1.19***	1.13*	1.07	1.15	1.23*
Household income >\$35,000	.61	1.04	.25**	.36	.98	.74
Days gone						
3-7 vs. 1-2	.35*	1.04	.82	.95	.61	1.27
>7 vs. 1-2	.21**	.83	.47	.32*	.73	2.43*
Intercept	48.96	2.60	.76	.02	.41	3.35
N	655	660	661	654	645	669

Significance levels:

* < .05
 ** < .01
 *** .001

police actions. Police were more likely to put out an APB for 15- to 17-year-olds in comparison to children 12 or younger. There was evidence that police were less likely to call for backup help in the case of runaways aged 13 or 14 in comparison to 12-year-olds, and the odds ratio of .40 for 15- to 17-year-olds approaches statistical significance ($p < .10$) in this police action category. That police were more likely to call for backup help for runaways aged 12 or younger reflects a standard element of written policy in many departments.

It is somewhat surprising that age is not more often associated with police actions. In both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the study, police often indicated that younger children's cases received a higher investigative priority. The Table 4.6 findings suggest that when other aspects of the case are controlled, as is accomplished in the multivariate analyses, age was not a major determinant of police actions.

There was no indication from the Table 4.6 findings that police react in unique ways to institutional runaways or throwaways. Somewhat surprisingly, neither is there evidence that a previous history of running away affects the actions police take in cases. Although the mail survey data and interviews with the police suggested that investigative action might be lower, especially where there is a long history of running away, we detect no such effect. According to parents' reports, the police were just as likely to engage in the six actions for youths who had six or more previous runaway incidents as for youth with no history of running away before the current incident.

The significantly low odds ratios for Sites 1 to 5 indicate the reference group site (Site 6) engaged in four of the investigative actions more often than the other five sites. This police agency was significantly more likely than most of the others to search for the child, put out an APB, call for backup, and have a followup contact with parents. Site 1 was also less likely than Site 6 to take a report in person or request a photograph. Site 2 was less likely than Site 6 to take a report in person. Clearly, the police in Site 1 engaged in all actions much less often than those in Site 6.

Table 4.6 shows several other significant findings:⁶

- recent trouble at home is associated with an in-person police visit;*
- parent attempts to locate the child before calling the police are associated with police requesting a photo;*
- when a parent reported being very concerned with the child's safety, the police were more likely to search for the child and put out an APB;*
- conflicts in the home in the 2 weeks before the runaway incident were associated with requests for a photo, searching for the child, and followup contact;*
- family income above \$35,000 was associated with a lower likelihood that a search of the home or neighborhood would be conducted; and
- the length of the runaway incident was directly associated with followup contact but inversely related to an in-person visit and putting out an APB.

It is difficult to interpret some of these findings, and some may be due to chance. It does seem likely that the finding of a direct relationship between parental safety concern and police actions indicates that the police may be responsive to parental fears. The most important result from Table 4.6 may be the lack of significant relationships. That is, characteristics of the child or family for the most part do not affect the number or types of police activities undertaken. Although parental worry affects some police activity, it appears to be unrelated to followup work.

4.6 PARENT/CARETAKER SATISFACTION WITH POLICE HANDLING OF CASES

4.6.1 Parent/Caretaker Responses

Parents ranked their satisfaction with police handling of cases. Three specific aspects of police handling were included: the investigation overall, the length of time it took for an officer to respond initially, and the amount of effort police made to recover the child. A separate question asked parents to report "yes" or "no" about their satisfaction

⁶The results marked with an asterisk in the bulleted list may all be related to the level of parental concern expressed to police who, in turn, do what they can to satisfy the parents (reviewer's comment by Darrel Stephens).

with the kind of information received from the police during the investigation. Table 4.7 shows the distributions of the satisfaction responses separately for household and institutional runaways for evaluations of police handling of the case overall, and of their time to respond and effort to recover the child or youth. Household and institutional cases were examined separately because earlier study findings indicated some police departments have special procedures for dealing with institutional runaways. Furthermore, relationships of the parent and institutional caretaker to the child differ, which may influence how police respond to cases and how parents and caretakers assess the police response.

Parents rated satisfaction with the overall handling of cases as excellent or very good 54% of the time. Time to respond was rated as excellent or good two thirds of the time, but effort to recover was not viewed as positively (only half of the household case respondents rated this aspect of the police response positively). From 16% to 27% of respondents for household cases said police handling of cases was poor or very poor, with most of this dissatisfaction expressed regarding effort to recover the child and the least with time to respond.

Ratings of police performance for institutional cases tended to be more favorable than for household cases, especially in the percentages of respondents rating police performance as poor or very poor. These poor rankings on the three satisfaction items ranged from 4% to 16%. There were similar levels of satisfaction with information that police provided about the case (not shown). Even fewer household respondents were satisfied. Given that police actions tended not to differ for household and institutional cases (Table 4.5), this may reflect lower expectations of police actions and/or a lower level of emotional involvement on the part of the institutional caretakers who responded to the survey. Fisher (1989) also found that 78% of case workers handling runaways thought the police response was helpful.

4.6.2 Multivariate Analysis of Parental Satisfaction

To understand the relationship between police actions and parent/caretaker satisfaction with police handling of cases, multivariate analyses were undertaken. Four dichotomous dependent variables were created from

Table 4.7 Parent/Caretaker Satisfaction with Police Handling of Runaway Cases

<u>Household</u>			
Parent Rating	Overall	Time to Respond	Effort to Recover
Excellent	23.9	32.0	22.4
Very good	30.5	34.1	26.4
Neutral	24.0	18.0	23.7
Poor	14.9	9.5	17.2
Very poor	6.6	6.4	10.2
<u>Institutional</u>			
Caretaker Rating	Overall	Time to Respond	Effort to Recover
Excellent	35.3	40.9	26.8
Very good	24.0	32.5	18.0
Neutral	34.0	23.0	39.5
Poor	5.1	2.8	13.6
Very poor	1.6	0.7	2.2

the satisfaction measures discussed above (overall, time to respond, effort to recover, and information provided). If respondents rated police actions as excellent or very good, they were considered satisfied and scored as one; otherwise, they were scored as zero. Separate logistic regression analyses were analyzed for each satisfaction measure using a number of individual, case, and police action independent variables. Odds ratios and levels of statistical significance are shown in table cells.

Table 4.8 shows that the age of the runaway was associated with parent/caretaker satisfaction with information the police provided. Parents/caretakers of older runaways were about three to four times more likely to be satisfied with information provided than parents of younger children. Parents and caretakers of female runaways were about two fifths as likely as those reporting about male runaways to be satisfied with information provided. The multivariate findings confirm the Table 4.7 results.

Some of the police action variables were directly related to parent/caretaker satisfaction. If a personal visit was made by the police, parents were five and a half times more likely to be satisfied with the time it took the police to respond; if a photograph was requested by police or if a backup officer was called, overall satisfaction was more than two times as likely than if these actions were not taken. Three of the police action frequency/satisfaction relationships were significant--all in a positive direction. The more actions taken by the police, the more likely parents and caretakers were to be satisfied. Institutional caretakers were more satisfied than parents.

One police action variable was associated with a reduced likelihood of satisfaction overall and with the effort expended to recover the child. When there was followup police contact, parents and caretakers were less likely to be satisfied. This report may reflect negative aspects of a case, such as the relationship between the time that the runaways were gone and followup contact shown in Table 4.6. It may be that parents were unhappy when their children had been gone for relatively long periods while, at the same time, more followup activity is required from police.

Parents and caretakers from Site 4 were less likely than their counterparts in the other sites to be satisfied overall either with time to

Table 4.8 Logistic Regression Analyses of Parental Satisfaction: Odds Ratios

	Overall Satisfaction	Time to Respond	Effort to Recover	Information Provided
Age				
13-14 vs. ≤ 12	1.64	1.34	1.53	4.02**
15-17 vs. ≤ 12	1.12	1.33	.89	2.77**
Female	.52*	1.34	.48	.39**
Race				
White vs. black	1.01	1.28	.81	1.15
Other vs. black	1.59	2.63*	.97	1.92
Miles from home				
10-50 vs. < 10	1.20	1.68*	1.10	.78
> 50 vs. < 10	.49	.97	.47	.46*
Institution	2.29*	3.22**	1.18	3.84*
No secure place to stay	1.15	1.36	.94	1.04
Police actions				
Person visit	2.87	5.53*	1.66	1.26
Photo requested	2.08*	1.37	.91	1.18
Search	.64	.72	1.05	.81
Put out APB	1.02	.56	1.41	.63
Called backup	2.27*	1.70	1.56	3.41
Police followup	.52**	.77	.38***	.66
Police action frequency	1.16	1.30**	.92	1.14
Investigative activity frequency	1.29	1.11	1.42***	1.29***
Site 1 vs. Site 6	1.21	.88	.88	.59
Site 2 vs. Site 6	.83	.98	1.63	1.18
Site 3 vs. Site 6	.62	.56	.69	.75
Site 4 vs. Site 6	.16***	.28**	.24**	.46
Site 5 vs. Site 6	.47	.46	.57	1.04
Previous runaway incidents				
2-5 vs. 0-1	1.42*	1.01	.82	.85
≥ 6 vs 0-1	.47	.42**	.60	.49
Days gone				
3-7 vs. 1-2	.88	.96	.82	1.10
> 7 vs. 1-2	.76	.92	.91	.60*
Intercept	.17	.10	.50	.44
N	569	568	562	546

Significance levels:

* $< .05$
 ** $< .01$
 *** $< .001$

respond or with the recovery effort made. Parents and caretakers of runaways who had six or more previous incidents were less likely than those with no previous runaway history to be satisfied with the time it took police to respond. If the runaway was gone more than a week, parents and caretakers tended not to be satisfied with the information provided by the police (although not with their efforts to recover the child).

4.7 CORRELATES OF RUNAWAY INCIDENT SEVERITY

It is of interest to understand what characteristics of runaways and their backgrounds are associated with more serious runaway incidents such as those that last a long time or involve long distance travel. To examine the correlates of runaway incident severity, we conducted logistic regression analyses on five dichotomous runaway incident indicators:

	<u>Percentage</u>
• Child traveled more than 50 miles	17.3
• Child had no secure place to stay	11.8
• Child gone 3 to 7 days	26.4
• Child gone more than 7 days	24.3
• Child initially ran to nonresidential setting	36.8

These variables were analyzed in logistic regression models with runaway demographics, type of case (institution, throwaway), previous history of running away, several parent/home variables, and the five site dummy variables.

Results of the analyses are shown in Table 4.9. Statistically significant findings can be summarized as "risk factors" (odds ratio significantly higher than 1.0) or "insulating" factors (odds ratio significantly lower than 1.0) for the various runaway incident features. The following points summarize the findings shown in Table 4.9:

- no secure place to stay: risk factors - being white, gone more than a week, and residence in Site 2; insulating factors - none.
- traveled more than 50 miles: risk factors - residence in Site 4; insulating factors - being an institutional runaway and parental actions to recover before calling police.

Table 4.9 Correlates of Runaway Incident Severity: Odds Ratios

	No Secure Place to Stay	Traveled >50 Miles	Gone 3-7 Days	Gone >7 Days	Non- residential Setting
Age					
13-14 vs. ≤12	1.38	.53	1.10	2.00	1.37
15-17 vs. ≤12	1.32	1.13	1.68	5.53**	1.06
Female	1.10	1.46	.73	.83	1.46
Race					
White vs. black	3.18**	2.00	.47	.37***	.93
Other vs. black	1.05	1.15	.70	.80	.74
Institution	.89	.09**	.30	.36	.34
Throwaway	1.84	.65	2.17	1.60	1.60
Previous incidents					
2-5 vs. 0-1	.66	.62	2.76**	1.47	.64*
≥6 or more vs. 0-1	1.02	2.44	3.15*	1.25	.46
Days gone					
3-7 vs. 1-2	1.25	1.36	N/A	N/A	1.11
>7 vs. 1-2	2.49*	1.99	N/A	N/A	.81
Site 1 vs. Site 6	1.11	2.31	1.51	1.91*	1.44
Site 2 vs. Site 6	2.72*	1.52	1.57	1.03	1.63
Site 3 vs. Site 6	2.04	.72	.56	.61*	.86
Site 4 vs. Site 6	1.65	8.66**	1.01	.80	1.76
Site 5 vs. Site 6	.95	2.51	1.28	.65	1.53
No. parent recovery actions	.88	.73*	1.28*	1.15*	.88
No. conflicts before episode	1.14	.96	.91	1.14	.98
Parent worried about danger	.57	.73	.70	1.34	.98
Good home adjustment	.62	1.85	.73	.72	2.96*
intercept	.07	.06	.32	.04	1.04
N	715	648	556	715	712

Significance levels:

- * < .05
- ** < .01
- *** < .001

- gone 3 to 7 days: risk factors - having a previous history of running away and parental recovery actions before calling the police; insulating factors - none.
- gone more than 7 days: risk factors - being age 15 to 17 and parental actions to recover before calling police and residence in Site 1; insulating factors - being white and residence in Site 3.
- ran first to nonresidential setting: risk factor - good home adjustment; insulating factor: having run away 2 to 5 times previously.

In summary, there is some evidence that being age 15 to 17, having a previous history of running away, and residence in some sites are associated with more serious runaway incidents. On the other hand, the absence of significant associations with the indicators of runaway incident severity is notable.

4.8 CORRELATES OF VICTIMIZATION, DANGER, AND HARM WHILE GONE

Some of the runaways told parents/caretakers they had been victims of violent or theft offenses while they were gone or their parents thought they were harmed in other ways. The purpose of the analyses in this section is to examine the correlates of these negative outcomes in a multivariate framework. Eight adverse outcome variables were created based on parent reports about the child's experience while away from home, not actual incidents. These variables are as follows:

	<u>Percentage</u>
• any victimization (sexual or nonsexual assault, theft)	11.8
• violent victimization (sexual or nonsexual assault)	9.9
• money or possessions taken	3.0
• in serious danger of harm	20.4
• serious mental harm	8.0
• any mental harm	
• sexual exploitation (involved in prostitution or pornography)	2.9
• harmed in another way (nonspecific)	4.4

These variables were scored one (adverse outcome) or zero (no adverse outcome) and analyzed separately in eight logistic regressions.

It should be noted that these measures are based on the responses of parents/caretakers who did not necessarily have direct or accurate knowledge of a number of the occurrences listed. It is likely that the parents/caretakers have underreported these events overall, and it may be that some events reported did not occur or were misunderstood by the parent. A comparison of parent and returned runaway youth responses to selected items from the survey found high levels of agreement on matters both would know, such as number of days youths had been gone and the number of times they had run away (see Appendix A). There was much less agreement in responses regarding illegal activities the youth had engaged in during the runaway episode. Parents were only about one fifth to one third as likely to report their children had engaged in panhandling, stealing, or drug dealing as were the youths themselves. No parents in this group reported a child had engaged in prostitution, pornography, or massage parlor work (and only 1% to 2% of the youths reported such activities) (see Table A.6). About two thirds of parents and youths said (independently) that they had discussed the runaway incident fully or in part, but only about half of this group agreed on the completeness of the discussion (Table A.3). Although parents are more likely to learn about victimization and other harm befalling their children during a runaway episode than about illegal activities, the comparative analysis suggests that the data considered here should be regarded with care.

Independent variables included in the models were:

- age: two dummy variables--ages 13 to 14 and 15 to 17 vs. 12 or younger;
- sex: females vs. males;
- race: whites vs. blacks, other races vs. blacks;
- previous runaway incidents: two dummy variables--2 to 5 previous incidents (37.1%) and 6 or more incidents (17.7%) vs. no previous incidents;
- institutional runaways (14.6%) vs. household runaways (5.8%);

- throwaway (8.2%) vs. runaway;
- first ran to nonresidential setting (36.8%) vs. ran to friend's or relative's house;
- parent did not know where child went first (17.6%) vs. other;
- distance traveled: two dummy variables--went 10 to 50 miles (53.6%) and more than 50 miles vs. less than 10 miles;
- no secure place to stay during incident (11.8%) vs. had secure place;
- time gone: two dummy variables--gone 3 to 7 days (26.4%) and gone more than 7 days (24.3%) vs. gone less than 3 days; and
- jurisdiction: five dummy variables identifying study sites.

Table 4.10 shows the results of the logistic regression analyses. The table's findings can be summarized by identifying "risk factors" (statistically significant odds ratios greater than 1.0) and "insulating factors" (statistically significant odds ratios less than 1.0). These findings are as follows:

- any victimization: risk factor--residence in Site 3; insulating factor--being age 13 or 14 vs. 12 or younger.
- violent victimization: risk factors--being white, traveling 10 to 50 miles from home, and residence in Site 3; insulating factor--being age 13 or 14.
- theft victimization: risk factors--having run away 6 or more times previously and residence in Site 5; insulating factors--none.
- serious danger: risk factors--having no secure place to stay while gone, six or more previous runaway incidents, being gone more than a week; insulating factors--residence in Sites 2 or 5.
- serious mental harm: risk factors--being female, traveling 10 to 50 miles from home, being gone more than a week, and residence in Sites 3, 4, and 5; insulating factors--none.
- any mental harm: risk factors--being female and residence in Site 3; insulating factors--safe destination and being an institutional runaway.
- sexual exploitation: risk factors--being female, not having a secure place to stay, and being a repeat runaway; insulating factor--being age 13 or older.

Table 4.10 Correlates of Adverse Incident Outcomes: Odds Ratios

	Any Victimi- zation	Violent Victimi- zation	Theft Victimi- zation	Serious Danger	Serious Mental Harm	Any Mental Harm	Sexual Exploita- tion	Other Harm
Age								
13-14 vs. ≤ 12	.33**	.52*	.24	.58	2.37	1.99	.11*	.81
15-17 vs. ≤ 12	.45	.53	.51	.67	1.59	1.36	.04***	.97
Female	1.61	1.98	1.20	1.68	2.64*	2.78*	8.28**	3.22
Race								
White vs. black	3.00	4.02*	.48	1.34	.86	2.16	1.81	6.78*
Other vs. black	.93	1.31	.25	.76	.64	.93	.68	2.90
Safe destination	.88	.79	.92	.96	.49	.34*	1.13	1.63
Destination unknown	.89	1.42	.20	1.09	.68	.27	.45	2.35
Miles traveled								
10-50 vs. <10	2.17	2.43*	1.46	1.15	2.00*	1.13	1.49	2.77
>50 vs. <10	.36	.72	.06	.53	.65	.80	2.82	1.00
Institution	.47	.56	.35	.82	.46	.32**	3.30	1.35
No secure place	1.41	.54	8.29	2.49**	2.00	.90	17.01**	1.71
Throwaway	.62	1.16	1.23	1.54	.95	1.25	1.85	5.68*
Previous incidents								
2-5 vs. 0-1	.74	.66	1.47	.81	.82	1.42	7.72*	.67
≥6 vs. 0-1	2.26	1.49	8.16*	2.32*	.83	.84	13.75**	2.93

(continued)

Table 4.10 (continued)

	Any Victimi- zation	Violent Victimi- zation	Theft Victimi- zation	Serious Danger	Serious Mental Harm	Any Mental Harm	Sexual Exploita- tion	Other Harm
Days gone								
3-7 vs. 1-2	1.75	1.83	.96	1.6	2.94	1.67	.65	2.28
>7 vs. 1-2	1.07	1.05	1.49	1.03**	.80*	1.18	1.76	1.83
Site 1 vs. Site 6	.85	.67	1.45	.60	4.15	1.01	.59	.26
Site 2 vs. Site 6	.66	.78	.27	.24***	4.16	.66	1.69	.30
Site 3 vs. Site 6	1.88*	2.44*	.55	1.08	6.65*	3.04*	1.22	.16
Site 4 vs. Site 6	.53	.58	.42	.89	24.61***	3.78	.25	1.05
Site 5 vs. Site 6	1.47	1.30	5.07**	.36*	10.90**	3.04	.52	1.28
Intercept	.08	.04	.03	.24	.00	.03	.00	.00
N	703	703	698	698	698	699	708	682

Significance level:

- * < .05
- ** < .01
- *** < .001

- other harm: risk factors--being white or a throwaway; insulating factors--none.

In summary, the fact that being older than 12 was an insulating factor against violent victimizations, and sexual exploitation indicates that younger runaways were particularly at risk for physical victimization--though they were not particularly at risk for theft. Being female, having run away more than once before, and having no secure place to stay were associated with sexual exploitation, but not with violent victimization generally nor with theft victimization.

4.9 POLICE ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

In this section, we look at the relationship of police actions to runaway incident severity (length of time gone, etc.) and adverse incident outcomes (e.g., victimization while gone). The questions of most interest are the types of police actions taken or the frequency of police actions associated with positive (or negative) runaway incident severity or adverse outcomes. Do police actions appear to make a difference?

Most runaway incidents are resolved within a few days with no apparent harm to the child. The argument is sometimes made that, given the low risk of harm to runaways, and given competing police priorities such as responding to predatory crime, it is not an appropriate use of limited police resources to pursue runaway cases aggressively unless there are indications of risk to the child. This argument rests, in part, on the fact that, without a substantial investment of investigative resources, mobile youths are difficult to locate, especially in large communities. We can partially test these assumptions by examining the relationship between police actions and case outcomes.

To address these questions, we used logistic regression models for selected outcomes, adding police action variables to the group of independent variables analyzed in the models reported earlier in the chapter (demographics, time gone, other incident characteristics, and runaway history). The addition of police action type and frequency variables limited the number of outcome variables that could be analyzed. Some of the outcomes, such as sexual exploitation and being the victim of theft, occurred too

infrequently to allow the addition of a number of additional variables to the models. Data were too sparse to support analyses of some adverse outcome variables.

Table 4.11 reports the results of the analyses. There are difficulties in interpreting some of these results as either "risk factors" or "insulators." For one thing, there is an obvious direct relationship between some police actions and dependent variables that cannot be sensibly interpreted in this way (e.g., time gone and police followup). For another, we have no information on the timing of police actions with relation to outcomes such as victimization. Thus, relationships to police actions are interpreted simply as significant associations. The results are as follows:

- no secure place: risk factors--being white or throwaway and running a long distance; insulating factor--having a safe initial destination; police actions--no significant relationships.
- traveled 50 or more miles: risk factors--being white and having no secure place to stay (for one or more nights); insulating factors--none; police actions--putting out an APB positively associated.
- gone 3 to 7 days: risk factors--having 2 to 5 previous runaway incidents; insulating factor--police search for child; other police action--police followup positively associated.
- gone more than 7 days: risk factors--being 15 to 17 years old, traveling more than 50 miles and no action taken by police; insulating factors--being white, having a safe initial destination; other police actions--police followup positively associated, police taking a report in person and putting out an APB negatively associated.
- any victimization: risk factors--being gone more than 7 days; insulating factor--police taking some action; other police actions--calling for backup positively associated.
- violent victimization: risk factors--being white and gone more than 7 days; insulating factor--police taking some action; other police actions--positive associations with conducting a search and calling for backup.
- serious mental harm: risk factors--being female and traveling more than 50 miles; insulating factors--none; police actions--none.

Table 4.11 Relationship of Police Actions to Incident Outcomes: Odds Ratios

	No Secure Place	Traveled 50+ Miles	Gone 3-7 Days	Gone 7+ Days	Any Victimiza- tion	Violent Victimiza- tion	Serious Mental Harm
Age							
13-14 vs. ≤12	2.64	.37	.99	3.85	.45	.99	2.39
15-17 vs. ≤12	2.55	1.15	.99	8.48**	.49	.67	1.68
Female	1.46	1.27	.81	.78	1.51	1.61	4.28**
Race							
White vs. black	4.12***	2.18**	.62	.34***	2.77	4.38**	1.90
Other vs. black	1.38	1.32	.40	.65	1.11	1.85	.37
Safe destination	.33*	1.41	.88	.70*	1.24	.83	.65
Miles traveled							
10-50 vs. <10	1.28	N/A	.61	2.47	1.93	2.40	3.44
>50 vs. <10	8.84***	N/A	.74	2.81**	.27	.67	1.68*
Institution	.54	.27	.72	.24	.64	.75	.79
No secure place	N/A	6.19**	1.34	1.56	1.33	.31	1.59
Throwaway	5.18**	.42	1.44	1.11	.64	1.55	1.19
Previous incidents							
2-5 vs. 0-1	.66	1.06	2.53*	1.56	.58	.47	1.73
≥6 vs. 0-1	1.19	2.35	2.03	.80	2.16	1.53	1.34

(continued)

Table 4.11 (continued)

	No Secure Place	Traveled 50+ Miles	Gone 3-7 Days	Gone 7+ Days	Any Victimiza- tion	Violent Victimiza- tion	Serious Mental Harm
Days gone							
3-7 vs. 1-2	1.39	.84	N/A	N/A	1.55	1.63	.53
>7 vs. 1-2	1.92	1.55	N/A	N/A	2.34*	3.04*	2.08
Police actions							
Person visit	.59	.79	.49	.30**	.65	1.20	.54
Photo requested	2.42	1.40	2.02	.93	1.68	1.99	2.70
Search	.76	.76	.32***	.53	2.33	2.59*	1.45
Put out APB	.88	6.16**	.83	.16***	1.16	1.69	1.77
Called backup	1.24	1.19	.48	.70	5.57**	7.94***	.34
Police followup	1.07	.57	2.74***	3.40*	.75	.86	1.66
No police actions	1.00	.90	1.01	1.17*	.76*	.65***	.88
Intercept	.01	.07	.66	.04	.15	.06	.00
N	579	605	456	579	577	577	572

Significance level:

- * < .05
- ** < .01
- *** < .001

There is some evidence, then, that police actions can affect the outcome of runaway incidents. The most consistent is that several of these (interviewing parents in person, searching for the runaway, and putting out an APB) were associated with the reduced likelihood that youngsters were gone for extended periods, while police taking no action was associated with the increased risk of being gone for more than a week. It is likely that the association of increased police followup with time gone is simply a reflection of police routine: The six departments from which we sampled reports required officers to follow up on runaway cases periodically until the child returned.

4.10 RUNAWAY ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES WHILE GONE

Parents and caretakers were asked to report whether their children were involved in a variety of illegal activities while they were gone. In this section, we examine the correlates of involvement in illegal activities during the runaway incidents. We again use logistic regression analyses to examine the relationship of a group of independent variables to involvement in theft and/or robbery, drug sales (including or without drug use), and drug use (but not sales). Independent variables that have been added are the same set used in most previous modeling except that variables have been added indicating involvement in theft, drug sales, and drug use in the year before the incident. The inclusion of these variables in the models provides some control for the inclination of the runaways to engage in illegal activities other than during the runaway incident per se. The goal is to get some idea of the "independent" contribution of the runaway incident itself to theft and drug offenses. The data on illegal activities are based on responses by parents/caretakers. As mentioned earlier, when compared with responses of returned youths, parents significantly underreported illegal activities (see Appendix A).

Table 4.12 shows the results of the analyses. Previous involvement in the three illegal activities is a very strong predictor of involvement in the same activities while gone. Youths who had been involved in theft before an incident were over 20 times as likely to have been so involved during an incident than were youths who were not involved in theft before an incident. Prior drug sales involvement raises the odds of selling drugs

Table 4.12 Correlates of Theft and Drug Offenses
While Gone: Odds Ratios

	Illegal Involvement		
	Theft/Robbery	Drug Sales	Drug Use Only
Age			
13-14 vs. ≤12	.48	.49	1.16
15-17 vs. ≤12	.61	.59	1.97
Female	.69	.28*	.68
Race			
White vs. black	2.13	.98	4.94**
Other vs. black	1.90	.77	1.82
Safe destination	1.12	1.47	4.29**
Destination unknown	6.31**	1.73	3.24*
Miles traveled			
10-50 vs. <10	2.18	2.02	1.47
>50 vs. <10	1.16	.66	1.40
Institution	.33	.04*	.49
No secure place	2.24	5.49***	2.90**
Throwaway	3.03*	.76	1.61
Previous incidents			
2-5 vs. 0-1	1.48	.97	1.86
≥6 vs. 0-1	2.37	1.80	3.10*
Days gone			
3-7 vs. 1-2	.91	1.18	1.08
>7 vs. 1-2	1.62	1.73	1.05
Site 1 vs. Site 6	1.41	1.50	1.17
Site 2 vs. Site 6	.96	1.59	.52
Site 3 vs. Site 6	1.51	13.02**	8.08*
Site 4 vs. Site 6	1.12	7.53*	1.85
Site 5 vs. Site 6	1.16	3.91	3.45
Previous theft	21.37***	N/A	N/A
Previous drug sales	N/A	1360.50***	N/A
Previous drug use	N/A	N/A	22.15***
Intercept	.01	.01	.00
N	674	667	685

Significance level:

- * < .05
- ** < .01
- *** < .001

during an incident more than 1,300 times. Those who used drugs in the year before running away were over 20 times more likely to have done so during an incident than those who did not.

A few other factors account for statistically significant variation in the likelihood of involvement in theft and drug offenses during a runaway incident. When parents or caretakers did not know that the child's initial destination, they were more than six times more likely to report that the child was involved in theft or robbery and more than three times more likely to report drug use. Throwaways were more than three times as likely to have been involved in theft or robbery than were runaways not so classified. Having a history of six or more previous incidents raised the odds of drug use during a current incident more than three times.

Two sites were associated with an increased risk of drug offenses. Site 3 runaways were 13 times more likely than Site 6 runaways to sell drugs while they were away from home, and Site 4 runaways were 7.5 times more likely to do so. Site 3 runaways were also at increased risk of drug use.

4.11 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FOR RUNAWAYS

Early in the chapter, comparisons were made between runaways and runaway incident characteristics for the current study (which collected cases from police records) and NISMART (which relied on surveys of household and juvenile institutions). The sex distribution of cases from the two studies was very similar; about 6 in 10 runaways were female. Runaways from the current study were younger, probably because younger children are viewed as being at higher risk of harm and are, thus, more likely to be reported to the police. There was a higher percentage of minority cases in the current study than in NISMART, possibly at least in part because the current study was conducted in six major metropolitan areas where minority populations are higher than in the population as a whole. There were few major differences in the features of the incidents for the current study and NISMART, although runaways in the latter were more likely to be accompanied by others when they left home.

4.11.1 Police Actions

Police responses to runaway cases from parent/caretaker points of view were varied, but some actions were common while others were rare. Police usually took basic information and asked for information about the child. They rarely suggested parents contact runaway hotlines or NCMEC. There was little evidence that police have waiting periods before taking reports, but police in one of the sites did tell about one of six parents to call back when they were first contacted. In three quarters of the cases, an officer came to take a report in person. Police searched the neighborhood for the child about one of four times and put out an APB in about one of three cases. There were noticeable differences among sites in the way that police responded to cases. One site in particular was less active in investigating runaway cases. There were no major differences within sites in the way that police responded to household and institutional cases.

Age, race, sex, and family income had little, if any, effect on the way that police responded to cases, although a few case characteristics did shape the police response. Police were less likely to call for backup for children older than 12, reflecting the fact that many police departments define missing cases involving younger children as priority cases requiring certain procedures, often including calling for backup. Parental concern was associated with increased likelihood of conducting a search and issuing an APB, while higher family income was associated with reduced likelihood of searching the neighborhood. Reduced time gone was associated with an in-person visit, while increases in time gone were associated with followup.

Police actions were also associated with outcomes of runaway incidents. For some outcomes, police actions appeared to be interpretable as risk or insulating factors. Police taking no action in a case, for example, was associated with increased risk of a youth's being gone for more than 7 days, while their taking some action (a personal visit, searching the neighborhood, and putting out an APB) was associated with reduced risk of being gone for extended periods. Relatively infrequent police actions, such as calling for backup, searching for the youth, or putting out an APB were positively associated with youths who traveled more than 50 miles, were gone more than 7 days, and were victimized during the incident. This

suggests that police were able to recognize cases likely to have serious negative outcomes in their early stages.

4.11.2 Parental Satisfaction

A significant percentage of parents were not satisfied with the police handling of cases. About one in five was dissatisfied overall, and one in four was not satisfied with the effort police made to recover their child. It should be noted again that parents would not have been aware of the full extent of police activity, so this perception is probably based on incomplete information. Institutional caretakers were more satisfied than parents with police handling of cases. The multivariate analyses showed that an in-person police response and a request for a photograph of the child were associated with parent/caretaker satisfaction. When there was police followup contact, parents tended not to be satisfied, an association perhaps reflecting parental unhappiness at their children's being gone for relatively longer periods.

4.11.3 Runaway Incident Seriousness

The seriousness of runaway incidents can be characterized on the basis of time gone, distance traveled, and the security of overnight quarters. When these features of the runaway incidents were analyzed in a multivariate framework, some correlates of incident seriousness were observed. Youngsters with a history of running away, older teenagers (15- to 17-years-old), and whites appeared to be at more risk than others of involvement in potentially dangerous runaway episodes. The notable sparseness of significant relationships in this analysis, however, suggests that accurately identifying runaways at risk is not a straightforward matter.

4.11.4 Correlates of Adverse Incident Outcomes

Adverse outcomes were conceptualized in terms of a runaway youth's being subject to victimization (including violent victimization and/or sexual exploitation), serious danger, and mental or other harm while away (insofar as these outcomes were perceived by or known to parents/caretakers). Multivariate analysis indicated risk factors associated with such outcomes as well as insulating factors.

Being white and traveling 10 to 50 miles increased the risk of violent victimization. Repeat runaways, females, those 12 and younger, and those without a secure place to stay for at least one night while gone were at increased risk of sexual exploitation. Being 13 or 14 rather than 12 and younger insulated runaways against violent victimization and sexual exploitation. Repeat runaways with six or more previous incidents were at increased risk of theft; no insulating factors were observed for theft victimization.

Repeat runaways (six or more previous incidents), those gone longer than a week, and those without a secure place to stay during the episode were at increased risk of serious danger (as perceived by parents/caretakers). Females were more likely than males to have suffered some mental harm, while the additional factor of traveling 10 to 15 miles from home increased the risk of serious mental harm. Generally, running away to a safe destination and running from an institutional setting insulated youths from mental harm, while being gone more than a week appeared to be an insulating factor for serious mental harm. That is, parents/caretakers of youngsters who had run from institutions and/or stayed away for a relatively long time did not think that these runaways had been harmed.

4.11.5 Illegal Activities

After controlling for variation attributable to demographic factors, features of the runaway incident and other factors (including illegal behavior in the year before the current incident), several statistically significant correlates of illegal activity during the runaway incident were observed. When parents did not know their child's original destination, they were six times more likely to report that the child was involved in theft or robbery. Throwaways were at increased risk of being involved in theft or robbery during the incident. Not surprisingly, all the "previous illegal involvement" variables are strong correlates of involvement in the same activity while gone. Being female and/or an institutional runaway were inversely associated with drug selling. Drug use while gone was associated with several factors including being white, having a safe initial destination or a destination unknown to parents/caretakers, having no secure place to stay, and/or six or more previous runaway incidents.

4.11.6 Summary of Findings by Key Variables

Another way to look at the findings of this chapter is to summarize the statistically significant multivariate findings by selected variable categories. The following listing provides such a summary.

Demographic Effects

- Demographic effects are not strong predictors of police actions.
- Police were more likely to call for backup if the runaway was age 12 or younger and to put out an APB if the runaway was 15- to 17-years-old.
- Parents of younger children were less likely to be satisfied with the information police provided.
- Whites were more likely than blacks not to have a secure place to stay.
- 15- to 17-year-olds were more likely than those 12 or younger to be gone more than a week.
- Whites were more likely than blacks to be victimized during an incident.
- Females were more likely than males to be exploited sexually and to suffer mental harm.
- Runaways 12 or younger were at increased risk for sexual exploitation.

Effects of Runaway History

- A previous history of running away did not affect police actions.
- Any previous runaway incident raised the risk of sexual exploitation.
- A history of six or more previous incidents increased the likelihood of theft victimization and drug use during incident.

No Secure Place to Stay

- This elevated the risk of being in serious danger and sexual exploitation.
- It also raised the risk of drug sales involvement.

Distance Traveled

- Going 10 to 50 miles in contrast to less than 10 miles was associated with violent victimization and serious mental harm.

Days Gone

- This was associated with having no secure place to stay.
- It was also associated with parent/caretaker perceiving child had been in serious danger and suffered serious mental harm.

Throwaways

- These were at risk of "other" harm.
- They were also at risk of theft victimization.

Implications of these findings are discussed in the final chapter of the report.

CHAPTER 5

FAMILY ABDUCTIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Family abductions usually involve one parent taking a child or children from another parent, often during custody or visitation disputes after a separation or divorce. Occasionally, a family abductor will be another relative such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle, or an in-law. NISMART found that the incidence of family abduction was much higher than previously thought--totaling 354,100 children 0 to 17 years of age in 1988 for a rate of 5.61 per 1,000 children

Until recently, little attention was paid to family abductions. Gelles (1984) made the first attempt to estimate the incidence of the phenomenon. Agopian (1981, 1984, 1987) analyzed the characteristics of cases, the effects that the events have on children and victims' parents, and some of the legal difficulties of responding to cases. Hoff (1985, 1986) looked at legal difficulties and remedies for such cases. Other work is currently in progress, including a study funded by the OJJDP of the obstacles to the recovery and return of parent-abducted children.

Family abduction cases often prove to be difficult for the criminal justice system for a variety of reasons:

- child's custody status may be unclear, making it uncertain whether a criminal abduction has taken place;
- laws and legal procedures differ from State to State and between jurisdictions, complicating matters when the abductor leaves the reporting jurisdiction; and
- family abduction cases are frequently part of a cluster of conflicts around family breakups, including child support payments and visitation privileges, and may not involve a serious attempt to keep a child; this sometimes makes the appropriateness of criminal justice system intervention questionable.

Because of the legal ambiguities, doubts about their authority to act, and practical difficulties, police are often reluctant to pursue cases. The findings from Phase 1 of this study reveal that more than three of four agencies nationally identified custody laws and difficulty of verifying

custody as obstacles to the successful investigation of cases. Lack of cooperation from other LEAs and prosecutors were also viewed as problems by substantial percentages of departments.

During the second phase of the study, Forst et al. (1988) found that

- the definition of family abduction (sometimes referred to as custodial interference) differs from jurisdiction to jurisdiction;
- police agencies differed from each other markedly in the way they respond to such cases; and
- most police agencies prefer that another local agency, such as a district attorney or family court, handle these cases.

As will be seen below, the legal status of family abduction cases and the posture of police departments toward them have implications for our analyses.

The ratios of runaway to family abduction cases in NISMART and current studies appear to confirm qualitative information gathered during the second phase of this study. The ratio of the incidence of runaways (reported to police) to family abductions (reported to police) in NISMART is 1.2 to 1 (181,600 + 155,804).⁷ The same ratio for the current study is 55 to 1 (5,526 + 100). The national incidence study suggests a much higher incidence of family abduction than the police records study does. During the site visits of Phase 2 of the study, it was determined that police departments often refer family abduction cases elsewhere. It appears that the family abduction cases identified in police files are a small percentage of total cases. It is also likely the cases in police records will have a biased profile. Police are unlikely to accept a random sample of cases for investigation. Cases investigated probably have features that police perceive make them appropriate for police investigation.

⁷The number used of runaways reported to police was derived from NISMART estimates as 40% of the 446,700 estimated from the household survey results plus 73% of the 4,000 estimated from the juvenile facilities study results who had not also run from a household that year (see Finkelhor et al., 1990a).

5.2 CASE CHARACTERISTICS

Comparison of the cases from the current study with those of NISMART shows some similarities and differences (Table 5.1).⁸ The sex profile was similar--53% male in the current study and 58% male in NISMART. As expected, there were more minority cases in the police study (76% vs. 20%) because the former was conducted in six urban areas where minority populations are high. The age distribution of the police study's family abduction victims was younger; this was also a pattern observed in the comparison of runaways. Perhaps the abduction of younger children is more likely to be reported to the police, or such cases are more likely to be accepted for investigation. The time-gone pattern for the two sets of cases was similar.

The characteristics of the perpetrator differed somewhat in the current and NISMART studies. Half of the current study perpetrators were 30 or younger, while only 30% of NISMART perpetrators were this young. The classifications of the perpetrators' relationship to the respondent differed in the two studies, so this comparison is somewhat problematic. However, it appeared that mothers and stepmothers were more likely to be the perpetrator in the police study; 40% of the cases involved such offenders, while only 11% of NISMART cases involved a "former or current wife or girlfriend." Classification of custody status also differed in the two studies, but it appeared that police study cases were less likely to have formal custody agreements (47%) than NISMART cases (60%).

Some aspects of the abduction appeared to be more serious for the police records study cases: The child was taken out of State more often, the offender made threats or demands in a higher percentage of cases, and the child was concealed more often. Sexual and physical abuse rates were very low and similar for the two studies. More of the NISMART victim's parents than parents in the police records study thought their child was mentally harmed more often.

⁸The NISMART definition of family abduction included cases where the perpetrator was a paramour of a parent (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1989). We identified five such cases in our study, which we categorized as nonfamily abductions. They are described in the following chapter.

Table 5.1 Comparison of Family Abduction Cases: Police Records and NISMART Studies

	Police Records Study (weighted n = 100; unweighted n = 58)	National Incidence Study (weighted n = 354,100; unweighted n = 142)
Male	53	58
Female	47	42
Race/ethnicity		
White	24	80
Black	68	17
Hispanic	8a	3a
Age of child		
0-1	42	6a
2-3	15a	18
4-5	13	15
6-7	8a	13
8-9	5a	15
10-11	6a	14
12-13	6a	10
14-15	4a	7
16-17	0	1a
Time gone (hours)		
Under 1 hour	0	4a
2-6	10a	9
7-24	18	21
25-144	18	28
145-168	29a	18
169-720	16	9
72 or more	0	9
Not returned	9a	1a
Offender age		
30 or under	51	30b
31-40	23	46
41 or older	6	14
Don't know	20	10
Child taken out of State	21	9
Threats or demands	42	17

See notes at end of table.

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

	Police Records Study (weighted n = 100; unweighted n = 58)	National Incidence Study (weighted n = 354,100; unweighted n = 142)
Concealment of child	55	33
Attempt to permanently alter custodial privileges	25	40
Sexually abused		
Yes	0	<1 ^a
Attempt	0	<1 ^a
No	89	94
Don't know	11	4
Physically abused		
Yes	5	4
No	90	89
Don't know	5	7
Mentally harmed		
Serious		16
Mild	19	15
Minor		9
None	71	54
Don't know whether or degree	10	5 ^a

^aBased on fewer than 10 cases.

^bAge category is under 30 in NISMART.

5.3 POLICE ACTIONS

Table 5.2 shows the actions police took in response to family abduction cases. In less than 2% of the cases, police told the parent to call back later. Of course, this percentage does not reflect cases where the police referred the caller elsewhere or did not take a report for other reasons. These incidents are not reflected in this study.

An officer came to take a report in person 9 out of 10 times; this figure was 8 of 10 times for runaways. Most other police actions were engaged in at a rate similar to actions for runaways. "Suggest calling a lawyer" was more common for family abductions.

Table 5.3 shows parent/caretaker satisfaction with police handling of family abduction cases. Police handling of cases was rated very good or excellent from 55% to 71% of the time. More than 7 of 10 parents rated time to respond highly. Ratings were very poor or poor 19% to 26% of the time. These percentages were similar to those for runaway cases.

5.4 SUMMARY

The findings from the final phase of the study indicate police actions for family abduction cases that were investigated did not differ markedly from those for runaways. Parental satisfaction with police handling of cases was similar to these findings for runaways.

Due to the limited number of family abduction cases in the sample (unweighted $n = 58$) and the low prevalence of adverse case outcomes, it was not possible to conduct multivariate analyses to examine these outcomes.

Police records are probably not a good source of information about family abduction cases. Indications are that only a small proportion are reflected in police files. It appears these cases are often not accepted for investigation, and police say they frequently refer them to another agency. The implications of this and other aspects of family abduction findings are discussed in the final chapter of the report.

In earlier phases of the study, it was clear that family abduction cases were viewed as a unique category (or population) by police. Issues of civil law were important, in addition to issues of criminal law, and the police were often uncertain that their involvement was appropriate. It is

Table 5.2 Parent/Caretaker Reports of Police Activities: Family Abductions

Police Activities	Percentage (weighted n = 100)
<u>Police Actions at Initial Contact</u>	
Call back later	1.6
Took basic information	41.9
Said officer would be sent	53.3
Came to station	1.6
Suggestions for locating child	2.5
Other responses	1.6
Officer came in person	90.1
<u>Actions Taken During In-Person Police Contact</u>	
Took basic information	97.2
Asked for photograph of child	59.7
Asked for friend/relative contact	51.0
Searched house	8.9
Searched neighborhood	44.0
Asked about child's haunts	62.0
Put out APB	24.4
Called other officers	32.0
Other actions	8.2
<u>Police Actions at Any Time During Event</u>	
Suggest how to find child	36.1
Suggest calling runaway hotline	1.6
Suggest contacting NCMEC or other missing child agency	5.1
Suggest calling friends/relatives	56.2
Describe investigative process	37.9
Tell how to get copy of report	45.1
Give case number	53.6
Tell who to contact for more information	54.3
Suggest calling lawyer	24.4
Other	8.4
Any followup contact	76.2

Table 5.3 Parent/Caretaker Satisfaction with Police Handling of Family Abduction Cases

Parent Rating	<u>Household (%)</u>		
	Overall	Time to Respond	Effort to Recover
Excellent	15.4	21.7	14.5
Very good	39.1	49.1	43.2
Neutral	21.4	9.6	16.0
Poor	10.0	10.9	16.1
Very poor	14.2	8.6	10.3

notable that the family abduction cases identified in our six Phase 3 jurisdictions apparently included a relatively high proportion of "policy-focal" cases by the NISMART definition (i.e., cases where the child was taken out of State [a felony in all States by 1990], threats or demands were made, and/or the child was concealed). In about half of these cases, there were no formal custody arguments. State laws criminalizing parental abduction normally require that a custody order be in place for the law to be effective. Most police interviewed in Phase 2 were especially uncomfortable about handling such cases, having no clear authority to do so.

CHAPTER 6

NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Nonfamily abductions are generally considered the most serious and rarest of the categories of children discussed in this report. The differences between the legal definition and public perception about these cases are sharp and include the following:

- the legal definition of abduction varies from State to State and is generally defined as coerced movement for even a small distance;
- perpetrators may be known to both the parent and child;
- the child may be held for only a short time and then released even before the parent realizes the child was "missing"; and
- the abduction, or coerced movement, may be subsumed under another more serious crime such as sexual assault or homicide.

These disparities affect the ability to accurately determine the incidence of such cases, as well as the capability of LEAs to respond to the problem. For example, if the perpetrator is an acquaintance of the family, it may be more difficult for the parent to convince the police that the child is endangered. Additionally, abductions intended to facilitate a sexual assault may require a different police response than one intended as a kidnapping for ransom.

Finkelhor et al. (1990a) addressed these definitional ambiguities by distinguishing between "legal" and "stereotypical" definitions of nonfamily abductions. They noted that the legal definition encompasses a wide range of incidents, including cases where a child is dragged into a car or an alley and sexually assaulted, cases where individuals are held hostage during a robbery, and cases where a neighbor or acquaintance of the parent takes the child without parental permission. The "stereotypical" definition is narrower and requires that the perpetrator be a stranger (to the child); and that the child was gone overnight or was transported a distance of 50 miles or more; or that the child was ransomed or killed; or that the perpetrator showed an intent to keep the child permanently.

Our current study findings indicate that concern about incongruence between the legal definition and the public perceptions of nonfamily abductions is well founded. Of the 11 cases of nonfamily abductions reported during the data collection period, only 1 case met the criteria for the "stereotypical" definition. The remaining cases were either a sexual assault that involved coerced movement or an abduction by a known person (generally the mother's boyfriend).

Information from Phase 1 and Phase 2 interviews with law enforcement personnel regarding their policies and practices for nonfamily abductions is presented below. A qualitative description of responses to the parent interviews for the nonfamily abduction cases that were reported during the Phase 3 data collection is also provided. Due to the small number of cases of this type, statistical analysis was not appropriate.⁹

6.2 PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2 FINDINGS

6.2.1 Police Perception of Problem

Perceptions about the problem of missing children vary across departments and by the position of officers within departments. One exception to this general rule is for "kidnappings" or stranger abductions, which are uniformly viewed as serious. However, this type of case is also viewed as extremely rare and is therefore a problem that police encounter infrequently.

When discussing the broader category of nonfamily abduction, Phase 2 respondents appeared to have a hierarchical classification of severity. Stranger abductions were considered to be the most serious, with other acquaintances such as babysitters or boyfriends being viewed as less serious.

⁹We identified cases for study in police files of "missing" and "abduction" cases. The NISMART estimates of nonfamily abductions were also based on a survey of police records; however, that study also searched homicide files and, in a subset of four counties, sex offense files. Two thirds of the legal definition cases identified in NISMART were found in police sex offense files. This difference in method accounts, in part, for the small number of cases we found (see Sedlak, Mohadjer, McFarland, & Hudock, 1990).

Results of the Phase 1 mail survey generally support the perception that stranger abductions are rare. Approximately 95% of all departments had no reported stranger abductions during 1986. Only a small number of the very large departments reported investigating even one stranger abduction case during 1986. However, those stranger abduction cases that were reported were most likely to remain open after 30 days.

6.2.2 Police Response

The investigative responsibility for this type of case varies by department. In many LEAs, stranger abductions are investigated by major crime units such as homicide, robbery, or crimes against persons. These units are generally considered to have a more important function within the department, compared to juvenile or missing persons units.

The classification categories for cases vary greatly among departments, especially at the dispatch stage. Some departments only have a category of "missing persons" for their dispatchers to use, while others employ "runaway," "lost," and "kidnapped." Dispatch officers interviewed during the Phase 2 site visits indicated that all the jurisdictions assign a high dispatch priority to stranger abductions, to very young missing children, and to instances where foul play is suspected.

There was a high level of consistency among respondents to the mail survey regarding factors that would result in the assignment of a high investigative priority to a stranger abduction case. The most frequently chosen were a child who is 8-years-old or younger, eyewitness account, danger of sexual exploitation, physical evidence, victim's need for prescription medicine, and a handicapped or disabled victim.

Responses to the mail survey indicated that the intensity of the investigative action is highest for stranger abductions and unknown missing cases as measured by the number of investigative actions taken. The departments overall showed less variation in action frequency for stranger abductions than for the other case types, indicating that departments of all sizes respond more similarly for stranger abductions than for other missing children cases.

Phase 2 respondents indicated that patrol officers routinely notify supervisors if foul play is suspected. In the most serious cases, the

patrol supervisors or other investigative personnel will set up a command post to coordinate activities. Many departments enter all missing persons cases into the NCIC system, and even those who do not routinely enter all cases do enter suspected stranger abductions. The NCMEC is rarely contacted by police agencies according to their own reports.

6.2.3 Obstacles to Investigation

Police departments were in agreement about obstacles to investigation of stranger abductions cases. Three obstacles were identified by 90% or more of the departments: difficulty securing witnesses, difficulty obtaining physical evidence, and difficulty classifying cases. In the proportions choosing any obstacle to investigating this case type, there were no significant differences among departments of various sizes, types, or with different units assigned the investigative responsibility.

6.3 PHASE 3 FINDINGS: CASE CHARACTERISTICS

There were 11 cases of nonfamily abductions or attempted nonfamily abductions for which a parent interview was completed. Most of the cases were more similar to family abductions or sexual assaults than to the stereotypical kidnapping by a stranger.

6.3.1 Characteristics of the Victims

There were five female victims and six male victims. Most of the victims were either black or Hispanic. Their ages ranged from 1- to 17-years-old: Five of the victims were aged 5 or less, four were between 5- and 10-years-old, and two were teenagers.

6.3.2 Characteristics of the Perpetrators

Nearly half of the perpetrators were boyfriends¹⁰ of the child's mother. All of these perpetrators were black or Hispanic males, and their ages ranged from 24- to 38-years-old. The remaining perpetrators were

¹⁰NISMART categorized cases where the perpetrator was a parent's paramour as family abductions unless this person clearly had "only a very short-lived relationship with the parent/guardian (a matter of a few weeks or so)." (Finkelhor et al., 1989, p. 8n.)

divided nearly evenly between "strangers" and "others," and little or no information was provided about them.

6.3.3 Description of the Events

No ransom or extortion was claimed in any of the cases, and most of the victims were not missing for very long. Eight children were gone 2 hours or less. Of the three remaining victims, two were held by persons known to the parent (14 hours and 3 months), and one was held for 3 days by an unidentified male. Nearly all of the victims were forcibly moved during the episode. Most were taken from the street and moved in a car to another location. The parent feared that the child would be harmed in four cases, but only one of these reported any actual harm done. Little mental or emotional harm and no physical assaults were reported.

Four females were reportedly sexually abused. One 17-year-old girl was reportedly abducted by a 21-year-old acquaintance and held in a motel room in another State for 3 days before being returned by the abductor. The other three cases involved two girls one aged 8 and one aged 15 who were all taken from the street and sexually molested. In these three cases, the child was held only a short time, and the incident was reported by the parent after the child had returned home.

6.4 POLICE RESPONSE

6.4.1 Notification and Initial Response

In nine of the cases, the report to the police was filed by the victims' mothers; one report was filed by the father and one by a foster parent. Six of the respondents initially notified the police by calling the emergency (911) number, and four walked into the station. None of the respondents was told to call or return later; an initial report was either taken at the first contact, or the person was told that an officer would come to take a report. In all cases in which a respondent was told an officer would come to take a report, an officer did respond in person.

6.4.2 Investigative Actions

Because most of the victims were missing for such a short period of time, many of the police investigative actions asked about were not rele-

vant. However, in most of the cases, the police did explain how to get a copy of the report and gave the parent the report number.

6.4.3 Recovery

The method of recovery was variable. The police were described as having been responsible for recovery of the child in only two cases. After the child returned, only about half of the parents felt that they had received a complete description of the episode from the child (excluding those children under age 8). The police questioned five of the children about the incident after they had been recovered. Only one child (one who claimed to have been sexually assaulted) received a medical examination. None of the individuals or families involved reported having been referred for counseling.

6.4.4 Parental Satisfaction with Response

Parental satisfaction with the overall police response was mixed. Six of the respondents described it as excellent or very good, but five felt that it was neither good nor bad or that it was poor. Few comments regarding police performance were offered; however, one parent did express anger that the police apparently did not believe that her child was sexually molested and did nothing to pursue the molester.

6.5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is apparent that nonfamily abductions do not consistently meet the public perception of a kidnapping by a stranger. In fact, for a large proportion of these cases, the abduction was merely a facilitative act, generally for the purpose of sexual assault. Finkelhor et al. (1990a) found that over two thirds of the cases in their police records study involved sexual assault, and that approximately one fifth of the episodes lasted less than 1 hour.

Our interviews with law enforcement personnel indicated that the extremely rare and highly publicized cases in which small children are kidnapped by strangers often drive written policies and operational practices. The massive "search and rescue" response that may seem appropriate to this type of incident is not always employed because the majority of

abductions are of short duration and the victim is often released by the abductor prior to the report to the police.

A case classification system that reflects the differences in the various types of nonfamily abductions is a necessary prerequisite to appropriate investigative activity. The decision rules used to formally classify cases at the intake stage in a police department often dictate which investigative unit is assigned to the case and what procedures are followed.

Guidelines that clearly delineate between the different types of nonfamily abductions and specify appropriate actions for each may help clarify the disparity between the public perception of the stereotypical kidnapping case and the broader legal definition.

CHAPTER 7
SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

When the missing children issue first rose to public consciousness about a decade ago, it was in response to a few tragic and sensational child homicide cases. Public reaction was passionate, but thinking about the issue was fuzzy. The important differences between different kinds of missing children such as abducted, lost, and runaway were often ignored in public discussion, and the magnitude of the problem was poorly understood. Over the last decade, a clearer view has developed. NISMART was a major advance in this regard.

Finkelhor et al. (1990b, p. 18) reported two important conclusions (quoted verbatim below):

- Although the five problems studied here are often grouped together as one--"missing children"--in fact, they are extremely dissimilar social problems. They affect different children and different families. They have very different causes, different dynamics, different remedies, different policy advocates, and different types of institutions and professionals who are concerned. They could not be lumped together for meaningful scientific analysis.
- There was a second serious obstacle to grouping these five categories of children under the rubric "missing children": not all these children were literally missing. As the studies revealed, a large proportion of the caretakers knew where their children were most of the time during the episodes....

We have referred to the study frequently throughout this report.

The study reported here was designed to examine police policies and practices for responding to runaway, abducted, and otherwise missing children. It was a complex multiphase study taking 4 years to complete (1986 to 1990). The first two phases focused on the police, including departmental policies and practices for responding to reports of missing children, how departments are organized to respond to these cases, what some of the obstacles to successful investigations are, and the effect of police policies and practices. Phase 1 was a mail survey of a national probability sample of 1,049 police departments and sheriffs' offices conducted in 1987; 791 agencies (75.4%) responded. Findings from that survey are published in

Collins et al. (1989). Selected findings have also been discussed earlier in this report; some will be discussed again in this chapter.

Phase 2 of the study (conducted in 1988) included visits to 30 departments around the country during which very detailed information was collected about runaway, abducted, and otherwise missing children cases. Interviews were conducted with police administrators, patrol personnel, investigators, and communications, records, and training personnel over 2-day to 4-day periods at each site. Juvenile shelter operators and other social service workers were also interviewed. Results of this phase of the study are published in Forst et al. (1988). Selected findings from this second research phase are also discussed in this report.

The third phase of the study focused on children reported to police as missing from their homes or an institution (noncorrectional) where they were staying, as well as parents and caretakers. This report gives detailed results of this third study phase and incorporates Phases 1 and 2 findings where appropriate. The interviews with parents and children sampled from police records were conducted in six major metropolitan areas in the spring and early summer of 1989. Methodological details were provided in Chapter 3.

The major purposes of the study were to:

- examine runaway, abducted, and otherwise missing child cases reported to the police from both police and parent/child perspectives;
- describe the missing children and youth and the missing incidents themselves;
- describe the police responses to missing incidents;
- describe missing incident outcomes such as whether the child was harmed during the episode;
- examine the relationship between police activities and incident outcomes; and
- develop implications from the study for police agencies and public policy generally.

The first five points have been the subject of earlier reports from the study and the foregoing chapters in this report. In this final chapter, we summarize the major findings and suggest implications for the police and other public and private decisionmakers.

In the runaway and family abduction categories, it has been possible to compare the characteristics of children and the incidents in the NISMART and current studies. Numbers of nonfamily abductions and otherwise missing children were too few to support comparative analyses. Percentages of males and females were similar in the two studies; females were more likely to be runaways, and there was some (not statistically significant) evidence that male children were more likely to be abducted by a family member. Children in our Phase 3 police records study tended to be younger than those in the national incidence study. Minority youths were more prevalent in the police records study because the cities included had higher minority populations than the Nation as a whole.

Most characteristics of runaway incidents were similar for the two studies. Victimization of the child while gone was infrequent and not divergent between the studies. A comparatively high drug use prevalence during incidents was reported for the national incidence study.

With the exception of one site, police virtually always took reports of missing children when parents or caretakers first called. In a large majority of cases, a police officer came to take a report in person. Police almost always got a description of the missing child or youth, but other police actions were much less common. Age, sex, and race had little effect on the police response, and police in most sites appeared to respond to household and institutional runaways in a similar way. Two systematic differences were that police in these departments were more likely to call for backup for children 12 or younger (as required by written policy), and they were more likely to search the neighborhood and issue an APB if parents or caretakers were very concerned about their child's safety.

About one in five parents was dissatisfied with the handling of runaway and family abduction cases. An in-person police response and making a request for a photograph of the child were associated with parental satisfaction for runaway cases.

There were significant differences between sites for runaway cases in

- the police response,
- the characteristics of the incidents, and
- the risk of victimization.

Some of the characteristics of incidents such as being gone more than a week were associated with adverse event outcomes.

7.2 LIMITATIONS

Before discussing the implications of the findings, it is important to note the major limitations of the current study. First, the sample of reported missing children cases analyzed here is not nationally representative. This is a point that has been made earlier, but it bears repeating. Comparison of the NISMART case profiles with those identified from police files for the current study suggests how the cases differ. Specifically, the current study sample is similarly distributed to NISMART by sex, but it has a younger age profile and a higher proportion of minorities. Although the NISMART and current study cases look similar in many ways, it is likely that there are qualitative differences between the samples that are not detectable in the comparisons made here. NISMART suggests 40% of household runaways are reported to the police; this 40% of cases is likely to be different from those not reported. This does not violate the analytic value of studying police cases; the fact that police have been involved in a case itself elevates that case to a higher level of interest from a public policy perspective. Public resources are being used, and police involvement requires that the nature and effects of that intervention be considered.

The sample of throwaway and family abduction cases identified through police files is more problematic than runaway cases from a generalizability perspective. NISMART found that only 23% of throwaway children were reported to the police--considerably lower than the reporting rate for runaway and abducted children. This is not surprising; a parent or guardian who no longer wishes that a child live at home is less likely to inform the police when the child leaves. This low reporting rate underlines the need for caution in the interpretation of findings about throwaways.

Family abduction cases are also less likely to appear in police records than runaway cases. Although 44% of the family abduction victim parents in NISMART said they reported the incident to the police, two factors suggest such cases often are not formally investigated. During Phase 2 of the study, police told us they often do not investigate family

abduction reports if the legal custody status for the child is undetermined or unclear. Such cases are often referred to a family court or social service agency. So, while a parent may have contacted the police, the report may not have been entered into police records. The other indication in our data that family abduction cases are underrepresented is the ratio of runaway to family abduction cases in our sample. At more than 55 to 1, it is much higher than expected based on NISMART findings; in NISMART, the ratio of runaways (reported to police) to family abductions (reported to police) was 1.2 to 1. This suggests police records are not a good source for identifying family abduction cases.

Most of the data analyzed here are based on parent reports. The comparison of parent and child responses in Appendix A of this report indicated variation in the level of agreement between parent and child reports on a number of similar or identical items. On some items the convergence between the responses was approximately 75%; on other items it was in the 50% range; for low prevalence illegal activity reports, parents' reports of youths' involvement were inadequate. Moreover, for some questions, 25% or more of parents said they did not know the answer. The interpretation of findings based on parents' reports of some child/youth experiences needs to be cautious because the convergent validity of the parent and child responses is problematic.

Related to the last point is the knowledge that parents had about investigative activities of the police. For some police actions such as whether the police came in person to take a report, parents' reports were likely to be accurate. For other police activities such as whether the police entered their child's name into NCIC, parents' reports would be less accurate. Police may not have informed parents of all that was done in connection with the missing incident. Police actions may have been underestimated, and thus the analysis of the effects of these actions would be incomplete.

One of the goals of the study was to examine the effects of police actions on case outcomes. This has proven difficult for a number of reasons:

- police case files were not sufficiently detailed or consistent across jurisdictions to permit using them to develop police action indicators;

- although there is considerable variation in police actions, it has proven difficult to identify systematic variation in police actions on the basis of case characteristics; and
- no information exists to locate temporarily the police actions relative to outcomes; this inhibits the capacity to make inferences about the effects of these actions.

In spite of the limitations, the data have several major strengths. The existence of data from the three different study phases provides detailed quantitative and qualitative information about how police deal with runaway and abducted children. No such information has existed before this study. The Phase 1 data are based on a national probability sample of police departments. The Phase 2 data are rich in qualitative detail. The samples of cases from the six sites participating in Phase 3 were selected probabilistically to represent all cases reported in those jurisdictions during the data collection period. Taken together the three phases of data permit drawing conclusions and implications that would not be possible with only one or two data phases. In addition, as the data from the current study have been enhanced by NISMART, so too have the NISMART data been made more valuable by the police records study.

7.3 IMPLICATIONS

The finding that the demographic characteristics of the child or youth are generally not important to the way that police respond to runaway cases was a surprise. Based on Phases 1 and 2, we had expected that age at least would be a strong predictor of police actions; police said cases involving younger children were usually given a high priority. As discussed earlier, there was some indication of more proactive investigation of runaway children aged 12 or younger (the police were more likely to call for backup). This kind of initial activity for cases involving younger children is a common element of written policies for handling missing child cases, but we had expected to see more noticeable variation in investigative actions by age. This may mean that police respond wholistically to cases; that is, they consider a wide range of information in making their investigative activity decisions. In fact, this is what police anecdotally say they do. When a number of factors are considered together as is the case in multivariate analyses, the relevance of age may be diminished.

During the Phase 2 site visits, one department told us that they had eliminated age as the single major factor in high initial priority for a case. Another department was considering elimination of the age criterion from their formal policy and procedure requirements. In both of these departments, officers had come to feel that using age as a single criterion had misled them often enough to be disturbing. Younger runaways were not necessarily in more dangerous situations than older youth. It is probably not appropriate to eliminate age as a criterion for very young missing children. Below some age (perhaps 8 or 9), children who are absent from adult supervision for any significant period of time are at risk of harm. But above some minimum, it may be that the circumstances of a case should determine investigative decisionmaking, not an arbitrary age limit. However, elimination of the age criterion should probably not be considered unless there is a careful accumulation of information about the incident fairly quickly such that an adequate risk assessment can be made. Time gone, time of day, location of disappearance, child's history, whether he or she was accompanied, and other information may provide a more accurate basis for judging risk than age.

The findings that race and household income were generally not associated with police actions suggests that socioeconomic status may not influence police decisionmaking when other characteristics of the case are considered. If accurate, this finding is good news.

Some demographic risk factors were observed in multivariate analyses:

- whites were more likely than blacks to be without a secure place to stay and to be victimized during runaway incidents;
- females were more likely than males to be exploited sexually during runaway incidents; and
- runaways aged 12 or less were at increased risk of sexual exploitation.

By themselves, these single attributes are not of practical value for police decisionmaking. Considered with other factors, however, the findings may provide useful guidance to police (e.g., for a 12-year-old thought to have run away to a center city area). A proactive response to recover a young child quickly may minimize the likelihood of sexual exploitation.

7.4 RISK FEATURES OF RUNAWAY INCIDENTS

Some features of runaway incidents are associated with bad outcomes such as victimization:

- traveling more than 50 miles from home and not having a secure place to stay were related;
- not having a secure place to stay elevates the risk of sexual exploitation and parent's perception that the runaway was in serious danger;
- the length of time gone was associated with no secure place to stay and the perception of serious danger;
- traveling 10 to 50 miles from home in contrast to staying within 10 miles was associated with serious danger and serious mental harm; and
- being gone more than 7 days was associated with victimization.

One implication of these findings is that adverse outcomes of runaway events might be minimized by attempting to control the severity of the event itself. Quick recovery would reduce risk, which is a reason for police departments to use investigative resources toward this end. This recommendation also has support in the routine activities/victimization perspective that specifies factors that help account for risk of victimization (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Cohen, Kluegel, & Land, 1981). Victimization risk goes up as "exposure" (time away from home) increases and "guardianship" (absence of protection) decreases. There is empirical, theoretical, and logical support for attempting to locate and return runaways quickly to minimize the risk of victimization.

It is likely that some runaway youths have "no secure place to stay" because shelters are not available, scarce or not accessible. Adequate shelter resources and effective outreach to encourage youths to stay in a shelter overnight will help to minimize adverse effects of running away. Making accurate judgments about the adequacy of shelter resources are not simple. It requires assessment and monitoring of the magnitude of the need locally. Decisionmaking should involve consultation and cooperation between social service agencies and LEAs. Although uncommon in practice, models of such cooperation are operating and are available for imitation.

7.5 EFFECTS OF POLICE ACTIONS ON RUNAWAY CASES

The foregoing analyses do not give much guidance for making recommendations about specific actions the police can take to affect the severity of the runaway incident itself or adverse outcomes such as victimization. Findings are ambiguous for the reasons discussed in the limitations section. For example, Table 4.11 indicated that putting out an APB was more likely with cases where the runaway traveled more than 50 miles from home in comparison to incidents when the runaway stayed closer to home. The most logical interpretation of this finding is that APBs are more likely when youths travel a long distance. This suggests that police can distinguish serious cases early in the investigation with some accuracy. The seriousness of the incident itself will influence what actions police take.

Some Table 4.11 findings suggested a positive effect of police actions on runaway incident severity. For example, if police made an in-person visit to take a report and if they issued an APB, the incident was significantly less likely to last more than 7 days than if these actions were not taken. Although we cannot make the inference that these particular actions accounted for the shorter duration of runaway events, they do seem to demonstrate that proactivity in handling runaway cases is effective. Proactive attempts to locate runaways are advisable.

A finding of the Phase 1 mail survey is relevant here. That study found that detailed written departmental policy specifications for runaway cases were associated with more vigorous investigations, and the intensity of investigative actions was associated with quicker recovery of runaways. In the earlier report, we recommended that in departments without written policies police executives consider developing detailed written policies for missing children cases. That recommendation is worth repeating here and is supported by findings that runaway incident severity has other negative effects. There is some reason to believe that vigorous investigation of runaway cases can shorten the time away from home and thereby reduce other risks.

Child safety aside, there are also "political" reasons for investigating runaway cases aggressively. A significant percentage of parents was dissatisfied with police handling of cases (Table 4.7). The modeling results in Table 4.8 indicated that several police actions were associated

with parental satisfaction. When an officer paid an in-person visit, parents were 5.5 times more likely to report being satisfied with the time it took police to respond. When police requested a photo, parents were twice as likely to report being satisfied with the overall police handling of cases. These are not police activities with high costs, and police already come in person most of the time (Table 4.3). Engaging in a proactive investigation of runaway cases is likely to have public relations value for departments; it is also likely to reduce harm to runaway children.

Finally, in formulating policies and practices, it is clear that departments should consider the features of their jurisdictions and the profile of runaway cases in their area. In the multivariate analyses of runaway incident severity and adverse incident outcomes, site variation in risk was apparent. These and other similar findings emphasize the need for police departments to consider the features of their own jurisdictions in the formulation of their policies and practices. Jurisdictions differ in the type and extent of risk to missing children, and this should be reflected in response strategies and tactics.

7.6 THROWNAWAYS

Of the "runaway" cases analyzed, 10% had one or more features that suggest the child was pressured to leave or was not welcome to come back home. NISMART suggests the problem is even more common than suggested in our data from police files. So far as we have been able to tell, the throwaway phenomenon has not been given much formal recognition by LEAs. During our conversations with them, individual police administrators and investigators have explicitly or implicitly acknowledged that children are often forced from their homes or, more commonly, that the situation is so undesirable at home that children or youths are forced to leave and are sometimes better off not returning. But few departments have formalized procedures to identify throwaways or children who cannot or should not return home. Recent legislation and social service practice have recognized the need to assess the desirability that a child return home. It is no longer an automatic assumption that returning a child home is always preferred. At a minimum, police should attempt to determine whether a

youth has been forced to leave home and whether the youth will be welcome home again. These factors should affect the police response and will suggest whether juvenile courts, social services, mental health services, or other resources should be brought into a case. In some instances, actions stemming from neglect or abuse will be indicated against parents or guardians, but the major reason for the police to distinguish between runaway and throwaway incidents is so that they can respond appropriately to cases.

Some throwaway cases will reflect a temporary crisis between parents and children that will resolve itself and will not indicate a need for intervention. But some throwaway cases will clearly indicate a need for intervention. Police can provide only limited and temporary help in this regard; services or intervention from other public or private resources will be needed. Typically, procedures for referral do not exist between the police and other agencies. Police often are not even aware of these resources.

The limited or nonexistent capacity of the police to refer juveniles or children in need of social or mental health services to appropriate resources is a problem for troubled runaways as well as for throwaways. Youths who repeatedly run away from home, or runaways with other serious problems, should be referred for evaluation or services. This would not be a difficult or costly set of activities for police to undertake. Often, it simply would require that someone recognize the needs and initiate discussions between the appropriate agencies. Departments that have not yet built bridges to the community agencies that deal with families and children should do so.

7.7 FAMILY ABDUCTIONS

Data from both Phases 2 and 3 of this study indicate that police are involved in a small percentage of all family abductions. Based on NISMART findings, the incidence of family abduction is considerably higher than previously thought. About 46% of the family abductions identified in NISMART fit that study's definition of policy-focal cases--that is, potentially needing intervention from some public agency (not necessarily police). In about 9% of the NISMART cases, the abductor had taken the child(ren) out of the State, now a felony in all States.

In the Phase 2 site visits, police said they commonly referred cases elsewhere (e.g., to the complaining parent's lawyer, the district attorney, or a social service agency) citing a number of reasons. Notable among these were lack of authority and expertise in civil matters, legal and enforcement ambiguities and inconsistencies among jurisdictions, and the failure or absence of dispute resolution efforts. One department, in a State that was a "magnet" for abducting parents and their children, had adopted an unusually active role in parental abduction cases, having dedicated two full-time detectives to this work. These officers followed written procedures and worked closely with the local State Attorney's office (see Forst et al., 1988). Their commander commented that the number of requests for assistance they received from out-of-State departments justified their level of involvement in these cases, but that most departments would neither want nor be able to afford the expense involved.

Despite their reluctance to deal with these cases, police should probably have an increased role. Some parental abductions are criminal; there may be some risk of harm to the children abducted. Police are often called. It seems clear that multiple agencies are normally involved in these cases (prosecutors, courts, social service, law enforcement). At a minimum, it would seem that police agencies would benefit themselves from examining their current procedures for dealing with these cases, developing specific criteria for handling them and/or referring them elsewhere, and establishing written policy.

7.8 NONFAMILY ABDUCTIONS

As we have indicated, police tend to respond very aggressively to cases that involve the abduction of a child by a nonfamily member, especially of cases NISMART refers to as "stereotypical kidnapping." We had only a few such cases in this study, and the police need no advice about responding to them. As NISMART has also pointed out, however, there are much larger numbers of abductions or attempted abductions that are carried out as an adjunct to other crimes, especially sexual assault. If the police were to understand the abduction/sexual assault connection more clearly, they may be in a better position than they are currently to prevent some of these assaults.

7.9 FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

Major issues of child and family welfare are embedded in the findings of the current study. One could generate a very long list of research questions in need of study. Clearly, the throwaway and family abduction phenomena are problems that are poorly understood and in need of serious attention. Basic questions of the level and type of resources that should be committed to the various aspects of missing children problems could be posed. We leave these issues aside and instead point to three aspects of the law enforcement response to the missing children and youth problems that should be addressed. If the recommended actions are taken, there is a realistic hope that the safety and welfare of children and families would be enhanced.

Three needs are apparent from the results of the current study of runaways and throwaways:

- more accurate profiles of cases at risk of serious consequences,
- development of case screening procedures to identify at-risk cases, and
- development of procedures to integrate law enforcement responses with other family and children resources in the community.

The first two points are closely related. This study and NISMART have provided a beginning toward the identification of cases at risk of serious outcomes. The numbers of cases, however, have not been sufficient for confident interpretation, in part because the prevalence of serious consequences is low. Additional work, perhaps based on samples of cases from police files in several communities, would augment what is already known to provide a basis for the development of police screening procedures to guide investigative decisionmaking. For example, based on better risk profiles, patrol officers who routinely take reports in person could be provided a set of questions to collect information from parents and caretakers early in the investigation on the correlates of risk. Results of this screening could then be used to guide immediate responses by patrol officers and subsequent activities of investigators. Such an approach could be

implemented in one or a few communities, and an evaluation could be embedded to assess the implementation and effects of risk screening. There are not the law enforcement resources nor is there the need to commit major investigative resources to all runaway cases. The above activities are aimed at developing procedures to commit limited investigative resources to best effect.

Runaway, throwaway, and family abduction cases that come to the attention of the police often involve individuals and situations that most need intervention by agencies other than the police. It may not be police services that are needed, but rather mental health, medical, welfare, or legal intervention. Even when the appropriate resources already exist in a community, and police are inclined to use such services, the mechanisms to do so may be absent. It would be very useful if attention were given to the development of procedures for cooperation between law enforcement and other community resources. Models of such cooperation could be designed that are appropriate to the organization and magnitude of existing community resources in particular jurisdictions.

These recommendations are modest; they do not involve major expenditures or radical reorganization of current ways of responding to reports on runaway children and youths. Thus, they are not only feasible, but also could be implemented without making major changes in the way that communities currently deal with the problems.

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APPENDIX A

COMPARISON OF RETURNED RUNAWAY YOUTHS'
AND PARENTS' RESPONSES

APPENDIX A

COMPARISON OF RETURNED RUNAWAY YOUTHS' AND PARENTS' RESPONSES

A.1 INTRODUCTION

The extent to which parents' reports of their children's behavior and experiences can be used as a reliable proxy for the youths' own reports is of perennial interest to those who conduct research concerning youths. Adults are often considered by researchers to be more desirable respondents than youths, both because of less burdensome and restrictive consent procedures and because adults tend to be physically more accessible. The latter issue is particularly salient in the case of research concerning runaway youths; even those who have returned home often prove very difficult to interview. The purpose of this appendix is to explore the degree of convergence between parents' and children's reports concerning the youths' experiences, both before and during the runaway incident. These results will also shed light on more general issues relating to the utility of interviewing parents as proxies for children to obtain information concerning such sensitive data as the youths' illegal behavior.

In this appendix, we compare parents' to youths' reports of two types of events. The first are those of which parents are likely to have independent confirmation (i.e., know from personal experience), namely:

- whether problems at home or school contributed to their youths' leaving home;
- the number of days the runaway youths were gone;
- whether they had run away before this incident, and if so how many times;
- whether they contacted their parents while away from home; and
- to what extent they discussed their experiences with their parents once they returned home.

The second type of events are those that parents are likely to know only because their children have so informed them, including:

- where they went when they first left home;
- how far they went when they were away from home; and
- what illegal activities they engaged in while away from home.

The data used for this substudy have four methodological shortcomings. First, the data are of necessity limited to the 364 files of interviews completed both by a parent and his or her returned runaway child. It seems likely that these files may not be fully representative of the study's full complement of 866 eligible cases of runaway youths; those youths who were not interviewed may have been more estranged from their families than the youths whose responses are described below.¹ If so, it may be assumed that there would be less correspondence between these youths' responses and those of their parents. Second, because many parents accepted our invitation to answer "don't know" to our questions, we will examine these responses to determine if there are patterns to how youths answer analogous questions. Third, although there are slight variations in wordings to some analogous questions asked parents and runaway youths, these variations are sufficiently modest not to affect materially the comparability of responses. Fourth, and perhaps most important, we have no way of knowing whether youths' or parents' reports are the more accurate. In the absence of a criterion reference, what we will explore are issues concerning the convergent validity of the two sets of responses.

A.2 CONTRIBUTION OF PROBLEMS AT HOME OR SCHOOL TO YOUTHS' RUNNING AWAY

Parents answered questions concerning whether their child "was unhappy living at home" or "was having a lot of conflicts with you or other people in the household"; youths responded to questions as to whether they ran away because they "had a fight with parents" or "wanted to get away from all the problems at home." A majority (52.3%) of 348 parents and youths agreed that problems at home did contribute to the runaway incident; 15.8% agreed that they did not. However, a substantial number of parents (16.7%)

¹The study did not attempt to interview children younger than age 12.

responded that such problems did not lead to the incident when their children indicated that such problems did; and somewhat fewer (11.8%) youths denied family problems that their parents reported. Only a scant 3.4% of parents answered "don't know" to this question.

In regards to problems at school, parents indicated whether their children "had some sort of trouble in school," and youths whether they "wanted to get away from all the problems at school." Parents would seem to be less likely to be aware of their children's school-related problems than home-related problems; if so, the disparity between the two sets of answers would be greater. Such was not the case; 10.3% of 341 parents and youths agreed that school problems did contribute to the runaway incident, while 61.6% agreed that they did not. The remainder were split almost evenly between (a) parents who thought their children were having problems at school when their children indicated otherwise (13.2%) and (b) parents who reported no school problems when their children indicated that they experienced such problems (15.0%).

A.3 NUMBER OF DAYS GONE

Parents and children answered slightly different questions about the length of time the runaway youths were gone from home. Parents reported the length of time between when their children left home or were expected home and their return; youths indicated simply how long they were away from home. Thus, some parents of youths who were legitimately away from home and then failed to return may have reported a shorter period of time gone than their children, if the latter calculated length of time from when they initially left home. However, Table A.1 indicates a fairly high level of agreement (75.6%) between parents and youths on this variable. Because the response options to these questions were open-ended (i.e., respondents were free to report any length of time from minutes to months), some discrepancies may be attributed to small differences between a given parent's report of length of time and that of his or her child, which would have resulted in classifying the periods into adjacent categories.

Table A.1 Parent and Child Agreement Concerning
Number of Days Child Was Away from Home

		Child's Response				Total
		1 day	2-5 days	6-10 days	More than 10 days	
Parent's Response	1 day	73 21.2%	22 6.4%	1 0.3%	3 0.9%	99 28.8%
	2-5 days	15 4.4%	108 31.4%	18 5.2%	8 2.3%	149 43.3%
	6-10 days	1 0.3%	4 1.2%	36 10.5%	8 2.3%	49 14.2%
	More than 10 days	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 1.2%	43 12.5%	47 13.7%
	Total	89 25.9%	134 39.0%	59 17.2%	62 18.0%	344 100.0%

Note. Percentages reflect proportion of total sample. Cells on the diagonal indicate convergent validity between parent and child responses.

A.4 NUMBER OF RUNAWAY INCIDENTS

Parents and youths answered identically worded questions about whether the youths had run away from home before, and, if so, whether the youths had run away 2-5 times in all, 6-9 times, or 10 or more times. Both parents and their children could also choose a "don't know" option. Considering the lack of ambiguity in this question, the level of disparity in the two sets of answers, as indicated in Table A.2, was surprising. Out of the total of 356 parent-child pairs, 9.3% of parents indicated that their children had run away more than once, while their children responded that they had run away only once; 10.4% of youths reported that they had run away from home more than once whose parents said that they had not. However, the preponderance of youths and parents, or 66.3%, agreed concerning the number of times the youths had run away. Among the responses of the remaining parent-child pairs (14.0%), lack of congruence may be attributed in part to trivial discrepancies (e.g., a youth may remember that he had run away from home a total of five times, while his parents may recall the number of runaway incidents as six, thus placing him in another response category).

A.5 YOUTHS' EFFORTS TO CONTACT PARENTS

We asked returned runaways if they attempted to contact their parents while they were gone and asked their parents if their child contacted them or "tried to contact them." Surprisingly, fully 20.4% of 363 parents indicated that their runaway child did (or tried to) contact them while their children indicated otherwise; only 6.9% of youths reported that they contacted their parents when their parents said that they did not.

A.6 YOUTHS' DESCRIPTION OF RUNAWAY EPISODE TO PARENTS

Youths reported the extent to which they discussed their experiences while gone with their parents once they had returned home; parents indicated how much information they got from their children about what happened while their children were missing. Response options were the same for both questions:

Table A.2 Parent and Child Agreement Concerning
Number of Runaway Incidents

		Child's Response					Total
		Once	2-5 times	6-9 times	10 or more times	Don't know	
Parent's Response	Once	134 37.6%	30 8.4%	4 1.1%	3 0.8%	2 0.6%	173 48.6%
	2-5 times	32 9.0%	78 21.9%	17 4.8%	7 2.0%	2 0.6%	136 38.2%
	6-9 times	1 0.3%	8 2.3%	9 2.5%	3 0.8%	0 0.0%	21 5.9%
	10 or more times	0 0.0%	5 1.4%	2 0.6%	15 4.2%	2 0.6%	24 6.7%
	Don't know	0 0.0%	1 0.3%	1 0.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 0.6%
Total		167 46.9%	122 34.3%	33 9.3%	28 7.9%	6 1.7%	356 100.0%

Note. Percentages reflect proportion of total sample. Cells on the diagonal indicate convergent validity between parent and child responses.

- received a complete description of episode;
- received a description of some but not all of the episode;
or
- did not discuss it at all.

As Table A.3 suggests, there was considerable discrepancy between the two sets of responses. Altogether, 56% of parents and children agreed concerning the extent of information shared. A total of 13.8% of parents said they did not discuss the incident with their children at all, while their children reported that they did provide at least some account of the episode; 15.4% of children said that they did not talk to their parents at all about the episode, while their parents thought otherwise.

A.7 WHERE CHILD WENT ON FIRST LEAVING HOME

This construct is the first of three discussed here for which the accuracy of parental responses would seem to be largely dependent upon communication between parent and child following the runaway incident. Both parents and children answered a question concerning where the children ran away to when they first left home. As Table A.4 indicates, there was fairly substantial agreement between parents and children on this question; fully half of parents and children agreed that the child went first to a friend's or relative's house. Over 10% of the youths said they went first to a friend's house, while the youths' parents indicated that they didn't know where their children went. Altogether, almost 20% of parents reported that they didn't know to what location their children went first.

A.8 HOW FAR CHILD WENT WHEN AWAY FROM HOME

We asked both parents and children whether they:

- remained in the neighborhood,
- left the neighborhood but remained in the city/town,
- went to another city or town in the same metropolitan area,
- left the metropolitan area but remained in the State, or
- left the State.

Table A.3 Parent and Child Agreement Concerning
Extent Child Discussed Runaway Episode with Parent

		Child's response			Total
		Full description	Some description	Did not discuss	
Parent's Response	Full description	27 7.6%	24 6.8%	11 3.1%	62 17.5%
	Some description	29 8.2%	102 28.7%	43 12.1%	174 49.0%
	Did not discuss	15 4.2%	34 9.6%	70 19.7%	119 33.5%
	Total	71 20.0%	160 45.1%	124 34.9%	355 100.0%

Note. Percentages reflect proportion of total sample. Cells on the diagonal indicate convergent validity between parent and child responses.

Table A.4 Parent and Child Agreement Concerning
Where Child Went When Child First Left Home

		Child's Response					Total
		Friend's house	Relative's house	Recreation place	Another city	Other	
Parent's Response	Friend's house	171 47.4%	13 3.6%	11 3.1%	3 0.8%	4 3.9%	212 58.7%
	Relative's house	3 0.8%	13 3.6%	1 0.3%	2 0.6%	1 0.3%	20 5.5%
	Recreation place	9 2.5%	1 0.3%	9 2.5%	0 0.0%	3 0.8%	22 6.1%
	Another city	3 0.8%	2 0.5%	2 0.6%	9 2.5%	1 0.3%	17 4.7%
	Other	13 3.6%	3 0.8%	0 0.0%	1 0.3%	7 1.9%	24 6.7%
	Don't know	41 11.4%	9 2.5%	8 2.2%	0 0.0%	8 2.2%	66 18.3%
Total		240 66.5%	41 11.4%	31 8.6%	15 4.7%	34 9.4%	361 100.0%

Note. Percentages reflect proportion of total sample. Cells on the diagonal indicate convergent validity between parent and child responses.

Parents were provided the additional response option of "don't know." In comparing parental reports to those of their children, we aggregated the first two categories because of ambiguities inherent in the concept "neighborhood," which may be interpreted differently by different observers. As Table A.5 indicates, there was substantial agreement (i.e., 80%) between parents and youths as to how far youths ran; an additional 8.4% of parents volunteered that they didn't know where their children went.

A.9 YOUTHS' PARTICIPATION IN ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES WHILE AWAY FROM HOME

Table A.6 indicates that the incidence of the illegal activities reported by parents and youths was very rare. Although a substantial majority of parents and their runaway children agreed that the youths did not engage in these activities, parents and youths were much more likely to disagree when one or the other responded positively concerning a given behavior. Furthermore, a quarter of parents answered these questions consistently by saying they didn't know the illegal activities in which their children engaged, even when for the most part their children responded negatively.

This comparison of parents' and youths' responses to several key questions concerning the precursors and events of the youths' runaway episodes does not yield an unambiguous answer to the question of whether parents' reports may be used as a proxy for their children's. For several dichotomous (i.e., "yes" or "no") questions, including problems at home, problems at school, and youths' efforts to contact parents, the aggregate levels of agreement were 72.5%, 72.0%, and 72.7%, respectively. For four variables with multiple response options, number of days gone, number of runaway incidents, how far the child went from home, and to what location the child first went, the aggregate levels of agreement were 75.6%, 66.3%, 80.0%, and 57.9%, respectively. With the exception of the variable concerning youths' efforts to contact parents, the responses of parents and children in different combinations of responses indicating disagreement (e.g., parents answer "yes," their children "no") were diffused.

For the very rare illegal activities in which youths engaged while away from home, parental responses appeared inadequate. That is, a parent was much more likely to report wrongly that their child engaged in the

Table A.5 Parent and Child Agreement Concerning
How Far Child Went During Runaway Episode

		Child's Response				Total
		Same neighborhood or city	Another city	Same State	Another State	
Parents' Response	Same neighborhood or city	239 67.1%	16 4.5%	1 0.3%	1 0.3%	257 72.2%
	Another city	17 4.8%	23 6.5%	1 0.3%	1 0.3%	42 11.8%
	Same State	1 0.3%	0 0.0%	7 2.0%	1 0.3%	9 2.5%
	Another State	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.3%	17 4.8%	18 5.1%
	Don't know	28 7.9%	2 0.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	30 8.4%
Total		285 80.1%	41 11.5%	10 2.8%	20 5.6%	356 100.0%

Note. Percentages reflect proportion of total sample. Cells on the diagonal indicate convergent validity between parent and child responses.

Table A.6 Parent and Child Agreement Concerning Child's
Illegal Activities During Runaway Episode

	Parent: Youth:	Yes Yes	No No	No Yes	Yes No	Don't know Yes	Don't know No	N
Panhandling		5 1.4%	223 61.6%	8 2.2%	9 2.5%	11 3.0%	106 29.3%	362
Stealing		14 3.9%	201 55.8%	15 4.2%	20 5.6%	10 2.8%	100 27.8%	360
Prostitution		0 0.0%	258 71.3%	2 0.6%	2 0.6%	2 0.6%	98 27.1%	362
Drug dealing		3 0.8%	234 65.2%	6 1.7%	11 3.1%	8 2.2%	97 27.0%	359
Massage parlor work		0 0.0%	271 75.1%	2 0.6%	1 0.3%	0 0.0%	87 24.1%	361
Pornography		0 0.0%	274 75.7%	3 0.8%	1 0.3%	0 0.0%	84 23.2%	362

Note. Percentages sum to 100 along each row of the table.

behavior (a false positive), or to fail to report that their child engaged in the activity when indeed he or she did (a false negative), than to report the behavior correctly (a true positive). In addition, between one quarter and one third of parents reported that they simply "didn't know" if their child engaged in the activity.

Surely a key variable of interest in efforts to ascertain the utility of parental reports of children's behavior, particularly when those reports concern activities that youths engaged in during the runaway episode, is the degree of communication between parents and their returned runaway children. The results of a comparison of parents' and youths' responses provide only modest encouragement. Less than 10% of parents and children agreed that the youths gave a full description of the incident; 20% agreed that they did not discuss the incident. One third of parents, and an equal number of youths, reported independently that they did not discuss what happened, while only one fifth reported independently that they provided (or were provided) a full description of the incident. About two thirds of parents and children reported independently that there was some or full communication after the child returned.

In summary, the findings indicate that parents and their children disagree to such an extent concerning their youths' illegal behaviors while runaways that parents' reports of such behaviors must be considered highly suspect. However, the findings also suggest that parents' reports of most of their runaway youths' behaviors, and of the facts surrounding the runaway episode, converge with the youths' own reports much more frequently than they diverge.

APPENDIX B
CHARACTERISTICS OF THROWAWAYS

APPENDIX B
CHARACTERISTICS OF THROWNAWAYS

The current study is probably not an unbiased source of information about throwaway children. Many parents who force their children out of the house or who will not let them return probably do not notify the police that the child is gone. The NISMART study indicated that in 23% of throwaway cases police were contacted. Only 10% of runaway cases in the current study were classified as throwaway on the basis of the following criteria from parent responses and police records:

- | | |
|--|------|
| • child was told to leave | 1.1% |
| • parent did not care whether child stayed or left | 5.9% |
| • parent did not care whether child came home | 4.6% |
| • parent said he/she was glad child left | 5.3% |
| • parent preferred that child not come home | 2.9% |
| • child came back in spite of opposition | 2.8% |
| • police record indicated child was a throwaway | 3.6% |

In the NISMART study, throwaways were identified through the household survey and through a community professional study.

The throwaways in the police study were more likely to be female and younger than those in the NISMART household study. As expected, there was a higher percentage of minorities due to the metropolitan nature of the sample for the police study.

To analyze the effects of being a throwaway, the analyses of incident outcome in Chapter 4 include a throwaway indicator variable in multivariate analyses. In most of these analyses, throwaways do not differ from runaways.

To examine the differences between runaways and throwaways directly, a logistic regression model was estimated. Table B.1 shows the results. Throwaways were more likely to be 15-17 in age than age 12 or younger. There were more likely to have been conflicts in the family in the 2 weeks before the incident for throwaways in comparison to runaways. The

throwaways were more likely to have been without a secure place to stay at some time during the incident. Runaways and throwaways did not differ by sex, race, miles traveled, time gone, or the number of previous runaway incidents.

Table B.1 Comparison of Runaways and Throwaways: Odds

Age	
13-14	1.62
15-17	4.64**
Female	1.22
Race	
White	.88
Other	.62
Safe destination	1.83
No. conflicts	1.30***
Miles traveled	
10-50	1.17
>	.41
No secure place	3.66***
Previous incidents	
2-5	1.17
≥6	2.92
Days gone	
3-7	1.65
>7	1.44

Significance levels:

* <.05
 ** <.01
 *** <.001

APPENDIX C

PHASE 3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

CASE EXTRACTION FORM

Part I. Data Collection Information

(Please complete all information in this section for all cases)

1. URSA ID _____
2. Field Researcher ID _____
3. Date ____ / ____ / ____
MM DD YY
4. Time _____ am pm
5. Is this information from:
- 01 Incident report
 - 02 Communications/dispatch log or computer print-out
 - 03 Desk officer/patrol supervisor's log
 - 04 Other (specify) _____
6. Incident Report Number (if applicable) (POLICE ID) _____
7. Missing Person's Report Number (if applicable) _____
8. Type of case: 01 Runaway 03 Non-Family Abduction
 02 Family Abduction 04 Otherwise
 05 Unknown
9. Date of Report by Complainant: ____ / ____ / ____
 MM DD YY
10. Time of Report by Complainant: _____ am pm
11. Name of Complainant _____
12. Address of Complainant _____
13. Home phone number of Complainant _____
Business phone number of Complainant _____
Additional phone number of Complainant _____

14. Relationship of complainant to missing child

- 01 Mother
- 02 Father
- 03 Step-parent
- 04 Other relative (SPECIFY) _____
- 05 Foster parent
- 06 Neighbor
- 07 Babysitter
- 08 Friend
- 09 Law enforcement officer
- 10 Court personnel
- 11 School Personnel
- 12 Residential Institutional Staff
- 13 Other (specify) _____
- 97 Not available

15. Name of missing child _____

16. Missing Child's Date of Birth ____ / ____ / ____
MM DD YY

17. Missing Child's Sex
01 Male
02 Female

59
E1

18. Missing Child's Race
01 Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
02 Black (non-Hispanic)
03 Hispanic
04 Other (specify) _____

19. Date child/youth disappeared ____ / ____ / ____
MM DD YY

20. Approximate time child/youth disappeared
01 ____ AM PM
02 Complainant doesn't know when

* 21. Date child/youth returned or located
01 ____ / ____ / ____
MM DD YY
02 Complainant doesn't know when
03 Not returned yet

* 22. Time child/youth returned or located
01 ____ AM PM
02 Complainant doesn't know when
03 Not returned yet

* 23. Length of time child gone
01 ____ hours (if less than 1 day)
02 ____ days
97 Not available

30

* 24. Case Disposition
(Circle all that apply)

- 01 NCIC entry cancelled
- 02 Case referred to other department within agency
- 03 Case referred to other agency with state
- 04 Case referred to FBI
- 05 Other (SPECIFY) _____

* 25. Date case closed

41

- 01 ____ / ____ / ____
MM DD YY
- 02 not closed yet
- 97 Not available

Part II. Basic Information from Incident Report

Should be completed for all selected cases.

Please use the following definitions in completing this section:

Initial notification: The first report to the police that a child/youth is missing, made by a parent or other adult responsible for the child/youth.

Incident report: The initial written or computerized record made by the police of the missing report. Usually completed by patrol officer or clerical person.

Subsequent investigative reports: Records made by the police of investigative activities subsequent to initial activities.

-- 26. Who took the initial notification?

- 01 Police telephone operator
- 02 In-person by desk officer or other police personnel
- 03 Reported to officer on the street
- 04 Reported directly to juvenile or missing persons officer
- 05 Other (specify) _____
- 97 Not available

-45 27. Was a patrol officer dispatched to the scene?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know
- 97 Not available

28. Case classification - This will depend on the site. In some sites it may be a specific code or it may a narrative description or both. If there is a narrative description, interviewer should summarize it.

29. Reason(s) for incident (police view): CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY

- 01 Parent/child conflict
- 02 Family instability
- 03 Defiant child
- 04 Child wanted to be with boyfriend/girlfriend
- 05 Child in trouble with school, police etc.
- 06 Custody dispute
- 07 Child taken to facilitate subsequent victimization
- 08 Throwaway
- 09 Child involved in crime (prostitution, drugs, theft)
- 10 Adventure seeking
- 11 Other (specify) _____
- 97 Not available

* 30. Case status

- 01 Child has returned home
- 02 Child has been located and referred to residential placement
- 03 Child has not returned - location unknown
- 04 Child has not returned - location known
- 05 Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 97 Not available

* 31. How child/youth returned or why case closed:

- 01 Child returned on own
- 02 Parent located and recovered child
- 03 Child returned by social service personnel, i.e., caseworker or probation officer
- 04 Police recovered child
- 05 Child arrested by police
- 06 Child returned by abductor
- 07 Dead body discovered
- 08 Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 09 Don't know
- 97 Not available

Part III. Description of Investigative Activity

Data collection information: date completed if different from above, interviewer, time etc.

Subsequent Investigative Actions	# Times	Dates
* 32. Personal contacts		
-- 01 Investigator-complainant phone contacts	_____	_____ _____ _____
-- 02 Investigator interviewed complainant at complainants home or office	_____	_____ _____ _____
-- 03 Complainant came to police department to speak to investigator	_____	_____ _____ _____
-- 04 Investigator-complainant contacts of other or unknown nature	_____	_____ _____ _____
-71 E2 05 Investigator contacts with someone other than complainant (friend, relative, etc.)	_____	_____ _____ _____

* 33. Other Actions: CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

(P = Patrol I = Investigator O = Other/DK)

	P	I	O	
---	---	---	---	01 Interviewed reporting party
---	---	---	---	02 Interview parent(s)
---	---	---	---	03 Interview available neighbors
---	---	---	---	04 Interview child's friends/siblings (if any)
---	---	---	---	05 Interview other available relatives
---	---	---	---	06 Interview school personnel
---	---	---	---	07 Contacted other police personnel for immediate assistance
---	---	---	---	08 Search home of child/youth
---	---	---	---	09 Get description of child/youth
---	---	---	---	10 Get photograph of child/youth, if available
---	---	---	---	11 Call for search of area
---	---	---	---	12 Issue all points bulletin-within jurisdiction
---	---	---	---	13 Set up command post
---	---	---	---	14 Call in investigative specialists
---	---	---	---	15 Gather physical evidence
---	---	---	---	16 Question available suspect(s)
---	---	---	---	17 Notify surrounding jurisdictions (e.g., by teletype)
---	---	---	---	18 Check hospitals
---	---	---	---	19 Check runaway shelter(s)/social service agencies
---	---	---	---	20 Check known juvenile haunts
---	---	---	---	21 Check morgues
---	---	---	---	22 Report to state missing persons file
---	---	---	---	23 Enter report into NCIC missing persons file
---	---	---	---	24 Report case to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
---	---	---	---	25 Report case to FBI
---	---	---	---	26 Circulate child/youth's photo to law enforcement agencies
---	---	---	---	27 Get child/youth's dental records
---	---	---	---	28 Give case number to parent/guardian
---	---	---	---	29 Give copy of incident report to parent/guardian
---	---	---	---	30 Obtain search warrant/subpoena to examine suspect's record
---	---	---	---	31 Maintain cases as open until child/youth returned
---	---	---	---	32 Other--List below: _____ _____
---	---	---	---	97. Not available

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TELEPHONE SCREENER FORM

URSA ID _____

- 7 Interviewer ID _____

Police ID _____

Child's Name _____

(FROM CASE EXTRACTION FORM)

Complainant's Name _____

Complainant's Phone Number _____

Date Child Reported Missing _____

---INTRODUCTION.

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from the URSA Institute.

May I speak to: [Complainant's Name]

(If not available, ask for a good time to reach person and make note on call record form. If complainant is permanently unavailable (can't be reached after 10 attempts), case will be given to supervisor for followup.

We are conducting a study of children and youth who were missing from their place of residence during the spring of 1989, usually because they ran away, were abducted, lost or were late coming home. The study is sponsored by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a federal government office. The (Police) Department is cooperating in the research by providing information about cases of missing children which have been reported to them. The study is aimed at understanding the experiences of children and youth while they are away from home and the police responses to these cases. We understand this may be difficult to talk about, but we hope that this information you provide will be useful in understanding this problem.

We would like to talk to you initially for about 5 minutes. Later we may ask you to answer additional questions. You may refuse to answer any question and all the information you give will be confidential.

Do you have any questions? Is now a good time for you?

[If no, you must get a date, time and perhaps different phone number to call back; make note on Call Record form.]

I would like to ask you a few questions about what happened when you called the police on (DATE OF REPORT) because (CHILD'S NAME) was missing.

TS-1. Could you tell me briefly about that episode?

01 Yes: _____

02 No: Complete non-interview report.

I need to ask some questions about this incident. You may have already answered some of these, but I would like to make sure I have the correct information.

TS-2. How old is (CHILD'S NAME)? _____

TS-3. What sex is (CHILD'S NAME)?

01 Male
02 Female

TS-4. What race is (CHILD'S NAME)?

01 Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
02 Black (non-Hispanic)
03 Hispanic
04 Asian
05 American Indian
06 Other (Specify) _____

TS-5. Has (CHILD'S NAME) returned or been located?

01 Yes
02 No (TS-9)

TS-6. How long was (CHILD'S NAME) gone?

01 _____ hours (if less than 1 day)
02 _____ days (if more than 1 day, skip to TS-8)
03 Don't Know

TS-7. Was (CHILD'S NAME) gone overnight?

01 Yes
02 No
03 Don't know

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Attachment B

(Page 3, 4, & 7 from Telephone Screener)

Definitions of Case Type and Eligibility Criteria

TS-8. Was (CHILD'S NAME) the victim of a physical assault, sexual assault, a robbery or any type of injury while he/she was missing?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know

TS-9. At the time of the episode or in general, did (CHILD'S NAME) have any serious or permanent physical or mental disabilities or impairment or life-threatening medical conditions?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know

TS-10. Which of the following best describes this incident?

- A. 01 Runaway
- 02 Family Abduction (ASK TS-10B)
- 03 Non-family abduction
- 04 Otherwise missing
- 05 Unknown

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(IF ANSWER IS UNCLEAR, READ RESPONDENT THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS):

Runaway: Child has left home (or refused to return home) without permission of parent.

Family Abduction: Child was taken from home by parent (or other family member or agent acting for parent) or not returned without permission of parent (or family member) in residence or in violation of custody agreement or legal statute.

Non-family Abduction: Child was removed from home or somewhere else without permission by non-family member and attempt was made to conceal location of child.

Otherwise Missing: Child disappeared from home or from parents' supervision and could not be located.

Unknown Missing: A child is missing and the facts of the case are insufficient to determine the cause.

B. (FOR FAMILY ABDUCTION CASES ONLY) Did the abductor do any of the following?

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>DK</u>	
--	--	--	--	Keep the child at least overnight beyond arranged time of return
--	--	--	--	Attempt to conceal child
--	--	--	--	Prevent custodial parent from contacting child
--	--	--	--	Make threats indicating an intention to prevent custodial parent from contacting a child on a permanent basis
--	--	--	--	Transport child from state

TS-11. What is your relationship to (CHILD'S NAME)?

--

- 01 Mother
- 02 Father
- 03 Step-parent
- 04 Other relative (Specify) _____
- 05 Foster parent
- 06 Neighbor
- 07 Babysitter
- 08 Friend
- 09 Law enforcement officer
- 10 Court personnel
- 11 Non-residential school staff
- 12 Residential institution staff (GO TO TS-12)
- 13 Other (Specify) _____

Interview checkpoint.

If respondent is a staff person in a residential institution, ask questions TS-12-20; if not, skip to next checkpoint on page 7, and follow procedures to end interview.

Now I would like to ask a few questions about your facility.

TS-12. What kind of institution/facility is this?

30

- 01 Shelter (short-term)
- 02 Group home
- 03 Halfway house
- 04 Correctional institution
- 05 School
- 06 Mental health facility
- 07 Other (SPECIFY) _____

TS-13. Is this institution/facility privately or publicly funded or does it receive funding from both private and public sources?

- A. 01 private
- 02 public
- 03 both (COMPLETE TS-13B)
- 04 don't know

- B. 01 more than 50% private
- 02 more than 50% public
- 03 half and half

TS-14. How many beds does your institution have? _____

TS-15. What is the typical length of stay? ___ days weeks months years

TS-16. Would you characterize this facility as providing secure detention?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know

TS-17. What kinds of services do you offer? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 01 Hot Line | 12 Education/tutoring |
| 02 Emergency shelter care | 13 Legal Aid |
| 03 Recreation | 14 Case management |
| 04 Crisis intervention | 15 Advocacy |
| 05 Child care | 16 Referral |
| 06 Residential care (other than emergency shelter care) | 17 General supervision |
| 07 Counseling/therapy | 18 Character-building activities |
| 08 Parenting training | 19 Employment counseling, referral, or training |
| 09 Diagnostic screening | 20 Other (specify) _____ |
| 10 Medical services | _____ |
| 11 Out-of-home placement | _____ |

TS-18. How long had (CHILD'S NAME) been at your institution before s/he left or was induced or forced to leave?

- 01 _____ hours (if less than 1 day)
- 02 _____ days
- 03 Don't know

TS-19. Why did (CHILD'S NAME) leave?

65

TS-20. Where is (CHILD'S NAME) living now?

66

- 01 has returned to this residence
 - 02 with parent(s)
 - 03 with other relatives
 - 04 in a foster home
 - 05 in another institutional facility
 - 06 Other _____
 - 07 Don't know
-

PROCEDURES TO END TELEPHONE SCREENER

A. Is this an eligible case?

- 01 Yes: Arrange Interview and go to B
02 No: (READ): "That's all the questions I have for you. Thank you for your time."

B. What type of interview?

- 01 Telephone
02 Personal
03 Refusal—Complete Non-Interview form

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STEP 1 - DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

Case Type

Eligibility Criteria

Runaway

1. Child has some sort of disability (Respondent answered 01-Yes to TS-9)

OR:

2. If age 11 or less; was he/she gone at least 6 hours?

If age 12 or more; was he/she gone at least overnight?

Family Abduction

If respondent answered TS-10; B 01-05 or 01-Yes to TS-9), then case is eligible.

Non-Family Abductions

All cases are eligible.

Otherwise Missing and Unknown Missing

1. Child has some sort of disability (Respondent answered 01-Yes to TS-9)

OR:

2. If child is age 5 or younger, was child was gone for at least two hours?

If child is age 6-8, was child gone for at least 3 hours?

If child is age 9-12, was child gone for at least 4 hours?

If child is 13-14, was child gone for at least 8 hours?

If child is 15-17, was child gone overnight?

STEP 2 - ARRANGE INTERVIEW.

Arrange face-to-face interview if any of the following:

Child gone 7 days or more.

Child was victimized or injured during the episode (respondent answered 01=yes to TS-8).

Child has some sort of disability (respondent answered 01-Yes to TS-9).

Parent refuses to agree to a telephone interview.

URSA ID: _____

INTERVIEWER ID: _____

POLICE ID: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____

PARENT OR CARETAKER QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEW METHOD

- 01 Phone
- 02 Face-to-face

SECTION A: DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT BY CASE TYPE

- I. (PR) RUNAWAY (page 2)
- II. (PFA) FAMILY ABDUCTION (page 8)
- III. (PNF) NON-FAMILY ABDUCTION (page 14)
- IV. (PO) OTHERWISE MISSING (page 19)

SECTION B: POLICE RESPONSE (PB - page 21)

SECTION C: OUTCOMES (PC - page 25)

SECTION D: FAMILY BACKGROUND (PD - page 29)

SECTION E: NON-RETURNED FOLLOW-UP (PNR - page 37)

READ:

When we talked on the phone (DATE/TIME OF SCREENING) you said there had been an incident where (CHILD'S NAME) had (CASE TYPE). I would like to ask you some additional questions about that incident. These questions will take about 20 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question. All information you provide will be kept confidential.

INTERVIEWER CHECKPOINT

Has (CHILD) been located?

- 01 Yes - GO TO APPROPRIATE PART OF SECTION A.
- 02 No - GO TO SECTION E. (page 37)

SECTION A - DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

PART I: FOR RUNAWAY CASES ONLY (PR)

PR-1. What first made you think (CHILD) was missing?

- 01 did not return home from school
- 02 did not return home by meal time
- 03 did not return by bedtime
- 04 was gone overnight
- 05 was gone for more than 24 hours
- 06 child left a note
- 07 was told by another person that child had run away
- 08 other (specify) _____

PR-2. After you noticed (CHILD) was gone, approximately how long was it before you called the police?

___ Minutes Hours Days Weeks Months

(ENTER TIME IN APPROPRIATE TIME PERIOD)

PR-3. Approximately how long was it between the time he/she left home or you expected (CHILD) home and the time he/she returned?

___ Minutes Hours Days Weeks Months

PR-4. Did any of the following occur prior to (CHILD) leaving home (this time)? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY

- 01 child left note
- 02 child took clothes or money
- 03 threatened to run away
- 04 had argument or fight with friend recently
- 05 had some sort of trouble in school
- 06 had some sort of trouble with the police
- 07 child was told to leave
- 09 other (specify) _____

PR-5. During the two weeks prior to this episode, did (CHILD) have any arguments with family members about any of the following?

Yes No DK

—	—	—	—	how child spends his/her money or allowance
—	—	—	—	relationship with other household members
—	—	—	—	amount or types of television shows child watches
—	—	—	—	household chores
—	—	—	—	child's boyfriend or girlfriend
—	—	—	—	child's other friends
—	—	—	—	child's use of alcohol or drugs
—	—	—	—	child's sexual behavior
—	—	—	—	child's personal appearance
—	—	—	—	child's use of automobile
—	—	—	—	child's having enough privacy
—	—	—	—	child's doing schoolwork
—	—	—	—	child's staying out late
—	—	—	—	other (specify) _____

PR-6. Were any of the following statements true about the situation of (CHILD) leaving?

Yes No DK

—	—	—	—	(He/She) was unhappy living at home
—	—	—	—	(He/She) was having a lot of conflicts with you or other people in the household
—	—	—	—	I did not really try to stop (him/her) from leaving
—	—	—	—	Things were easier after (he/she) had gone
—	—	—	—	I did not really care one way or the other whether (he/she) stayed or left
—	—	—	—	I am glad that (he/she) left

PR-7. How concerned were you that (CHILD) was in danger of being harmed while he/she was away from home?

01 very concerned
02 somewhat concerned
03 not concerned

PR-8. I have some statements that might describe how you felt at the time of the episode; would you say that you agree or disagree with the statement:

		<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>DK</u>
—	a. I wanted (CHILD) to come home very badly.	1	2	3
—	b. I didn't care one way or the other whether (CHILD) came home.	1	2	3
55	c. I would have preferred that (CHILD) had not come home.	1	2	3

PR-9. Which of the following actions (if any) did you take to find the child before you called the police? Did you...

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
___	___	call parents of child's friends
___	___	call child's friends
___	___	check with school
___	___	check hospitals
___	___	check relatives
___	___	go to places where child spends time (mall, video arcade, sports field etc.)
___	___	contact National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
___	___	contact state or local missing child organization
___	___	contact state clearinghouse
___	___	hire a private detective
___	___	other (specify) _____

PR-10. Did you take any of these actions after you called the police?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
___	___	call child's friends
___	___	check with school
___	___	check hospitals
___	___	check relatives
___	___	go to places where child spends time (mall, video arcade, sports field etc.)
___	___	contact National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
___	___	contact local missing child organization
___	___	contact state clearinghouse
___	___	hire a private detective
___	___	other (specify) _____

PR-11. Did your child contact you or try to contact you while he/she was away?

01 yes (PR-12)
02 no (PR-13)
03 don't know (PR-13)

PR-12. How many times? _____

PR-13. Where did (CHILD) go when he/she first left home?

01 friends house
02 relatives house
03 place of recreation (including downtown area, malls, arcade in your community)
04 to another city or town
05 other (specify) _____
06 Don't know

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- PR-14. While (CHILD) was away from home did he/she:
- 01 remain in the neighborhood
 - 02 leave the neighborhood but remain in the city/town
 - 03 go to another city or town in the same metropolitan area
 - 04 leave this metropolitan area but remain in the state
 - 05 leave the state
 - 06 Don't know

- PR-15. To the best of your knowledge at any time during the episode was (CHILD) more than

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>DK</u>
100 miles from home?	1	2	3
50 miles from home?	1	2	3
10 miles from home?	1	2	3
1 mile from home?	1	2	3

- PR-16. While (CHILD) was away from home where did he/she sleep most of the time?

- 01 was not away over night
- 02 in a motel or hotel
- 03 with a friend (including boyfriend/girlfriend)
- 04 with a relative
- 05 with someone he/she met during time gone
- 06 in a runaway shelter
- 07 in a shelter for homeless persons
- 08 on the street
- 09 in a variety of places
- 10 Other (Specify) _____
- 11 don't know

- PR-17. To the best of your knowledge during how many nights of this episode was (CHILD) without any place to sleep?

_____ nights

- PR-18. While (CHILD) was away from home how did he/she get meals most of the time?

- 01 purchased food
- 02 provided by person(s) he/she stayed with
- 03 ate in soup kitchens or other charitable source
- 04 shoplifted food from stores
- 05 from a variety of sources
- 06 did not eat while gone (PR-20)
- 07 other (specify) _____
- 08 don't know

- PR-19. To the best of your knowledge, did (CHILD) eat enough nutritious food while he/she was gone?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

PR-20. While (CHILD) was away from home, how did he/she get money most of the time?

- 01 didn't have any money
- 02 took money with him/her
- 03 did odd jobs
- 04 found a permanent job
- 05 supported by a friend
- 06 illegal activities
- 07 other (specify) _____
- 08 don't know

PR-21. Sometimes youth who run away from home become involved in activities which are not legal. While (CHILD) was away from home, was he/she involved in any of the following activities? (ASK EACH ITEM).

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	
—	—	—	—	panhandling
—	—	—	—	stealing
—	—	—	—	prostitution
—	—	—	—	drug dealing
—	—	—	—	massage parlor work
—	—	—	—	pornography
—	—	—	—	other (specify) _____

PR-22. Did (CHILD) run away alone or with someone else?

- 01 alone (PR-24)
- 02 with someone else (PR-23)
- 03 don't know (PR-24)

PR-23. Who did (CHILD) run away with?

- 01 boyfriend/girlfriend
- 02 one other friend
- 03 several other friends
- 04 other _____

PR-24. Has your child run away before?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (SKIP TO SECTION B)
- 03 don't know (SKIP TO SECTION B)

PR-25. How many times has (CHILD) ever run away?

- 01 2-5 times
- 02 6-9 times
- 03 10 or more times
- 04 don't know

PR-26. How many times in the past year has (CHILD) run away?

- 01 1 time
- 02 2-5 times
- 03 6-9 times
- 04 10 or more times
- 05 don't know

PR-27. What is the longest time (CHILD) has ever remained away from home?

- 01 less than 1 day
- 02 1-3 days
- 03 4-10 days
- 04 more than 10 days
- 05 don't know

PR-28. Did you call the police:

- 01 every time the child has run away
- 02 about half the times the child has run away
- 03 less than half the times the child has run away
- 04 only this time
- 05 don't know

PR-29. Could you tell which of these statements is most true concerning (CHILD)'s return home?

- 01 He/She was asked to return.
- 02 He/She was permitted to return.
- 03 He/She came back in spite of opposition of someone in the household.

PR-30. How likely do you believe it is that this situation (child leaving) will recur? (READ CATEGORIES)

- 01 Very likely
- 02 Somewhat likely
- 03 Somewhat unlikely
- 04 Very unlikely
- 05 Don't know

PR-31. Have any other children in your household ever run away?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know

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E6

SKIP TO SECTION B (page 21)

SECTION A

PART II: FOR FAMILY ABDUCTION CASES ONLY

First, I would like to ask you some questions about what happened to (CHILD) while s/he was away from home.

PFA-1. Was more than one child taken?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No (PFA-4)

PFA-2. How many children were taken? _____

PFA-3. Please list their ages?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

PFA-4. How long was/were (CHILD/they) gone? _____ hours days weeks months

PFA-5. Which of the following best describes the incident?

- 01 child was taken from home/school/sitters without respondents consent
- 02 child was not returned from a scheduled visitation period
- 03 child was not given to respondent for visitation
- 04 other (specify) _____

PFA-6. What was the child told by the abductor about what was happening?

- 01 nothing
- 02 that the respondent no longer wanted the child
- 03 the child was going for a visit with the respondents permission
- 04 the child would be better off with the abductor
- 05 child was threatened to gain cooperation
- 06 other (specify) _____
- 07 don't know

PFA-7. While the child/children was gone did the abductor make any contact with you regarding the child at any time?

- 01 yes
- 02 no

PFA-8. Did the abductor make any threats to you?

- 01 yes (PFA-9)
- 02 no (PFA-10)

PFA-9. What was the nature of the threats? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 you would be harmed
- 02 child would be harmed
- 03 child would be kept permanently
- 04 abductor would report respondent to authorities
- 05 other (specify) _____

PFA-10. Did the abductor make any demands?

- 01 Yes (PFA-11)
- 02 No (PFA-12)

PFA-11. What demands were made? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 money or other possessions
- 02 change in custody arrangement
- 03 change in visitation arrangements
- 04 change in educational arrangements
- 05 change in nature of care provision
- 06 other (specify) _____

PFA-12. While the child/children were gone, did you know what city/town he/she/they were living in?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No

While the child/children were gone, did you know the address where he/she/they were living?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No

PFA-13. How far was the child taken during the episode?

- 01 remained in same city/town
- 02 left town but remained in state
- 03 left state but remained in country
- 04 left the US
- 05 don't know

PFA-14. Where did the child/children live or sleep during the episode?

- 01 was not gone overnight
- 02 at abductor's residence
- 03 at residence of friend of abductor
- 04 at residence of another relative
- 05 in a motel or hotel
- 06 in a variety of places
- 07 other (specify) _____
- 08 don't know

PFA-15. How soon after you decided that the child/children were gone did you call the police?

- 01 _____ hours days weeks
- 02 don't know when child/children were taken

PFA-16. How concerned were you that your child/children was/were in danger of being harmed while away from home?

- 01 very concerned
- 02 somewhat concerned
- 03 not concerned

PFA-17. Did you take any of these actions to find the child before you called the police?

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|-----------|--|
| ___ | ___ | tried to contact abductor by phone |
| ___ | ___ | tried to locate child/children (searched for them) |
| ___ | ___ | tried to contact friends or relatives of abducting parent |
| ___ | ___ | contacted local missing child agency |
| ___ | ___ | contacted State clearinghouse |
| ___ | ___ | contacted the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children |
| ___ | ___ | contacted your lawyer |
| ___ | ___ | contacted judge, court or prosecutor |
| ___ | ___ | had friends help look for child/children |
| ___ | ___ | hired a private detective |
| ___ | ___ | other (specify) _____ |

PFA-18. Have you done any of these things since you contacted the police?

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|-----------|--|
| ___ | ___ | tried to contact abductor by phone |
| ___ | ___ | tried to locate child/children (searched for them) |
| ___ | ___ | tried to contact friends or relatives of abducting parent |
| ___ | ___ | contacted local missing child agency |
| ___ | ___ | contacted State clearinghouse |
| ___ | ___ | contacted National Center For Missing and Exploited Children |
| ___ | ___ | contacted your lawyer |
| ___ | ___ | contacted judge, court or prosecutor |
| ___ | ___ | had friends help look for child/children |
| ___ | ___ | hired a private detective |
| ___ | ___ | other (specify) _____ |

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Now, I would like to ask you some questions about the person primarily responsible for this incident. How many people were there? (IF MORE THAN TWO SAY:) Please choose the two who you consider to be the most responsible and answer the following for them. (IF ONLY ONE PERSON WAS RESPONSIBLE, ANSWER ONLY FOR PERSON A AND MARK PERSON B N/A).

PFA-19. How is this person related to (CHILD)?

A. Person A

- 01 natural father
- 02 natural mother
- 03 stepfather
- 04 stepmother
- 05 uncle or aunt
- 06 grandparent
- 07 mother's boyfriend
- 08 father's girlfriend
- 09 other (specify) _____

B. Person B

- 01 natural father
- 02 natural mother
- 03 stepfather
- 04 stepmother
- 05 uncle or aunt
- 06 grandparent
- 07 mother's boyfriend
- 08 father's girlfriend
- 09 other (specify) _____

PFA-20. How old was the abductor on his/her last birthday?

A. _____

B. _____

PFA-21. What is the abductor's race?

- A.
- 01 Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
 - 02 Black (non-Hispanic)
 - 03 Hispanic
 - 04 other (specify) _____

- B.
- 01 Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
 - 02 Black (non-Hispanic)
 - 03 Hispanic
 - 04 other (specify) _____

PFA-22. How many years of school has the abductor completed?

- A.
- 01 not high school graduate
 - 02 high school graduate
 - 03 some college
 - 04 college graduate
 - 05 don't know

- B.
- 01 not high school graduate
 - 02 high school graduate
 - 03 some college
 - 04 college graduate
 - 05 don't know

PFA-23. What is the abductor's employment status?

- A. 01 employed full-time
- 02 employed part-time
- 03 unemployed
- 04 homemaker
- 05 other (specify) _____

- B. 01 employed full-time
- 02 employed part-time
- 03 unemployed
- 04 homemaker
- 05 other (specify) _____

PFA-24. Who has legal custody of (CHILD)?

- 01 respondent has sole custody
- 02 no formal custody agreement
- 03 formal joint custody agreement between respondent and abductor
- 04 other arrangement (specify) _____

PFA-25. Is legal custody of (CHILD) currently in dispute?

- 01 yes
- 02 no

PFA-26. Does the abductor have formal visitation rights?

- 01 yes
- 02 no

PFA-27. Have you and the abductor had any disagreements about:

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|-----------|------------------------------------|
| ___ | ___ | support payments |
| ___ | ___ | visitation |
| ___ | ___ | discipline of the children |
| ___ | ___ | dating or living with other people |
| ___ | ___ | medical or dental care of child |
| ___ | ___ | care or nourishment of child |
| ___ | ___ | other (specify) _____ |

PFA-28. When would you say your most recent disagreement was:

- 01 no disagreements
- 02 immediately prior to the abduction
- 03 1-7 days before the abduction
- 04 1-4 weeks before the abduction
- 05 between one month and one year ago
- 06 more than a year ago
- 07 can't remember when last disagreement occurred

PFA-29. Have any of your children ever been taken by the abductor without your permission before?

- 01 yes
- 02 no

-- PFA-30. If so, how many times? _____

PFA-31. How often did you call the police:

- 01 every time
- 02 about half of the time
- 03 less than half of the time
- 04 only this time

PFA-32. Did you (or will you) file criminal charges against the abductor?

- 01 yes, have filed charges
- 02 tried to file charges but police would not take case
- 03 tried to file charges but prosecutor would not take the case
- 04 no-but plan to do it
- 05 no-do not plan to do it
- 06 did not know whether you could file charges
- 07 have not decided
- 08 don't know

PFA-33. Is taking a child from a custodial parent a criminal offense in your state?

- 01 Yes (PFA-34)
- 02 No (skip to Section B)
- 03 Don't know (skip to Section B)

PFA-34. Is it a felony or a misdemeanor?

- 01 Felony always
- 02 Felony sometimes
- 03 Misdemeanor always
- 04 Don't know

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SKIP TO SECTION B (page 21)

SECTION A

PART III: FOR NON-FAMILY ABDUCTION CASES ONLY (PNF)

PNF-1. Was more than one child taken?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No (PNF-3)

PNF-2a. How many children were taken? _____

PNF-2b. How old were the children?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

PNF-3 Where was/were the child/children abducted from?

- 01 child's home or yard
- 02 outside on the street (e.g., walking home from school or in own neighborhood)
- 03 another home child was visiting
- 04 shopping center/mall
- 05 public event
- 06 hitch-hiking
- 07 school/day care
- 08 car
- 09 other (specify) _____
- 10 don't know

PNF-4. Do you know anything about the perpetrator?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (PNF-11)

PNF-5 Was more than one perpetrator involved?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (PNF-7)
- 03 don't know (PNF-7)

PNF-6. How many perpetrators were involved? _____

Please provide the following information for the two people you consider to be primarily responsible for the episode. (IF THERE WAS ONLY ONE PERSON RESPONSIBLE, ANSWER QUESTIONS FOR PERSON A AND WRITE N/A FOR QUESTIONS ON PERSON B).

PNF-7. What is the person's age on his/her last birthday?

- Person A: _____
- Person B: _____

PNF-8. What is this person's sex?

Person A: 01 Male
02 Female

Person B: 01 Male
02 Female

PNF-9. What is this person's race?

Person A: 01 Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
02 Black (non-Hispanic)
03 Hispanic
04 Other (specify) _____
05 Don't know

Person B: 01 Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
02 Black (non-Hispanic)
03 Hispanic
04 Other (specify) _____
05 Don't know

PNF-10. Which of the following best describes who this person/these persons was/were?

a. Person A

b. Person B

01	01	Parents boyfriend/girlfriend
02	02	Foster family member
03	03	Stranger
04	04	Neighbor
05	05	Person in authority (teacher, scout leader, etc.)
06	06	Caretaker/babysitter
07	07	Friend of your children
08	08	Friend of yours
09	09	Friend of other adult in household
10	10	Other (SPECIFY) _____
11	11	Don't know

PNF-11. Have the person/persons responsible for this episode been apprehended?

01 Yes, all perpetrators
02 Yes, at least one, but not all
03 No
04 Don't know

PNF-12. Was a ransom demanded for (CHILD)?

01 yes
02 no

PNF-13. Was any attempt made to extort any goods or services from you in order to keep your child safe or have him/her returned?

01 Yes
02 No

PNF-14. How soon after you noticed your child was missing did you call the police?

_____ hours days weeks months

PNF-15. How concerned (are/were) you that (CHILD) was in danger of being harmed while he/she was missing?

- 01 very concerned
- 02 somewhat concerned
- 03 not concerned

PNF-16. Did you take any actions to find the child before you called the police?

Yes No

- _____ Yes _____ searched for child in house/neighborhood
- _____ Yes _____ called child's friends
- _____ Yes _____ checked with school
- _____ Yes _____ checked hospitals
- _____ Yes _____ checked relatives
- _____ Yes _____ went to places where child spends time (mall, video arcade, sports field etc.)
- _____ Yes _____ contacted National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- _____ Yes _____ contacted local missing child organization
- _____ Yes _____ contacted State clearinghouse
- _____ Yes _____ hired private detectives
- _____ Yes _____ other
- _____ Yes _____ (specify) _____

PNF-17. Have you taken any of these actions after you called the police?

Yes No

- _____ Yes _____ searched for child in home
- _____ Yes _____ searched for child in neighborhood
- _____ Yes _____ called child's friends
- _____ Yes _____ checked with school
- _____ Yes _____ checked hospitals
- _____ Yes _____ checked relatives
- _____ Yes _____ went to places where child spends time (mall, video arcade, sports field, etc.)
- _____ Yes _____ contacted National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- _____ Yes _____ contacted local missing child organization
- _____ Yes _____ contacted State clearinghouse
- _____ Yes _____ hired private detectives
- _____ Yes _____ other
- _____ Yes _____ (specify) _____

PNF-18. Could you tell me how long it was from the time (CHILD) was taken/detained until he/she was freed or returned?

- 01 _____ hours days weeks months years
- 02 don't know when child was taken

PNF-19. How did abductor take child?

- 01 used physical force
- 02 threatened child
- 03 lured child with candy or gifts
- 04 lied to child about where child was being taken
- 05 other (specify) _____
- 06 don't know

PNF-20. Was the child moved even a few feet from his/her original location?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No (PNF-22)
- 03 Don't know

PNF-21. How was the child moved?

- 01 child was carried
- 02 child was made to enter vehicle
- 03 child walked
- 04 other (specify) _____
- 05 don't know

PNF-22. Which of the following best describes where the child was taken?

- 01 into a vehicle
- 02 into an abandoned building
- 03 to abductor's residence
- 04 to residence of someone known by abductor
- 05 to a field or forest
- 06 other (specify) _____
- 07 don't know

PNF-23. How far was the child taken during the episode?

- 01 remained in same city/town
- 02 left town but remained in state
- 03 left state but remained in country
- 04 left the U.S.
- 05 don't know

PNF-24. While (CHILD) was gone, how did he/she get meals most of the time?

- 01 abductor provided food
- 02 ate in soup kitchens or other free places
- 03 did not eat while gone
- 04 other (specify) _____

PNF-25. Where did the child sleep during the episode?

- 01 was not gone overnight
- 02 slept at abductor's residence
- 03 slept at residence of friend of abductor
- 04 slept at residence of abductor's relative
- 05 abandoned building
- 06 stayed in a motel or hotel
- 07 other (specify) _____
- 08 don't know

PNF-26. What did you think had happened to your child when you first noticed he/she was missing?

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- 01 runaway
- 02 late coming home
- 03 abducted
- 04 lost
- 05 other (specify) _____
- 06 don't know

SKIP TO SECTION B (page 21)

SECTION A

PART IV: FOR OTHERWISE MISSING CASES ONLY (PO)

PO-1. Prior to realizing or thinking (CHILD) was missing, where did you think he/she was?

- 01 at home
- 02 at school or at job
- 03 at a friends or playing with friends
- 04 in the care of relatives
- 05 in the care of others
- 06 at a mall/arcade/movie
- 07 other (specify) _____

PO-2. How did you notice your child was missing?

- 01 was late coming home
- 02 failed to call at arranged time
- 03 disappeared from presence
- 04 gone longer than usual
- 05 someone else noticed child missing
- 06 other (specify) _____
- 07 don't know

PO-3. How soon after you noticed or believed (CHILD) was missing did you call the police?

- 01 _____ minutes hours days weeks months
- 02 don't know exactly when child was gone

PO-4. Did you take any of the following actions before calling the police?

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|-----------|--|
| ___ | ___ | searched for child in home |
| ___ | ___ | searched for child in neighborhood |
| ___ | ___ | called child's friends |
| ___ | ___ | checked with school |
| ___ | ___ | checked hospitals |
| ___ | ___ | checked relatives |
| ___ | ___ | went to places where child spends time (mall, video arcade, sports field etc.) |
| ___ | ___ | contacted National Center for Missing and Exploited Children |
| ___ | ___ | contacted local missing child organization |
| ___ | ___ | contacted State clearinghouse |
| ___ | ___ | hired private detectives |
| ___ | ___ | other
(specify) _____ |

PO-5. Did you take any of these actions after you called the police?

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|-----------|--|
| ___ | ___ | searched for child in home |
| ___ | ___ | searched for child in neighborhood |
| ___ | ___ | called child's friends |
| ___ | ___ | checked with school |
| ___ | ___ | checked hospitals |
| ___ | ___ | checked relatives |
| ___ | ___ | went to places where child spends time (mall, video arcade, sports field etc.) |
| ___ | ___ | contacted NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN |
| ___ | ___ | contacted local missing child organization |
| ___ | ___ | contacted State clearinghouse |
| ___ | ___ | hired private detectives |
| ___ | ___ | other (specify) _____ |

PO-6. Which of the following best describes why your child was missing?

- 01 child hurt or injured
- 02 child wandered away while with you
- 03 child had gotten lost
- 04 child had forgotten about time
- 05 child had misunderstood expectations about returning home
- 06 someone taking care of child had misunderstood expectations about returning child home
- 07 unforeseen circumstances causing delays
- 08 other
(specify) _____

PO-7. How concerned were you that (CHILD) was in danger of being harmed while he/she was away from home?

- 01 very concerned
- 02 somewhat concerned
- 03 not concerned

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SKIP TO SECTION B (page 21)

SECTION B: POLICE RESPONSE (PB)

INTERVIEWER CHECKPOINT:

Has Section E been completed? (If child was still missing when the respondent was initially contacted Section E should be completed.)

- 01 Yes - SKIP TO PB-9
- 02 No - BEGIN WITH PB-1

PB-1 How did you initially contact the police?

- 01 called emergency or 911 number
- 02 called non-emergency number
- 03 walked in to station
- 04 approached an officer on the street
- 05 called a juvenile officer or missing persons investigator directly
- 06 other (specify) _____

PB-2. The first time you spoke to the police, did they do any of the following? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 told you to call or come back later (PB-3)
- 02 took basic identifying information about the incident (PB-4)
- 03 told you an officer would come to take a report (PB-4)
- 04 told you to come to the station to make a report (PB-6)
- 05 suggested where/how to look for your child (PB-4)
- 06 other (specify) _____ (PB-4)

PB-3. If later, how much later? _____ Minutes Hours Days

PB-4. Did a patrol officer come to talk to you in person and take a report?

- 01 yes (PB-5)
- 02 no (PB-6)

PB-5. How soon after your call did the officer come?

Length of time: _____ Minutes Hours Days (PB-7)

PB-6. Did you go to the station to make the report?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No

PB-7. When the officer came to take your report (or when you went to the station to make your report), did someone do any of the following?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
---	---	---	---	took basic information (description etc)
---	---	---	---	asked for a photograph of child
---	---	---	---	asked for friends/relatives to contact
---	---	---	---	searched house or child's room
---	---	---	---	searched neighborhood
---	---	---	---	asked about places where child might be
---	---	---	---	put out an APB or other announcement
---	---	---	---	called other offices to help
---	---	---	---	other (specify) _____

PB-8. Did someone from the police department do any of the following?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
---	---	---	---	suggest where/how to look for (child)
---	---	---	---	suggest calling runaway hotline
---	---	---	---	suggest contacting National Center for Missing and Exploited Children or local runaway/missing child agency
---	---	---	---	suggest you call child's friends or relatives
---	---	---	---	describe investigative process
---	---	---	---	tell you how to get a copy of the report
---	---	---	---	give you the case number but not a copy of the report
---	---	---	---	tell you who to contact for more information about case progress
---	---	---	---	suggest you call lawyer or district attorney
---	---	---	---	other (specify) _____

PB-9. After you made your initial report, did you have any other personal or phone contacts with police personnel?

01 Yes
02 No (PB-11)

PB-10. What kind of contact did you have? How many times?

of times:

---	---	a.	police officer called to get information
---	---	b.	police officer came in person to get information
---	---	c.	parent called police officer to get information
---	---	d.	parent visited police department to talk to officer
---	---	e.	parent was told where to pick child up
---	---	f.	parent called police officer to inform someone that child had returned
---	---	g.	other (specify) _____

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PB-11. To your knowledge did the police do any of following during the time your child was missing?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
—	—	—	—	Call in investigative specialists
—	—	—	—	Gather physical evidence
—	—	—	—	Question available suspect(s)
—	—	—	—	Interview available neighbors
—	—	—	—	Interview child's friends/siblings
—	—	—	—	Interview other available relatives
—	—	—	—	Interview school personnel
—	—	—	—	Check hospitals
—	—	—	—	Check runaway shelter(s)/social service agencies
—	—	—	—	Check known juvenile haunts
—	—	—	—	Check morgues
—	—	—	—	Report to FBI
—	—	—	—	Circulate child/youth's photo to law enforcement agencies
—	—	—	—	Get child/youth's dental records
—	—	—	—	Give copy of incident report to parent/guardian
—	—	—	—	Obtain search warrant/subpoena to examine suspect's record
—	—	—	—	Maintain case as open until child/youth returned
—	—	—	—	Notify surrounding jurisdictions (e.g., by teletype)
—	—	—	—	Notify other specific jurisdiction/district/precinct
—	—	—	—	Report to the state missing persons file
—	—	—	—	Enter report into NCIC missing persons file
—	—	—	—	Report case to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
—	—	—	—	Report case to a local runaway/missing child agency
—	—	—	—	Other (SPECIFY) _____

PB-12. How would you rate the police handling of the investigation overall?

01 excellent
 02 very good
 03 neither good nor bad
 04 poor
 05 very bad

PB-13. How would you rate the length of time it took for a police officer to respond to your initial call?

01 excellent
 02 very good
 03 neither good nor bad
 04 poor
 05 very bad
 06 did not respond

PB-14. How would you rate the amount of effort the police made to recover your child?

- 01 excellent
- 02 very good
- 03 neither good nor bad
- 04 poor
- 05 very bad

PB-15. Were you satisfied with the kind of information you received from the police officers during their investigation?

- 01 yes
- 02 no

PB-16. What other information would you have liked to have?

PB-17. Are there things the police did not do that you would have liked for them to do? (specify)

PB-18. Were there things the police did that you feel were inappropriate, or made you angry? (Specify) _____

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SECTION C- OUTCOMES (PC)

PC-1. How was the (CHILD) recovered?

- 01 police recovered child (PC-2)
- 02 returned on own (PC-5)
- 03 parent/other relative located and recovered child (PC-5)
- 04 child located by social service personnel (e.g., caseworker or probation officer) (PC-5)
- 05 returned by abductor (PC-5)
- 06 child found in hospital (PC-5)
- 07 dead body discovered (PD-1)
- 08 other (PD-5)
(SPECIFY) _____

PC-2. How long was (CHILD) held by the police?

- 01 Never, child was brought home immediately after being found by police (PC-6)
- 02 1 hour or less
- 03 several hours
- 04 overnight
- 05 24 hours or more

PC-3. Where was (CHILD) held?

- 01 in a police station office (PC-6)
- 02 in secure juvenile detention (PC-6)
- 03 in jail (PC-4)
- 04 in a shelter or group home (PC-6)
- 05 other _____ (PC-6)

PC-4. While (CHILD) was in jail did he/she have any contact with any adults who were also being held?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 don't know

PC-5. Did you contact the police to inform them that (CHILD) had been recovered?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 does not apply

PC-6. After (CHILD) returned how much information did you get from him/her about what happened while he/she was missing?

- 01 received a complete description of the episode
- 02 received a description of some but not all of the episode
- 03 did not discuss it at all

- PC-7. After (CHILD) was recovered did the police question him/her about what happened while he/she was missing?
- 01 yes
 - 02 no
 - 03 don't know
- PC-8. Was (CHILD) touched sexually or molested during this episode?
- 01 yes (PC-10)
 - 02 no
 - 03 don't know
- PC-9. Was there an attempt to touch or sexually molest (CHILD) during this episode?
- 01 yes
 - 02 no (PC-11)
 - 03 don't know (PC-11)
- PC-10. Was this reported to the police?
- 01 yes
 - 02 no
 - 03 don't know
- PC-11. Was (CHILD) hit, punched, beaten up or hit with an object, or physically harmed in any way during this episode?
- 01 yes (PC-12)
 - 02 no (PC-13)
 - 03 don't know (PC-13)
- PC-12. Did this require medical attention?
- 01 Yes
 - 02 No
 - 03 Don't know
- PC-13. During this episode was (CHILD) in serious danger of being harmed?
- 01 Yes, definitely
 - 02 Probably
 - 03 No (PC-15)
 - 04 Don't know (PC-15)
- PC-14. Was this reported to the police?
- 01 yes
 - 02 no
 - 03 don't know
- PC-15. Did (CHILD) have money or possessions stolen from him/her during this episode?
- 01 yes
 - 02 no (PC-17)
 - 03 don't know (PC-17)
- PC-16. Was this reported to the police?
- 01 yes
 - 02 no
 - 03 don't know

PC-17. Was (CHILD) harmed in any other way during this episode?

- 01 yes (PC-18)
- 02 no (PC-20)
- 03 don't know (PC-20)

PC-18. How was (CHILD) harmed?

PC-19. Was this reported to the police?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

PC-20. Did (CHILD) suffer any mental harm as a result of this incident?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (PC-22)
- 03 don't know (PC-22)

PC-21. Would you say the mental harm has been:

- 01 very serious
- 02 somewhat serious
- 03 mild
- 04 minor
- 05 don't know

PC-22. Was (CHILD) involved in pornography or prostitution during this episode?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

PC-23. Was (CHILD) involved with using or selling drugs during this episode?

- 01 yes (PC-24)
- 02 no (PC-25)
- 03 don't know (PC-25)

PC-24. Which--using drugs or selling drugs?

- 01 using only
- 02 selling only
- 03 both

PC-25. Was (CHILD) involved in any thefts or robberies during this episode?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

PC-26. Has (CHILD) received a medical examination as a result of this incident?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

PC-27. Was (CHILD) or your family referred to any counseling as a result of this episode?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (PC-30)
- 03 don't know (PC-30)

PC-28. Who referred (CHILD) or your family for individual counseling?

- 01 police
- 02 court or judge
- 03 social service agency
- 04 other (specify) _____
- 05 don't know

PC-29. How satisfied are you with the counseling?

- 01 very satisfied
- 02 somewhat satisfied
- 03 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 04 somewhat dissatisfied
- 05 very dissatisfied

PC-30. How would you describe the relationship with (CHILD) since (his/her) return? (READ CATEGORIES.)

- 01 Much improved
- 02 Somewhat improved
- 03 About the same
- 04 Somewhat worse
- 05 Much worse
- 06 DK

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SECTION D. FAMILY BACKGROUND (PD)

Now, I would like to finish by asking some background questions about you and your family.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

-- PD-1. What year were you born? _____

PD-2. What was the highest grade in school you completed?

- 01 None
- 02 Elementary: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (circle the appropriate grade)
- 03 High School: 9 10 11 12 (circle the appropriate grade)
- 04 Some college, vocational education
- 05 College graduate
- 06 Some graduate school
- 07 Graduate degree

PD-3. What is your current marital status?

- 01 Married (ASK QUESTION PD-4A AND B FOR RESPONDENT AND SPOUSE)
- 02 Living with someone as a couple (ASK QUESTION PD-4A AND B FOR RESPONDENT AND PARTNER)
- 03 Widowed (ASK QUESTION PD-4A THEN SKIP TO PD-5)
- 04 Divorced (ASK QUESTION PD-4A THEN SKIP TO PD-5)
- 05 Separated (ASK QUESTION PD-4A THEN SKIP TO PD-5)
- 06 Never married (ASK QUESTION PD-4A THEN SKIP TO PD-5)

PD-4A. Are you presently:

- 01 Working full-time
- 02 Working part-time
- 03 Keeping house
- 04 Unemployed, and looking for work
- 05 Retired
- 06 Other (specify) _____

PD-4B. Is your spouse or partner presently:

- 01 Working full-time
- 02 Working part-time
- 03 Keeping house
- 04 Unemployed, and looking for work
- 05 Retired
- 06 Other (specify) _____

PD-5. About how much income comes into the household per year before taxes?

- 01 Less than \$15,000
- 02 \$15,001 to \$25,000
- 03 \$25,001 to \$35,000
- 04 \$35,001 to \$45,000
- 05 \$45,001 to \$55,000
- 06 \$55,001 to \$65,000
- 07 More than \$65,000
- 08 Other (specify) _____

- 09 Don't wish to say
- 10 Don't know

PD-6. How many adults live in the household? _____

PD-7. How many children live in the household? _____

PD-8. Is (CHILD) an adopted or foster child?

- 01 Adopted child
- 02 Foster child
- 03 Neither

PD-9. Which would you say best describes your household?

- 01 Both parents present, married
- 02 Blended family (step-parents in household)
- 03 Single parent: Mother only
- 04 Single parent: Father only
- 05 Other (specify): _____

PD-10A. How long have you lived at your current residence?

_____ months _____ years

PD-10B. (If less than 5 years). How many times have you moved in the past 5 years? _____ times

PD-11. Do you attend church or synagogue regularly?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Refusal

PD-12. What is the general level of adjustment within the home? (READ ALL)

- 01 Very good--things are fairly harmonious within the home
- 02 Fairly good--problems from time to time, but nothing serious
- 03 Somewhat poor--there are some problems which need attention
- 04 Very poor--there are many serious problems; intervention is needed
- 05 Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 06 Do not wish to say
- 07 Don't know

PD-13. How well does (CHILD) usually behave at home?

- 01 Very well - problem behavior not a concern
- 02 Fairly well - minor problem behavior
- 03 Fair--some problem behavior needs attention
- 04 Poor--serious problem behavior needs intervention
- 05 Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 06 Do not wish to say
- 07 Don't know

PD-14. Does (CHILD) behave in any of the following ways?

- | Yes | No | |
|-----|-----|---|
| ___ | ___ | Argues excessively with mother or step/foster mother |
| ___ | ___ | Argues excessively with father or step/foster father |
| ___ | ___ | Has frequent temper tantrums |
| ___ | ___ | Fights excessively with siblings/other children |
| ___ | ___ | Won't come home at appointed times |
| ___ | ___ | Refuses to follow other rules such as where not to go |
| ___ | ___ | Has friends you don't approve of |
| ___ | ___ | Defiant, generally |
| ___ | ___ | Other (specify) _____ |

PD-15. How would you rate the child's academic performance at school?

- 01 Does not attend school (Skip to Q.18)
- 02 Excellent
- 03 Good (above average)
- 04 Average
- 05 Poor (below average)
- 06 Fails
- 07 Other (specify) _____
- 08 Do not wish to say
- 09 Don't know

PD-16. How would you rate the child's behavior at school?

- 01 Excellent
- 02 Good
- 03 Average
- 04 Below average
- 05 Poor
- 06 Do not wish to say
- 07 Don't know

PD-17. How would you describe his/her attendance at school?

- 01 Regular - attends school every day unless ill
- 02 Fairly regular - skips once in a while
- 03 Somewhat irregular - skips fairly often
- 04 Very irregular - skips frequently
- 05 Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 06 Do not wish to say
- 07 Don't know

PD-18. How does (CHILD) get money? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 Doesn't earn any money
- 02 Receives an allowance
- 03 Does odd jobs such as babysitting or lawn-mowing
- 04 Works part-time at a regular job (restaurant, store, etc.)
- 05 Works full-time
- 06 Other (specify) _____
- 07 Does not wish to stay
- 08 Don't know

PD-19. What does (CHILD) do frequently in his/her spare time during the DAY? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 Doesn't have any spare time during the day
- 02 Goes to drop-in center
- 03 Chats with friends
- 04 Practices/plays sports
- 05 Practices/performs music
- 06 Does homework
- 07 Works on hobbies
- 08 Watches TV at home
- 09 Hangs out in street
- 10 Hangs out in shopping malls
- 11 Plays video games in an arcade
- 12 Goes to bars/taverns
- 13 Hangs out in subway station
- 14 Other (specify) _____
- 15 Do not wish to say
- 16 Don't know

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PD-20. And what does he/she do frequently in his/her spare time during the EVENINGS? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 Doesn't have any spare time during the evening
- 02 Goes to drop-in center
- 03 Chats with friends
- 04 Practices/plays sports
- 05 Practices/performs music
- 06 Does homework
- 07 Works on hobbies
- 08 Watches TV at home
- 09 Hangs out in street
- 10 Hangs out in shopping malls
- 11 Plays video games in an arcade
- 12 Goes to bars/taverns
- 13 Hangs out in subway station
- 14 Other (specify) _____
- 15 Do not wish to say
- 16 Don't know

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PD-21. Before this incident, had (CHILD) ever been involved in (ACTIVITY) a.-1). (IF NO, MARK 01 AS FREQUENCY) If yes, ask--How often had (CHILD) participated in this activity during the past year before the missing incident?

- 01 Never
- 02 Not in the past year
- 03 Only one incident
- 04 One or two incidents
- 05 Several incidents
- 06 He/she is continually involved in such incidents
- 07 Other (specify) _____
- 08 Do not wish to say
- 09 Don't know

	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Frequency in the Past Year</u>
—	a. skipping school	_____
—	b. curfew violation	_____
—	c. shoplifting	_____
—	d. panhandling	_____
—	e. vandalism	_____
—	f. stealing money	_____
—	g. prostitution	_____
—	h. car theft	_____
—	i. selling drugs	_____
—	j. other (SPECIFY)	_____

PD-22. How often would you say (CHILD) uses alcohol?

- 01 Daily
- 02 Weekly
- 03 Monthly
- 04 A few times
- 05 Only one time
- 06 Never
- 07 Don't know

PD-23. How often would you say (CHILD) uses drugs?

- 01 daily
- 02 weekly
- 03 monthly
- 04 a few times
- 05 only one time
- 06 never (PD-25)
- 07 don't know

PD-24. What types of drugs does he/she use? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.

- 01 Marijuana
- 02 Hash
- 03 Cocaine
- 04 Crack
- 05 Alcohol
- 06 Heroin
- 07 Glue
- 08 Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 09 Do not wish to say
- 10 Don't know

READ:

We've asked you some questions about events that happened to your child(ren). We'd like to ask you whether some of those same kinds of events ever happened to you when you were younger. Before the age of 18:

PD-25. Did you ever run away from home and stay away overnight?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know
- 04 Not applicable

PD-26. Were you ever missing from home so that your parents contacted the police?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know
- 04 Not applicable

PD-27. Did either parent ever abduct you or try to abduct you in violation of a custody agreement?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know
- 04 Not applicable

PD-28. Did a stranger ever kidnap or try to kidnap you?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know
- 04 Not applicable

PD-29. Were you ever forced out of your home by your parents?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know
- 04 Not applicable

PD-30. When you were in the 6th grade, about how many times would you say that you were physically punished by your parents?

- 01 Never
- 02 Once or twice
- 03 A few times
- 04 Once a month
- 05 Every week
- 06 More often than once a week
- 07 DK

PD-31. Were you ever physically abused by a parent or guardian?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 DK
- 04 NA

PD-32. Before age 18, can you remember having any experience you would now consider sexual abuse--like someone trying or succeeding in having sexual intercourse with you against your will, someone touching you, grabbing you, or making you touch or feel them against your will?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 DK
- 04 NA

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PROCEDURES FOR ENDING QUESTIONNAIRE

IF CHILD IS UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE OR HAS NOT RETURNED, THANK PARENT AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW.

IF CHILD IS OVER AGE 12 AND HAS RETURNED, READ PARENT CONSENT FORM AND SCHEDULE INTERVIEW (INTERVIEW SERIOUS CASES IN PERSON; NON-SERIOUS CASES BY PHONE).

Parent Consent Form

I would also like to interview (CHILD'S NAME) about this incident. Before you decide whether to allow this, I need to read you the following instructions regarding the confidentiality of the interview.

The URSA Institute (UI) will not reveal the child's identity to anyone outside the project staff and that the connection between your child's name and his/her answers to any questions will be kept confidential by URSA until the project is completed, when all records of your child's identity will be destroyed. In addition, you may not be present during the interview, and URSA will not reveal your child's answer to any question to you.

Your child does not have to answer any question to which he/she objects and he/she may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Do you consent to allow your child to participate in this interview?

Yes

No

Date

Signature of Interviewer

SECTION E-1 (PNR)

To be used for cases where the child/youth has not yet returned home.

PNR-1. How long has your child been missing? ___ hours days weeks months

PNR-2. Why do you think your child is missing?

- 01 Runaway
- 02 Abducted by other parent or relative
- 03 Abducted by stranger
- 04 Lost
- 05 Other (specify) _____
- 06 Don't know

PNR-3. How did you initially contact the police?

- 01 called emergency or 911 number
- 02 called non-emergency number
- 03 walked in to station
- 04 approached an officer on the street
- 05 called a juvenile officer or missing persons investigator directly
- 06 other (specify) _____

PNR-4. The first time you spoke to the police, did they do any of the following? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 told you to call or come back later (PNR-5)
- 02 took basic identifying information about the incident (PNR-6)
- 03 told you an officer would come to take a report (PNR-6)
- 04 told you to come to the station to make a report (PNR-7)
- 05 suggested where/how to look for your child (PNR-6)
- 06 other (specify) _____ (PNR-6)

PNR-5. If later, how much later? _____ (Minutes Hours Days)

PNR-6. Did a patrol officer come to talk to you in person and take a report?

- 01 yes (PB-5)
- 02 no (PB-6)

PNR-7. How soon after your call did the officer come?

Length of time: _____ Minutes Hours Days (PNR-9)

PNR-8. Did you go to the station to make the report?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No

PNR-9. When the officer came to take your report (or when you went to the station to make your report), did someone do any of the following?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
___	___	___	took basic information (description etc)
___	___	___	asked for a photograph of child
___	___	___	asked for friends/relatives to contact
___	___	___	searched house or child's room
___	___	___	searched neighborhood
___	___	___	asked about places where child might be
___	___	___	put out an APB or other announcement
___	___	___	called other offices to help
___	___	___	other (specify) _____

PNR-10a. Did someone give you any of the following instructions?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
___	___	___	suggest where/how to look for (child)
___	___	___	suggest calling runaway hotline
___	___	___	suggest contacting National Center for Missing and Exploited Children or local runaway/missing child agency
___	___	___	suggest you call child's friends or relatives
___	___	___	describe investigative process
___	___	___	tell you how to get a copy of the report
___	___	___	give you the case number but not a copy of the report
___	___	___	tell you who to contact for more information about case progress
___	___	___	suggest you call lawyer or district attorney
___	___	___	other (specify) _____

PNR-10b. Have you taken any of the following actions to locate your child?

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
___	___	a. called child's friends
___	___	b. checked relatives
___	___	c. went to places where child spends time (mall, video arcade, sports field, etc.)
___	___	d. called runaway hotline
___	___	e. checked with school
___	___	f. checked hospitals
___	___	g. contacted National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
___	___	h. contacted state or local missing child organization
___	___	i. hired a private detective
___	___	j. other (specify) _____

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WE WILL CALL YOU BACK IN TWO WEEKS TO SEE IF YOUR CHILD HAS RETURNED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

(BEGIN WITH SECTION E-2 TWO WEEKS FROM NOW - MARK THE DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR)

SECTION E-2 (PNRF)

Follow-up to determine if child/youth has returned home or not.

URSA ID _____

INTERVIEWER ID _____

CHILD'S NAME _____

POLICE ID _____

DATE _____

FOLLOW-UP # _____

PNRF-1. Has (CHILD) returned home or been located?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (SKIP TO PNRF-3)

PNRF-2. Which of the following best describes this incident?

- 01 Runaway (go to page 2 - parent form)
- 02 Family abduction (go to page 8 - parent form)
- 03 Non-family abduction (go to page 14 - parent form)
- 04 Otherwise missing (go to page 19 - parent form)

PNRF-3. Have you been contacted by any other police officers since we last talked?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

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PNRF-4. Since we last talked to you on (DATE) have the police done any of the following?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
—	—	—	—	call in investigative specialists
—	—	—	—	gather physical evidence
—	—	—	—	question available suspect(s)
—	—	—	—	interview available neighbors
—	—	—	—	interview child's friends/siblings (if any)
—	—	—	—	interview other available relatives
—	—	—	—	Don't interview school personnel
—	—	—	—	check hospitals
—	—	—	—	check runaway shelters/social service agencies
—	—	—	—	check known juvenile haunts
—	—	—	—	report to FBI
—	—	—	—	circulate child's photo to law enforcement agencies
—	—	—	—	get child/youth's dental records
—	—	—	—	give copy of incident report to parent/guardian
—	—	—	—	obtain search warrant/subpoena to examine suspect's record
—	—	—	—	maintain case as open until child is returned
—	—	—	—	notify surrounding jurisdictions (e.g., by teletype)
—	—	—	—	notify other specific jurisdictions/districts/precincts
—	—	—	—	report to the state missing persons file
—	—	—	—	enter report into NCIC missing persons file
—	—	—	—	report case to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
—	—	—	—	Other (specify) _____

PNRF-5. Since we last talked to you on (DATE), have you taken any of the following actions to locate your child?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
—	—	—	contacted police again
—	—	—	called child's friends
—	—	—	checked with school
—	—	—	checked hospitals
—	—	—	checked relatives
—	—	—	went to places where child spends time (mall, video arcade, sports field, etc.)
—	—	—	contacted NCMEC
—	—	—	contacted state or local missing child organization
—	—	—	hired a private detective
—	—	—	other (specify) _____

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WE WILL CALL YOU BACK IN TWO WEEKS TO SEE IF YOUR CHILD HAS RETURNED. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

(BEGIN WITH ANOTHER COPY OF SECTION E-2 TWO WEEKS FROM NOW - MARK DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR).

URSA ID: _____

INTERVIEWER ID: _____

POLICE ID: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____

CHILD INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEW METHOD

- 01 Phone
- 02 Face-to-face

SECTION A: DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT BY CASE TYPE

- I. RUNAWAYS (CR - page 2)
- II. FAMILY ABDUCTIONS (CFA - page 9)
- III. NON-FAMILY ABDUCTIONS (CNF - page 11)
- IV. OTHERWISE MISSING (CO - page 13)

SECTION B: FAMILY BACKGROUND (CB - page 15)

Hello, my name is _____. I am from URSA Institute. We are conducting a study of children who were reported missing to the police. We would like to talk to you for about 15 minutes. You may refuse to answer any question and all the information you give will be confidential. Before you decide whether to participate in the interview I would like to read you the following assurance.

UNDERSTANDING OF MINOR CHILD

(TO BE READ TO CHILD PRIOR TO BEGINNING INTERVIEW.)

Participation in this study is voluntary. I understand that if I do not want to answer any question, I don't have to, and that I can stop the interview any time if I want to. I understand that the interview will be conducted in private. I understand that URSA Institute will not reveal to anyone, including my parents or guardian, the answer I give to any question.

Are you willing to participate in this interview? ___ Yes ___ No

Date

Signature of Interviewer

SECTION A: DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT

I. FOR RUNAWAYS (CR)

CR-1. Have you ever run away from home before the time of (date)?

01 Yes (CR-2)

02 No (CR-4)

CR-2. How many times have you run away from home (counting this time)?

01 2-5 times

02 6-9 times

03 10 or more times

04 don't know

CR-3. What is the longest time you remained away from home?

01 less than 1 day

02 1-3 days

03 4-10 days

04 more than 10 days

05 don't know

CR-4. Have you ever threatened to run away?

01 Yes

02 No

CR-5. How long were you away from home this time? ____ hours/days/weeks/months

CR-6. Did you tell anyone you were going to run away before you left or did you leave a note?

01 Yes

02 No (CR-8)

CR-7. Whom did you tell or leave a note for? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

01 parents

02 brother(s)/sister(s)

03 other relative(s)

04 boyfriend/girlfriend

05 other friend(s)

06 other (specify) _____

CR-8. Have any of your brothers or sisters ever run away?

01 Yes

02 No

03 don't have any

CR-9. Have any of your friends ever run away?

01 Yes

02 No

03 don't have any

CR-10. Why did you run away this time?

01 didn't run away - was thrown out or forced to leave

Did you run away because you (ASK EACH ITEM)

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
___	___	had a fight with parents
___	___	wanted to get away from all the problems at home
___	___	wanted to get away from all the problems at school
___	___	wanted an adventure
___	___	wanted to look for my natural parents
___	___	didn't like the institution or foster home I was in
___	___	went along with a friend
___	___	other (specify) _____
___	___	don't know

CR-11. What did you take with you when you left? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

___	01	nothing
___	02	money
___	03	extra clothes
___	04	food
___	05	personal items (books, records, etc.)
___	06	other (specify) _____

CR-12. Where did you go when you first left home?

___	01	friend's house
___	02	relative's house
___	03	place of recreation (mall, downtown, arcade, etc.)
___	04	to another city or town
___	05	other (specify) _____

CR-13. While you were away from home, how far did you go?

___	01	remained in neighborhood
___	02	left the neighborhood but remained in the city/town
___	03	went to another city or town in the same metropolitan area
___	04	left this metropolitan area but remained in the state
___	05	left the state
___	06	don't know

CR-14. While you were away from home, how did you travel most of the time?

___	01	Did not travel
___	02	Walked
___	03	Public transportation
___	04	Took a bus or train
___	05	Used own or friend's car
___	06	Stole a car
___	07	Took an airplane
___	08	Hitchhiked
___	09	Other (specified) _____

CR-15. While you were away from home, how did you get meals most of the time?

- 01 purchased food
- 02 provided by person(s) I stayed with
- 03 ate in soup kitchens or other free places
- 04 shoplifted food from stores
- 05 got food in a variety of ways
- 06 didn't eat while I was gone
- 07 other (specify) _____

CR-16. How many meals per day did you normally eat while you were gone? _____

CR-17. While you were away from home where did you sleep most of the time?

- 01 did not sleep while I was gone
- 02 in a motel or hotel
- 03 with a friend
- 04 with a relative
- 05 in a runaway shelter
- 06 in a shelter for homeless people
- 07 on the street/or in the park
- 08 in abandoned buildings
- 09 in a car
- 10 in a variety of places
- 11 other (specify) _____

CR-18 While you were away from home, how did you get money most of the time?

- 01 didn't have any money
- 02 took money with me
- 03 did odd jobs
- 04 found a permanent job
- 05 supported by a friend
- 06 illegal activities
- 07 other (SPECIFY) _____

CR-19. Sometimes youths who run away from home become involved in activities which are not legal in order to support themselves. While you were away from home were you involved in any of the following activities?(ASK EACH ITEM.)

- | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> | |
|------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| ___ | ___ | panhandling |
| ___ | ___ | stealing |
| ___ | ___ | prostitution |
| ___ | ___ | drug dealing |
| ___ | ___ | massage parlor work |
| ___ | ___ | pornography |
| ___ | ___ | other (SPECIFY) _____ |

CR-20. Were you ever afraid while you were gone?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No (CR-22)

CR-21. What were you afraid of? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

- 01 Was afraid of being robbed
- 02 Was afraid of being beaten up
- 03 Was afraid of being sexually molested
- 04 Was afraid parents would find me
- 05 Was afraid the police would find me
- 06 Other _____

CR-22. While you were gone, did you contact any of the following: (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

- 01 runaway shelters
- 02 other homeless shelters
- 03 food kitchens/Salvation Army
- 04 runaway hotline
- 05 other (specify) _____

CR-23. Did you contact any family, relatives, or friends while you were gone?

- 01 yes (CR-24)
- 02 no (CR-25)

CR-24. Whom did you contact? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 parent
- 02 step-parent
- 03 other relative
- 04 friend
- 05 other (specify) _____

CR-25. While you were gone, did you suffer from any of the following?

- | <u>YES</u> | <u>NO</u> | |
|------------|-----------|--|
| ___ | ___ | were you touched sexually or molested? |
| ___ | ___ | were you hit, punched, beaten up, or hit with an object? |
| ___ | ___ | did you have any money stolen from you? |
| ___ | ___ | did you suffer any mental harm? |
| ___ | ___ | did you have any possessions taken away from you? |
| ___ | ___ | were you victimized in any other way? (SPECIFY) _____ |

CR-26. Did you suffer emotional harm while you were gone?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (CR-28)

CR-27. How serious was the emotional harm?

- 01 very serious
- 02 not too serious
- 03 not serious at all

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about alcohol or drug use.

(ASK CR-28-31 FOR EACH DRUG, i.e., 28, 29, 30, 31, THEN 28, 29, etc.)

CR-28. Did you use any (DRUG) while you were away from home this time? (IF NO - CODE 06 in COLUMN 29 BELOW AND CONTINUE TO CR-30 FOR SAME DRUG)

CR-29. How often would you say you used (DRUG) while you were away from home this time?

- 01 daily
- 02 weekly
- 03 monthly
- 04 a few times
- 05 only one time
- 06 never
- 07 don't know

CR-30. Did you use (DRUG) in the past year before you ran away this time? (IF NO - CODE 06 IN COLUMN 31 AND CONTINUE TO NEXT DRUG.)

CR-31. How often would you say you used (DRUG) in the past year before you ran away this time?

- 01 daily
- 02 weekly
- 03 monthly
- 04 a few times
- 05 only one time
- 06 never
- 07 don't know

Type of Drug	28. Used while gone		29. Frequency	30. Used before run away		31. Past year Frequency
	YES	NO		YES	NO	
a. alcohol	___	___	___	___	___	___
b. marijuana	___	___	___	___	___	___
c. hashish	___	___	___	___	___	___
d. crack or freebase cocaine	___	___	___	___	___	___
e. cocaine in another form	___	___	___	___	___	___
f. heroin	___	___	___	___	___	___
g. PCP	___	___	___	___	___	___
h. amphetamines	___	___	___	___	___	___
i. other (SPECIFY)	___	___	___	___	___	___

CR-31j. Did you inject any drugs:
 While you were gone? 01 Yes 02 No
 In the last year? 01 Yes 02 No

CR-31k. Have you ever shared needles with intravenous drug users?
 01 Yes
 02 No

CR-32. How did you get home?

- 01 returned on own
- 02 found by parent/relative
- 03 located by social service personnel (e.g., caseworker or probation officer)
- 04 found by police
- 05 other (specify) _____

CR-33. Why did you return? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 Needed food or shelter
- 02 Did not feel safe
- 03 Was no longer angry at parents
- 04 Was lonely and bored
- 05 Other (specify) _____

CR-34. Do you think your parents were worried about you while you were gone?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know

CR-35a. Could you tell me which of the following statements is most true concerning your return home this time? (READ ALL)

- 01 I was asked to come home.
- 02 I was permitted to come home.
- 03 I came home despite opposition from someone in the household.
- 04 No one cared whether I came home or not.

CR-35b. Did you have any contact with the police while you were gone?

- 01 Yes (CR-36)
- 02 No (CR-41)

CR-36. How many times did you have contact with the police while you were gone?

_____ times

CR-37. What kind of contact did you have with the police while you were gone? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 was questioned, but not picked up
- 02 arrested or taken into custody
- 03 got help from police
- 04 other (SPECIFY) _____

CR-38. How long, if at all, were you held by the police?

- 01 Never, I was taken directly home (CR-41)
- 02 1 hour or less
- 03 several hours
- 04 overnight
- 05 24 hours or more

CR-39. Where were you held?

- 01 in a police station office (CR-41)
- 02 in secure juvenile detention (CR-41)
- 03 in jail (CR-40)
- 04 in a shelter or group home (CR-41)
- 05 Other (SPECIFY) _____

CR-40. While you were in jail did you have any contact with adults who were also being held?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No

CR-41. Did you receive a medical or psychological exam upon your return?

- 01 Yes (CR-42)
- 02 No (CR-43)

CR-42. What kind of exam?

- 01 medical
- 02 psychological
- 03 both kinds
- 04 don't know

CR-43. After you returned, were you questioned by the police about your experiences?

- 01 yes
- 02 no

CR-44. Did you discuss your experiences while gone with your parents after you returned?

- 01 provided a complete description of episode
- 02 discussed some but not all of the episode
- 03 did not discuss it at all

CR-45. Do you think you might run away again some time in the future?

- 01 Yes
- 02 No
- 03 Don't know

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SKIP TO SECTION B (FAMILY BACKGROUND - page 15)

II. FOR FAMILY ABDUCTIONS (CFA)

CFA-1. When were you kept or taken from your (mother, father, other caretaker)? (ASK DATE AND TIME)

- a. DATE _____
b. TIME _____ A.M. P.M.

CFA-2. Where were you taken from?

- 01 home
02 school
03 not returned from a normal visitation
04 other (specify) _____

CFA-3. Where were you first taken?

- 01 to abductor's home
02 to another relative's home
03 to a hotel, motel, or another temporary residence
04 other (specify) _____

CFA-4a. While you were away, where did you sleep most of the time?

- 01 was not gone overnight
02 residence of abductor
03 residence of friend of abductor
04 residence of relative of abductor
05 hotel or other temporary residence
06 other (specify) _____

CFA-4b. While you were away from home did you stay in one place or move around?

- 01 stayed in one place
02 moved around
03 don't know

CFA-5. Were you taken out of your home state?

- 01 yes
02 no
03 don't know

CFA-6. Did you contact your (CUSTODIAL PARENT OR GUARDIAN) while gone?

- 01 yes (Specify reason and Go To CFA-8) _____
02 no (CFA-7)

CFA-7. Why did you not contact your (CUSTODIAL PARENT) while you were gone?

- 01 didn't want to
02 was afraid to
03 was not allowed to by abductor
04 didn't know how to
05 other (specify) _____

--- CFA-8. How long were you gone? ____ hours/days/weeks/months

--- CFA-9. While you were away from home, how did you get meals most of the time?

- 01 abductor provided food
- 02 ate in soup kitchens or other charitable place
- 03 did not eat while gone
- 04 other (specify) _____

--- CFA-10. While you were away, did you attend school?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 does not apply (summer vacation, weekend, etc.)

--- CFA-11. While you were away, were you ever taken to a hospital or clinic?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

--- CFA-12. While you were away from home, did you use another name or change your name?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

--- CFA-13. While you were gone, did you suffer from any of the following?

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|-----------|--|
| ___ | ___ | were you touched sexually or molested? |
| ___ | ___ | were you hit, punched, beaten up, or hit with an object? |
| ___ | ___ | did you have any money stolen from you? |
| ___ | ___ | did you suffer any mental harm? |
| ___ | ___ | did you have possessions taken away from you |
| ___ | ___ | were you harmed in any other way? (specify) _____ |

--- CFA-14. While you were gone, did you have any contact with police?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (skip to CFA-16)

--- CFA-15. What kind of contact with the police did you have while you were gone?

- 01 questioned, but not taken into custody
- 02 arrested or taken into custody
- 03 got help from police
- 04 other (SPECIFY) _____

--- CFA-16. Did you discuss your experiences while gone with your custodial parent after you returned?

- 01 provided a complete description of the episode
- 02 discussed some but not all of the episode
- 03 did not discuss it at all

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SKIP TO SECTION B (FAMILY BACKGROUND - Page 15)

III. NON-FAMILY ABDUCTIONS (CNF)

CNF-1. When were you abducted?

- a. DATE _____
b. TIME _____ A.M. P.M.

CNF-2 Where were you taken from?

- 01 home or yard
02 outside on the street (e.g., walking home from school or in own neighborhood)
03 another home you were visiting
04 shopping center/mall
05 public event
06 hitch-hiking
07 school or daycare
08 car
09 other (specify) _____

CNF-3. Where were you taken?

- 01 into a vehicle
02 into an unoccupied building
03 to abductor's residence
04 to residence of someone known by abductor
05 to a field or forest
06 other (specify) _____
07 don't know

CNF-4. How long were you gone? _____ hours/days/weeks/months (If less than 24 hours or not overnight, skip to CNF-7)

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: DO NOT ASK QUESTIONS 5 AND 6 UNLESS RESPONDENT WAS GONE OVERNIGHT.

CNF-5. While you were gone, how did you get meals most of the time?

- 01 abductor provided food
02 ate in soup kitchens or other free places
03 did not eat while gone
04 other (specify) _____

CNF-6. While you were gone, where did you stay?

- 01 residence of abductor
02 residence of friend of abductor
03 residence of relative of abductor
04 abandoned building
05 hotel or other temporary residence
06 other (specify) _____

CNF-7. While you were gone, did you use another name or change your name?

- 01 yes
- 02 no
- 03 don't know

CNF-8. While you were gone, did you stay in one place or move around?

- 01 stayed in one place
- 02 moved around

CNF-9. While you were gone, did you suffer from any of the following?

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | were you touched sexually or molested? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | were you hit, punched, beaten up, or hit with an object? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | did you have any money stolen from you? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | did you have any possessions taken from you? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | did you suffer any mental harm? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | were you harmed in any other way? (specify) _____ |

CNF-10. While you were gone, did you have any contact with police?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (skip to CNF-12)

CNF-11. What kind of contact with the police did you have while you were gone?

- 01 questioned
- 02 rescued or helped by police
- 03 other

CNF-12. Did you receive a medical or psychological exam upon your return?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (CNF-14)

CNF-13. What kind of exam?

- 01 medical
- 02 psychological
- 03 both
- 04 don't know

CNF-14. Did you discuss your experiences while gone with your parent(s) after you returned?

- 01 provided a complete description of the episode
- 02 discussed some but not all of the episode
- 03 did not discuss it at all

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SKIP TO SECTION B (FAMILY BACKGROUND - Page 15)

IV. OTHERWISE MISSING (CO)

CO-1. How long were you gone? _____ hours/days/weeks/months

CO-2. Which of the following best describes why you were missing?

- 01 You were hurt or injured
- 02 You wandered away from your parents
- 03 You got lost
- 04 You forgot about the time
- 05 You didn't realize when you were supposed to be home
- 06 You were delayed getting home
- 07 Other (SPECIFY) _____

CO-3. Where were you while you were gone?

- 01 in the neighborhood
- 02 out of the neighborhood but in the same town
- 03 out of the town but in the same metropolitan area
- 04 out of the metropolitan area but in the same state
- 05 out of state

CO-4. While you were gone, did you suffer from any of the following?

YES NO

- ___ ___ were you touched sexually or molested?
- ___ ___ were you hit, punched, beaten up, or hit with an object?
- ___ ___ did you have any money stolen from you?
- ___ ___ did you have any possessions taken from you?
- ___ ___ did you suffer any mental harm?
- ___ ___ were you harmed in any other way? (specify) _____

INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: DO NOT ASK QUESTIONS 5 AND 6 UNLESS RESPONDENT WAS GONE OVERNIGHT.

CO-5. While you were away from home, how did you get meals most of the time?

- 01 purchased food
- 02 provided by person(s) I stayed with
- 03 ate in soup kitchens or other charitable place
- 04 didn't eat while I was gone
- 05 other (specify) _____

CO-6. While you were gone, where did you sleep most of the time?

- 01 did not sleep while I was gone
- 02 in a motel or hotel
- 03 in a car
- 04 on the street
- 05 in abandoned buildings
- 06 other
(specify) _____

CO-7. How did you return home?

- 01 found my own way home
- 02 parent/other relative found me
- 03 police found me
- 04 stranger found me
- 05 other
(specify) _____

CO-8. Did you receive a medical or psychological exam as a result of this incident?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (CO-10)
- 03 don't know

CO-9. What kind of exam did you receive?

- 01 medical
- 02 psychological
- 03 both

CO-10. While you were gone, did you have any contact with the police?

- 01 yes
- 02 no (CO-12)

CO-11. What kind of contact did you have with the police while you were gone?

- 01 asked police for help
- 02 taken home by police
- 03 other

CO-12. Did you discuss your experiences while gone with your parent(s) after you returned?

- 01 provided a complete description of the episode
- 02 discussed some but not all of the episode
- 03 did not discuss at all

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GO TO SECTION B (FAMILY BACKGROUND -- Page 15)

SECTION B: FAMILY BACKGROUND (CB)

CB-1. Which of the following best describes how things are in your home? Would you say it was... (READ CATEGORIES)

- 01 Very good--things are fairly harmonious in my home
- 02 Fairly good--problems from time to time, but nothing serious
- 03 Somewhat poor--there are some problems which need attention
- 04 Very poor--there are many serious problems
- 05 Other (specify) _____
- 06 Do not wish to say
- 07 Don't know

CB-2. How would you describe your attendance at school? Would you say it was... (READ CATEGORIES)

- 01 Regular--attend school every day unless ill
- 02 Fairly regular--skip school once in a while
- 03 Somewhat irregular--skip several times a month
- 04 Very irregular--skip frequently
- 05 Other (specify) _____
- 06 Do not wish to say
- 07 Don't know

CB-3. Do you have any of the following problems at school? (ASK EACH ITEM)

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | |
|------------|-----------|------------------------|
| ___ | ___ | Getting into fights |
| ___ | ___ | Discipline problems |
| ___ | ___ | Don't like my teachers |
| ___ | ___ | Using bad language |
| ___ | ___ | Failing classes |
| ___ | ___ | Don't do homework |
| ___ | ___ | Don't pay attention |
| ___ | ___ | Irregular attendance |
| ___ | ___ | Other (SPECIFY) _____ |

CB-4. How do you get money? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 doesn't earn any money
- 02 receives an allowance
- 03 does odd jobs such as baby-sitting and lawn-mowing
- 04 works part-time at a regular job (restaurant, store, etc.)
- 05 works full-time
- 06 other (SPECIFY) _____
- 07 does not wish to say
- 08 don't know

CB-5. Can you tell me what you do frequently in your spare time DURING THE DAY? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 Don't have any spare time during the day
- 02 Go to drop-in center
- 03 Talk with friends
- 04 Practice/play sports
- 05 Practice/perform music
- 06 Do homework
- 07 Work on hobbies
- 08 Watch TV at home
- 09 Hang out in street
- 10 Hang out in shopping malls
- 11 Play video games in an arcade
- 12 Go to bars/taverns
- 13 Hang out in subway station
- 14 Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 15 Don't know

CB-6. What do you do frequently in your spare time in the EVENINGS? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

- 01 Don't have any spare time during the evening
- 02 Go to drop-in center
- 03 Talk with friends
- 04 Practice/play sports
- 05 Practice/perform music
- 06 Do homework
- 07 Work on hobbies
- 08 Watch TV at home
- 09 Hang out in street
- 10 Hang out in shopping malls
- 11 Play video games in an arcade
- 12 Go to bars/taverns
- 13 Hang out in subway station
- 14 Other (SPECIFY) _____
- 15 Don't know

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CB-7. Before this missing incident, have you ever been involved in (ACTIVITIES a-1)?

(If no, mark 01 as frequency.)

If yes, ask -- How often have you participated in this activity during the past year before this missing incident?

- 01 never
- 02 not in the past year
- 03 only one incident
- 04 one or two incidents
- 05 several incidents
- 06 he/she is continually involved in such incidents
- 07 other (SPECIFY) _____
- 08 doesn't wish to say
- 09 don't know

Activities	Frequency in Last Year
a. skipping school	_____
b. curfew violation	_____
c. possessing alcohol	_____
d. possessing drugs	_____
e. shoplifting	_____
f. panhandling	_____
g. vandalism	_____
h. stealing money	_____
i. prostitution	_____
j. car theft	_____
k. drug dealing	_____
l. other illegal activity (Specify) _____	_____

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