



## **CAREGIVER CHECKLIST TOOL:**

### **I HAVE SECURED MY HOME**

- *Installed secure locks.*
- *Installed a home security alarm system or inexpensive battery-operated alarms on doors and windows (available at stores like Walmart and Radio Shack).*
- *Placed hook and eye locks on all doors, above child's reach.*
- *Fenced yard.*
- *Adhered printable STOP SIGNS to doors, windows and other exits, such as gates.*

### **I HAVE TAUGHT, OR AM TEACHING, MY CHILD/ADULT ABOUT WANDERING DANGERS**

- *If the child/adult has functional language, use this as a way to teach them about the dangers of wandering into traffic and water especially, as well as encounters with strangers. Use various methods to teach them how to respond if they find themselves alone or lost outside, in a non-home setting (school, classroom, hotel, etc) or any setting.*
- *Use the types of language/lingo they like and would respond to. Use favorite characters, topics, props and visual prompts in your explanation if necessary.*
- *If your child/adult has limited language, use social stories to teach your child/adult about the dangers of wandering into traffic and water especially, as well as encounters with strangers.*

### **I HAVE ENROLLED MY CHILD/ADULT IN SWIMMING LESSONS**

- *Teaching your child how to swim DOES NOT mean your child is safe in water.*
- *If you own a pool, fence your pool. Use gates that self-close and self-latch higher than your children's reach. Remove all toys or items of interest from the pool when not in use.*
- *Neighbors with pools should be made aware of these safety precautions and your child's tendency to wander.*
- *To find swimming lessons in your area, visit [NationalAutism.org](http://NationalAutism.org), click Autism & Safety, choose "Swimming Instructions." The final lesson should be with clothes on.*

### **I HAVE LOOKED INTO TRACKING DEVICES/PERSONAL LOCATOR TECHNOLOGY:**

- *Visit [ProjectLifesaver.org](http://ProjectLifesaver.org) or [LoJackSafetyNet.com](http://LoJackSafetyNet.com)*

### **I HAVE ALERTED MY TRUSTED NEIGHBORS**

- *Give your neighbor a simple handout with your name, address, and phone number.*
- *Ask them to call you immediately if they see your child outside the home.*
- *Does your child have a fear of cars and animals or is he/she drawn to them?*
- *Does your child gravitate towards pools or nearby ponds or creeks?*
- *Does he/she respond to their name, have sensory issues, or meltdown triggers?*
- *Approach neighbors you trust. Beforehand, check your neighborhood for nearby sex offenders by visiting [familywatchdog.us](http://familywatchdog.us)*

### **I HAVE ALERTED MY LOCAL FIRST RESPONDERS**

- *Provide name of child or adult, current photograph and physical description including any scars or other identifying marks or behaviors*

- Identify your child's favorite song, toy or character
- Provide names, home, cell and pager phone numbers and addresses of parents, other caregivers and emergency contact persons
- Provide sensory, medical, or dietary issues and requirements
- List favorite attractions and locations where the person may be found
- Provide likes, dislikes, fears, triggers, and de-escalation techniques
- Provide your child's preferred method of communication (note if nonverbal, uses sign language, picture boards, or written words)
- List if they wear an ID, jewelry, tags on clothes
- Provide map and address guide to nearby properties with water sources and dangerous locations highlighted – instruct to search these areas first

**\_\_\_ I HAVE OBTAINED A WEARABLE ID FOR MY CHILD THAT CONTAINS ALL OF MY CONTACT INFORMATION**

**\_\_\_ I WILL INITIATE A “TAG, YOU’RE IT” SYSTEM DURING FAMILY GATHERINGS, COMMOTION, TRANSITIONS**

- Recognize that many incidents occur during a family gathering, school function or transition
- Initiate a “tag” strategy - a well-coordinated system that TAGS the adult who is to closely supervise the individual. Explain the tag system to those who may be responsible for watching your child/adult and make sure they understand the expectations and their responsibilities.
- During walks, hiking, or any other outdoor activities, use the “Bookends” approach – one adult on each side of the child.

**\_\_\_ I WILL MONITOR ANY CHANGES IN MY HOME’S SECURITY, ESPECIALLY WHEN WARMER WEATHER OR SEASONAL TRANSITIONS AFFECT MY HOME’S LAYOUT**

- According to the National Autism Association, autism missing-person cases tend to increase in the late winter/early spring months especially in mid sections of the country.

**\_\_\_ I WILL BE ON HIGH ALERT DURING SUMMER HOLIDAYS, SUCH AS MEMORIAL DAY, LABOR DAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY, AND DURING VISITS TO FRIENDS/FAMILY’S HOMES, PUBLIC PLACES, PARKS, AND OTHER NON-HOME SETTINGS**

**\_\_\_ I HAVE ADDRESSED WANDERING AT SCHOOL, SUMMER CAMP, AND OTHER EXTERNAL SETTINGS**

- If you haven’t done so previously, ask “What are the school’s policies on wandering prevention?”
- Write a letter requesting that you always be informed, in writing, of any wandering incident on or off the campus.
- If your child/adult is an active wanderer and poses safety risks, consider addressing wandering issues in his/her IEP or personal care plan.
- Take note of all architectural barriers (fences, etc.) around the school, day care or summer camp, or lack thereof. Make the facility aware of any lack of barriers and ask for barriers to be put in place.

**\_\_\_ I CONTINUE TO REASSESS AS MY CHILD/ADULT GROWS AND/OR LEARNS NEW WAYS TO POSSIBLY EXIT**

**\_\_\_ I CONTINUE TO DOCUMENT ACTIONS TAKEN TO PROTECT MY LOVED ONE**

**CREATE YOUR FAMILY WANDERING EMERGENCY PLAN (FWEP) BY DOWNLOADING A FREE TEMPLATE AVAILABLE AT [AWAARE.ORG](http://AWAARE.ORG)**