

RESOURCE PAGE For “Safety First”

Elopers are children at risk of running away, or “elopement”

Simple Locks:

The first challenge is to keep the child from leaving the house. Many parents often put locks on the doors to prevent them from leaving. The kind of lock used will depend on the child’s ability to manipulate locks. **Hook & eye latches** and **slide bolts** are among the most common, simple locks for a door. If they are too easy to unlock, consider finding ones that have a **spring-loaded catch** that makes it more complicated to unlock. If anything, it will stall the child and give you time to catch up. **Dead bolts** are among the most secure locks. Some are operated by knobs, and some are operated by keys on the inside and out. The drawback of the ones operated by keys is that it is another key to carry around, and lose. Many parents are also very weary of not being able to get their children and themselves out of the house in the case of a fire. **All of these locks can all be bought at the local hardware store.**

Keyless locks:

Keyless locks provide the adult with the benefit of locking doors to prevent wandering from the house or to prevent the child from entering certain rooms—without having to keep track of keys. There are several options that can be used for keyless locks:

- Digital keypad deadlocks and handle latches,
- Mechanical keypad deadlocks and handle latches,
- Card-swipe systems,
- Proximity systems, (you hold a fob close to the pad)
- Biometric systems (finger-print detection)—cheaper than you think. I actually found a system for under \$200 on www.homesecuritystore.com.

The least expensive of these options is the digital keypad deadlocks. They run for as low as \$85. These systems can be found on websites such as:

- www.keylesspro.com
- www.nokey.com
- www.keylessentrylocks.com
- www.homedepot.com

Alarms

Simple Alarms

For those who prefer to not keep the doors locked at all times, there are alarms available to alert the caregiver that the child has left the house or a specific area. Firstly, since some houses are equipped with security systems, the parents are often able to simply set the alarms for the doors. Be careful to make sure that the alarm would not be sent to the alarm company.

For those without security systems, there are **inexpensive alarms** that can be attached to doors and windows. There is a small, inexpensive (\$10) alarm called **SlideAway** that will emit a very loud, piercing alarm when a door or window is open. This alarm is turned on and off with a switch. The

drawback is that the alarm would need to be shut off every time that someone would want to go through the door without setting it off. It is perfect for windows or doors that are not used often. The drawback with the SlideAway alarm is that it can be easily switched off with a switch. For those with children who are clever enough to figure that out, Radio Shack sells similar alarms that can only be switched off by a key or a keypad. They are, however, a little more expensive (\$21.99 and \$29.99). They can be found on www.Radioshack.com.

Motion Alarms

Another option is to use a **motion alarm** (\$18). When used by the door, the alarm will detect movement and alert the caregiver that the child is going out the door. The motion alarms are also nice to use in the child's bedroom or in the hallway to alert the parents when the child is wondering in the house during the middle of the night. The alarm can be set to sound a loud 110-decibel alarm, or a pleasant door chime. Home Depot sells a similar device made by Heath/Zenith for about \$40. This device detects motion, and sends a signal to a separate receiving device that is plugged into a nearby outlet. Whatever is plugged into the outlet (lamp, radio) will then turn on.

Transmitter Alarms

There are alarms that can be put on the child to alert the caregiver when he/she leaves the area. There is one made by Child Guard (\$25). The child carries a small transmitter that looks like a cartoon animal. The transmitter sends a constant signal to the receiver, which is held by the adult. The signal is adjustable from a distance of 6 to 30 feet. When the child goes beyond the set distance, the adult's receiver starts to beep, letting them know that the child is starting to wander off. This device is nice because it can be used both at home and out in the community. The SlideAway, motion alarms, and Child Guard can all be found on web sites that sell personal protection and safety products, including:

- www.1stlinesecurity.com/homeprotection.html
- www.selfprotectionstore.com
- www.firsthomesecurity.com
- www.milestonesafety.com
- www.familydefense.com
- www.radioshack.com

Wrist Alarms

For children who have a very persistent problem and/or live in areas where they would be in serious danger if they ran away, the parents can spend more money and buy advanced alarms that are worn on the wrist. These are often worn by people with Alzheimer's. There are few different products with several different options. Some of them have a gps locator in them to help track the individual. Some are monitored by a monitoring company. The websites for these are:

- www.projectlifesaver.com
- www.safetyandsecuritycenter.com
- www.scorpion-security.com/wander.htm
- www.gps-applications.com/Wandercare100T.htm
- www.communityyears.com/proximity_alarms.htm
- www.gpslocators.com/gpslowaforal.html

ID bracelets

Children who tend to run away should wear an **ID bracelet** or **ID necklace**. They can be found at many drug stores or on the Internet at

- www.americanmedical-id.com or
- www.medicid.com.

The price of these starts at about \$20. Many children do not like to wear jewelry, so another option is to place iron-on labels into each garment. These can be found at most craft stores. You can also get nice iron-on cotton labels at www.conntext.com. Some children might be able to learn to carry and produce an **ID card**. There are now many web-sites devoted to ASD identification. Use a search engine to find many more possibilities.

Fences

Check with local fence companies to see what is available in your area.

Surveillance Cameras

Surveillance cameras can be used to monitor the child when the adult is not able to be in the same room. The adult may want to watch the child while he is doing an activity in another room, or while the child is in the backyard. The adult may need to observe the child while he/she is sleeping. The adult may also wish to observe the child for safety while he is having his "cool down" in his room, but does not want to give him the attention. Wireless cameras tend to be the most efficient for these applications. There are several models out there, ranging from simple baby monitors to highly sophisticated cameras. The costs vary. Online sources include:

- www.radioshack.com
- www.homesecuritystore.com
- www.X10.com
- www.wirelessvideocameras.com

Service Dogs

There are some families who are purchasing *specialty trained* service dogs for children with autism that are prone to eloping. They can be expensive, but also rewarding in ways that mechanical devices can never be. The most popular sources on the web are:

- www.northstardogs.com
- www.autismservicedogsofamerica.com
- www.4pawsforability.org
- www.nsd.on.ca