

# Keeping children with disabilities safe

Caring for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder or other special need



If you care for a child who is prone to wandering off from a safe environment and whose diagnosis may interfere with their ability to recognize danger and stay safe, you need to be aware of these important facts:

- Nearly 50 percent of children with autism engage in wandering behavior
- Wandering occurs across all settings, under every type of adult supervision
- Increased risks are associated with autism severity
- Fifty percent of families report they have never received advice or guidance about wandering from a professional
- Accidental drowning accounts for approximately 90 percent of lethal outcomes

## How can you improve the response if your child wanders and goes missing?

The Bismarck Police Department and the Sanford Health Dakota Children's Advocacy Center have teamed up to develop a plan to improve outcomes of missing children with special needs in the Bismarck/Burleigh County area. This plan includes:

- Prior to the time of crisis: Gathering information from parents of children with special needs regarding the unique needs of their child and sharing the information gathered with law enforcement and the 911 dispatch system.
- At the time of crisis: Use the information gathered prior to the event to better implement a timely response and return the child home safely.

## How does a parent sign a child up for this service?

If your child resides in the Bismarck/Burleigh area, the first step is to fill out the authorization form and questionnaire. Then send the information to the Bismarck Police Department. Both forms can be downloaded at [bismarck.sanfordhealth.org/dcac](http://bismarck.sanfordhealth.org/dcac), click "Community" on the left-hand side, then "Keeping children with disabilities safe."

For more information, please contact Detective Dean Clarkson of the Bismarck Police Department at 223-1212 or call the Sanford Health Dakota Children's Advocacy Center at (701) 323-5626.

Sanford Health Dakota Children's Advocacy Center  
200 E. Main Ave. #301  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
(701) 323-5626

[bismarck.sanfordhealth.org/DCAC](http://bismarck.sanfordhealth.org/DCAC)  
[facebook.com/sanfordhealthdcac](https://facebook.com/sanfordhealthdcac)



Dakota Children's  
Advocacy Center  
SANFORD  
HEALTH