

2016 Annual Report



CHILD FIND of AMERICA®

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [SERVICES](#) [FAMILY STORIES](#) [MISSING CHILD POSTERS](#) [RESOURCES](#) [CONTACT](#) [DONATE](#)



1-800-I-AM-LOST - PO Box 277 New Paltz, NY 12561 - [information@childfindofamerica.org](mailto:information@childfindofamerica.org) - EIN#22-2323336



Founded in 1980

## A MESSAGE FROM CHILD FIND'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Taiwan, Mexico, Egypt, Pakistan, Kenya, England, Indonesia, Brazil . . . and the list goes on. These are only a handful of the countries that Child Find callers cited in the past few years when asked where their child might have (or worse yet, *had*) been taken. For this issue of our annual report, we've asked our case workers to share some of the alarming stories they were told by parents hoping to prevent or resolve an international abduction. We believe you might be interested to learn more – in layman's terms – just how the treaty known as the *Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction* can be relied on, and unfortunately, when it cannot. While local and interstate parent abductions are nightmarish, a child taken out of the home country adds terrible complications and challenges, quickly overwhelming the left-behind parent. Our staff has put together a compelling set of stories to help you get sense of what these parents are up against.

On the prevention and education fronts, Child Find's training division has recently turned its focus to the subject of corporal punishment and its impact on children. From the Prevent Child Abuse New York annual conference to national Head Start conferences in Washington, D.C. and Nashville, Tennessee, the team has been exploring this issue in depth. What does physical punishment have to do with missing children? Our training team tells you in this issue.

As you may have noticed, the cover of this year's annual report is taken from the home page of our redesigned website. That's a big hint that we hope you've had the opportunity to visit – and will continue to revisit for *Family Stories*, *Links to Resources*, *Prevention Printables* and other updates.

Finally, as you will see on the Programs and Services and the Finance Report pages, we've had a busy and productive 36<sup>th</sup> year – as well as a fiscally responsible one. Once again, we've been rated A+ by Charity Watch and once again we thank you for helping to keep our phone lines open for America's children and their families.

Sincerely,



### Help us to continue "Bringing Kids Home and Keeping Them Safe" through a tax-deductible gift . . .

... **by Check:** Child Find of America, Inc.  
PO Box 277, New Paltz NY 12561-0277

... **by Credit Card & PayPal:** Visit our website [childfindofamerica.org](http://childfindofamerica.org) and click to our Donate page -or- call our Administrative Office at: 1-845-883-6060, weekdays 9am-5pm EST.

... **by a Gift of Stock (in 2 Easy Steps):** 1) Call our Admin Office: 1-845-883-6060 and talk to Mark or Donna about your plans in advance of your stock transfer—this will help us provide the necessary information to our broker. 2) Notify your broker of your intention to give a gift of securities to Child Find, providing the following information: Broker: Edward Jones. Account Name: CHILD FIND OF AMERICA INC Account Number: 736-05790-1-0

- **Privacy Policy:** Child Find does not sell or share donors' names or personal information with any other entity.
- **Tax-deductible:** Child Find is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization - EIN #22-2323336
- **Transparency:** Child Find's most recent Annual Report, Form 990 & audited financial statements are always available online: [childfindofamerica.org](http://childfindofamerica.org)

**Rated A+ by Charity Watch for 19 consecutive years!**

### Planned Giving: For Now and For Years to Come

A charitable bequest will ensure that Child Find can continue providing the vital programs and services that you are supporting now. By designating a specific amount or percentage of your estate, life insurance, retirement plan, or revocable trust, your assets remain in your control during your lifetime - which you can modify should your financial situation change. If you or your planned giving advisor would like to make an appointment to discuss your plans, please contact our Administrative Office.

Phone: 1-845-883-6060, M-F, 9am-5pm EST

Email: [information@childfindofamerica.org](mailto:information@childfindofamerica.org)



**CHILD FIND of AMERICA®**

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

*To help create a world in which every child can thrive in a safe, healthy, and legal environment, Child Find of America provides professional services designed to prevent and resolve child abduction and the family conflicts that can lead to abduction and abuse.*

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Child Find was founded in 1980 by the mother of a child abducted by the child's father. At that time there were no laws about parental or family abduction and consequently, little response from law enforcement. Child Find played a significant role in the creation of laws that make all forms of child abduction a crime.

**Child Find's 1-800-I-AM-LOST** line connects callers to our in house location staff who coordinate efforts with a network of professional partners. Child Find searches for missing, kidnapped, runaway and parentally abducted children. When safe and appropriate, photos and posters of missing children are disseminated nationwide via social media and with the support of media outlets, businesses and volunteers.

Over the years, Child Find has greatly expanded its scope of services beyond location investigations to provide prevention, education & training, conflict resolution, mediation, and information & referral support services to families in crisis.

**Child Find's Parent Help at 1-800-716-3468** provides professional services designed to defuse family conflicts that can lead to abduction and abuse such as: crisis intervention, conflict management, safety planning, communication/parenting skill-building, and more. Parent Help has registered over 8,400 cases since being established in 2006.



## BY THE NUMBERS - FAMILIES SERVED IN 2015

In fiscal year 2015, Child Find's toll free lines received over 3000 calls for assistance from all 50 states and internationally.

109 calls came from parents reporting their child was missing. Of those calls, 84 reported the child was abducted by the other parent or a family member, 24 reported endangered runaways including 3 cases of trafficking, and 1 disappearance / possible stranger abduction, still unresolved.

73 callers sought help with denied access issues and / or fear that abduction by the other parent was imminent.

Additionally, 21 missing child cases from previous years - mainly decades old stranger abductions - remained open. 3 of those cases were closed by authorities this year, sadly, due to murder confessions from criminals already in prison. Of all active cases, 43 children were located or returned to a safe environment.

958 new cases were registered with Child Find's Parent Help program. An overview of co-occurring reasons for calling included: 105 concerns for child safety; 145 reporting domestic violence; 150 requiring skill-building assistance with co-parenting; 653 needing help negotiating legal systems. 45 additional cases (registered in previous years) also received services.

673 of our callers received Information & Referral services regarding legal assistance, financial challenges, child support, kin care, domestic violence, child abuse, youth-at-risk and other issues related to child well-being.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

In 2015, Child Find's staff conducted trainings and participated in 11 national and regional conferences with service professionals and agencies regarding safety, missing children, domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, mediation, healthy families and more.

Child Find's educational materials are available to individuals, schools and community organizations. Press releases, articles and interviews with local and national media bring attention and awareness to the issues. In-service training of allied professionals also increases understanding and develops safety skill sets, further strengthening Child Find's mission. We have developed a comprehensive information and referral network and resources serving parents, educators, human service workers, and law enforcement - to educate about missing children issues, the co-occurrence of abuse and abduction, crisis management and keeping kids safe. Many of Child Find's free materials are available on our website. Information and Referral specialists are available by calling our toll-free numbers M-F, 9am-5pm EST.

*Still Missing* – Please visit [www.childofamerica.org](http://www.childofamerica.org) for updated composite photos and posters of the children pictured above who are still missing.



CHILD FIND of AMERICA®

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

## INTERNATIONAL ABDUCTION:

### UNDERSTANDING THE HAGUE CONVENTION

- BY BRIAN G., CHILD FIND CASE WORKER

The main focus of Child Find of America's Parent Help program is to try to understand and alleviate co-parenting conflict, but often our callers make contact only after positions have hardened and the conflict is entrenched. In some of the worst cases, international abduction becomes the "nuclear option"—the one to burn all bridges. Unfortunately, the circumstances that allow for it to happen are becoming more and more common in today's globalized world. The taking of a child even across state lines can put the left-behind parent in a state of shock, confusion, anger, and fear, but international abduction makes for many more complications, forcing the left-behind parent to navigate a foreign judicial system, often with language and cultural barriers thrown in the mix.

While there are criminal laws in all 50 states (and most countries) that can apply, parental abduction cases do not always draw the attention of the criminal courts – often much to the chagrin of the left-behind parent. At Child Find, our callers often ask, "Why isn't anyone doing anything about this?", or even, "Why doesn't anybody care?" An understandable reaction, when the left-behind parent learns that law enforcement officers and prosecutors may see their situation as a private matter, especially if there is no direct evidence of danger to the child, or no clear violation of an existing custody order.<sup>1</sup> While the filing of criminal charges can sometimes be a useful tool for accessing help from state, federal or even international law enforcement, most abductions remain in the realm of civil law: one private party vs. another.

This is why the most important law concerning international parental child abduction is the **Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (1980)** (the "Convention").<sup>2</sup> The Convention gives support to the left-behind parent (or "LBP") when the abduction involves two Convention contracting states. In practice, however, it can be very challenging for the LBP to assert his or her Convention rights, and there are several hurdles to get over in making a

return application. First of all, each Convention contracting state is mandated to have a Central Authority that handles all matters of Convention compliance. Once an international abduction is believed to have occurred, the LBP should contact the Central Authority in the country where he or she lives to initiate the return application. In the U.S., the Central Authority is the State Department's Office of Children's Issues. The State Department can work with the LBP and assist with reaching out to the Central Authority in the country where the abducting parent has fled to. This Central Authority is often asked to play a crucial role in helping to track down the abducting parent and child, which can be an extremely difficult task for many reasons, including family assistance / efforts to hide the abducting parent, or non-cooperative local law enforcement authorities. And time is very much of the essence because the LBP must file the petition for return in a court of the country where the child is located within one

year of the abduction; of course, the child and abducting parent may need to be located before this can happen. If the petition is not timely filed, the abducting parent can argue that the child is "well settled" in his or her new home, and the return application may be denied.<sup>3</sup> In addition, once a child turns 16 they "age out" from any application of the Convention at all.

The Convention defines an abduction as a "wrongful taking or retaining" of a child (i.e. in breach of another person's custody rights), and its design







CHILD FIND of AMERICA®

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

envisages that the child should be speedily returned to the country of his or her “habitual residence”.<sup>4</sup> This gives the LBP<sup>5</sup> a home-field advantage, so to speak, and is meant to provide a deterrent to taking a child across international borders to try to get a more sympathetic forum for a custody matter, or a rehearing on a decision that previously went against the abducting parent. But there does not even have to be a prior order: as long as the LBP was “exercising custody rights”<sup>6</sup> at the time the abduction occurred, and has established his/her country as the habitual residence, then there is what’s called a *prima facie* case for return. Note that, even if the LBP is found to not have been exercising custody rights, (s)he may still be able to open a Convention case for access, if not for return of the child.

The most important thing to know about the Convention is that it’s never meant to directly determine who gets custody of a child, only which country’s laws ought to apply. So the outcome of a Convention case is only a decision to return, or not to return. Once the LBP establishes a *prima facie* case for return, the burden shifts to the abducting parent to show why a return would not serve the interests of justice. There are five possible avenues to accomplish this, known as the “affirmative defenses”: 1) the child is well-settled in the receiving country *and* there was over a year between the wrongful taking/retaining and the filing of the petition; 2) the LBP consented or acquiesced to the taking/retaining of the child; 3) the child is mature enough to express his or her own wishes and doesn’t want to return; 4) returning the child would place the child at “grave risk” of physical or psychological harm or otherwise place the child in an intolerable situation; or 5) a return of the child would be contrary to fundamental principles of human rights.

Most of the above defenses are self-explanatory and fact-based, but the so-called “grave risk” defense – the most commonly cited reason, globally, for a court to refuse return in a Convention case<sup>7</sup> – requires some further discussion. On one hand, the entire purpose of the Convention could be defeated if this exception were interpreted as giving *carte blanche* to investigate where the child would be better off. This is the territory of a custody proceeding, which it’s quite clear that a Convention case is not.

#### A Case Worker’s Notes:

*From the desk of Javier C., Case Worker*

As a Spanish-language case worker, many of my callers have strong ties to Mexico and other foreign countries, so it’s important to keep in mind the risk of international parental abduction. When the abduction has already happened, options are more limited. Many Spanish-language callers are also undocumented immigrants, which limits freedom of movement and—as they may perceive it—their access to the legal system.



One recent caller was a mom from the Dominican Republic who had lived in USA for more than ten years, but was undocumented. She met a man from India—also undocumented—a few years after her arrival; they had a baby and lived together for two years. One day, dad wanted to take their daughter along to visit friends. He told mom that he would be back late that night, but they never returned. He called early the next morning from the airport, but only to say he was going back to India with their daughter, because he wanted her to be raised by his mother in his family’s faith.

Dad had promised to keep mom in touch with their daughter by phone—IF she agreed not to report the abduction in any way. At that moment in time, facing such a challenging situation, she may have thought that going along with this plan was her only option. Over the years, however, contact became less and less frequent until finally her daughter couldn’t speak enough Spanish or English to communicate with her mother. By the time our caller contacted Parent Help, it had been seven years since the abduction, so even if the Convention applied (it didn’t, because India is not a contracting state), her daughter would have been considered settled in India.

What could our caller have done in terms of prevention? Dad had been able to collect all their daughter’s documents with him, including her passport. Sadly, it was mom herself who had obtained the U.S. passport for her daughter. She had obtained both U.S. and Dominican passports, in fact, because she wanted her to have dual nationality . . . but her daughter had now lost connection to both those nations.



CHILD FIND of AMERICA®

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

From the inception, it was understood that any exceptions would have to be interpreted in a “restrictive fashion” to ensure that the Convention would remain effective.<sup>8</sup> U.S. courts have stated that the “grave risk” defense must point to a risk that is “more than serious”, and established by clear and convincing evidence – a higher standard than that which is ordinarily applied in a civil case. On the other hand, one reason for the increasing use of the “grave risk” defense, both in the U.S. and globally, is the increasing recognition of domestic violence as an underlying cause in many cases of child abduction. In such situations, the defense is available for when the abducting parent has acted to protect a child from further abuse. As the Hague Convention Litigation Manual (2012) puts it:

Scholars and advocates have highlighted the difference between the stereotypical abductor envisioned by the drafters of the Hague Convention and the reality that abductors are most commonly women who act as primary caretakers for the children. In alleging grave risk to the children, litigants are increasingly raising the issue of domestic abuse, in addition to emphasizing the decades of scholarship addressing the harmful effects of domestic violence on children in the home.<sup>9</sup>

The affirmative defenses thus serve an important need—but courts need to be vigilant and well-informed about the permitted scope of their analysis, particularly when it comes to allegations of “grave risk”. Clearly, however, there is overlap between this defense and the “best interests of the child”, which makes the Convention something more than simply an arbiter of jurisdiction in its application.

This is how the Convention is supposed to work, but problems with adherence to its principles remain. Each year in April, the U.S. State Department publishes a report on its efforts in the past year to resolve cases of international parental child abduction. It presents statistics on cases pending and resolved, not only for countries that are full Convention partner states with the U.S., but for all foreign countries with an abduction case in that year, including the non-Convention partners.<sup>10</sup> In the most recent report for 2015, still 14 out of the 73 U.S. Convention partner states

#### A Case Worker’s Notes:

*From the desk of Shari D., Program Director*

We’ve had some cases that are stark reminders of the differences in global practices and traditions as to how children are to be raised. I’ve spoken with many parents with children born and raised in the USA, but fearful that the other parent is planning to abduct the child to his or her country of origin.

One mom was dealing with a situation where dad was a powerful, influential figure in the USA. She discovered that he’d purchased land in the African town in which he’d been born,

and that his family members were preparing their 11-year-old daughter for a “secret” trip to dad’s place of birth. It became evident, through her efforts to learn more, that her daughter would be sent off without her knowledge or permission, for a female circumcision ceremony and likely to be kept abroad by extended family. Mom was overwhelmed and felt almost powerless to stop this from happening.

We handled a similar situation for a mom who was told that dad would be returning to his homeland to take his position as chief of his native tribe; dad was next in line after his father’s and brother’s deaths. This dad was to inherit land, wealth, power, as well as his brother’s widow as property. Apparently, dad had been secretly planning to take their American-born young son with him, and mom was desperate to stop this from happening.

Another all-too-common situation that comes to mind when considering these cultural differences involve cases Child Find has opened for parents who’ve learned a child is going to be abducted and given to extended family to raise. In several places around the world, it’s common practice for a child to be reared until a certain age by grandmother, for example, without the biological parents’ involvement – again, a challenging situation where prevention is the only real hope.

They’re tough cases, since these parents who are planning abductions are careful not to document their plans. While we tell people to trust their instincts and assure them we take their concerns seriously, it may be very difficult for them to successfully convince a court that prevention intervention is necessary.





**CHILD FIND of AMERICA®**

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

were considered to be noncompliant, either due to an unresponsive Central Authority, lack of due diligence from law enforcement, the courts' lack of

adherence to Convention principles, or all the above. There are reasons for optimism that the situation is improving, however. When it comes to abductions out of the U.S., Mexico is by far the biggest destination country (437 cases open in calendar year 2014),<sup>11</sup> and although it had previously been considered noncompliant, it was not flagged as such in 2015. New nations accede to the Convention each year, including the Philippines in 2016, and efforts are ongoing to increase compliance—notably the passing of the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act (2014). That Act states that worldwide, “about one half” of parental abductions to Convention partner states result in return of the child to the U.S.,<sup>12</sup> but despite problems with adherence to the Convention, the LBP is always in a stronger position under the Convention than outside of it. Without it, the LBP may have no alternative but to litigate custody in the abducting parent’s country – if the child can even be found at all. The State Department reports, for instance, that for abductions to Japan before it joined the Convention in 2014, in the few cases where LBPs have fought for custody in Japanese family courts, “none have resulted in either meaningful parental access or the return of the child to the U.S.”<sup>13</sup>

So the Convention is an imperfect remedy, not least because fewer than half of the world’s countries have adopted it. But prior to having to use it, there are things a parent who suspects a risk of international abduction can do to minimize that risk or to prevent the abduction from happening. Be aware of significant changes in the life of the other parent that may be warning signs: quitting a job, selling a home or ending a lease, closing a bank account, or requesting school / medical records for the child. Consult with an attorney, if that is an option, because there may be a need for quick and effective choices regarding applications for court orders. Get sole custody, if possible, or at least an order with wording to prevent a removal abroad, if there’s not one already. Because the U.S. has open borders, it can be difficult or impossible to entirely restrict the other parent from having opportunity to abduct, but having clear court orders for custody and

#### **A Case Worker’s Notes:**

*From the desk of Aaron I., Case Manager*

I think a lot of folks have the impression that international parental abduction is largely a matter remedied through the legal system. While it’s true that a solid court order can greatly reduce the risks, it often does little to assuage some parents’ concerns over that nightmare occurring, especially since restrictive family court orders so often are only temporary.

One such case that comes to mind involves a mother of 2 children who had been successful in convincing the judge there was a risk of their father abducting them to Kenya, a country not party to the Hague Convention. The children’s father – who was born in Kenya and studying to become a doctor – captivated our caller with promises of sharing a new life together in the USA. They had met online and got along very well. She reported that she only came to learn more of his true nature after they married and moved in together in her home state of Virginia.

When our caller’s relationship with her husband broke down due to domestic violence, he and his family made several explicit threats to take the children back to Kenya against her wishes. These concerns were brought to the attention of the court and the final court order was restrictive, allowing Dad only supervised visits and that they be contingent upon surrendering his passport on each occasion.

Years later, Mom called Child Find upon learning of Dad’s plans to remarry in Kenya. He had recently petitioned the court for unsupervised visitation as well. Mom also learned that he may have been granted Kenyan passports for himself and the children due to dual citizenship. Her fear of abduction was sparked all over again.

Only in the worst of cases does a family court order restrict a parent’s access to his/her children indefinitely. In cases of international parental abduction, the offending parent often remains part of the children’s lives through the court order, and supportive connections in that parent’s country of origin can strengthen in the face of legal challenges. Child Find’s role here is preventive, usually involving discussion about red flags and practical steps that can be taken to address them. In this case, the caller must remain aware of the risks on a daily basis while maintaining the semblance of a secure and stable environment for herself and her children. She is accomplishing this through the involvement of friends, family, school and church officials in her evolving safety plan – as well as with ongoing support from Child Find.







parenting time can at least put you in a position of being able to ask for cooperation from embassies and airline staff, for instance. In the U.S., there is what's called the Passport Issuance Alert Program run by the Department of State that you can enroll in, in order to get notice of an application for a passport for your minor child. While it generally requires consent of both parents to obtain a U.S. passport for a minor under 16, there can be exceptions to this,<sup>14</sup> so the Program can provide some extra assurance. If your child already has a passport, you can ask the court to hold it. If your child has dual nationality, things get trickier because each country has its own rules for issuing passports, but you can reach out to the relevant embassy and – ideally with a supportive court order – prevail on them to alert you to any incoming application.

If an application to court for emergency orders is required, the court will consider:

- a) The weight of evidence that the other parent is actually planning to abduct: including threats to do so or any past history of abducting;
- b) The circumstantial evidence: e.g. resources available to the other parent (both financial resources and in terms of family support) that could help make abducting easier; strong ties to another country, or evidence of weak (or weakening) ties to the U.S.;
- c) The difficulty of having the child returned, if an abduction should occur (e.g. is the parent suspected of planning an abduction to a non-Convention partner state?)

Above all, never ignore abduction threats—always take them seriously, and make a record of what was actually said, in what context, and when.

Where a court has been convinced there is a credible flight risk, there are a host of possible remedies. It can order that the other parent post a bond (both as a deterrent to flight, and/or to assist with recovery efforts should an abduction occur), order supervised visitation (though this is usually only a temporary fix), write specific restrictions into the custody order, order the other parent to notify another country's embassy or consulate of a court order and its travel restrictions, require a parent to obtain a custody order from the court of another country that mirrors the one existing in the U.S., or any combination of the above or other creative solutions.<sup>15</sup> While

none of these methods can provide total certainty that an abduction won't happen, they can provide some peace of mind by making things much more difficult for the prospective abductor. The old saying that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure holds truer than ever because—even with support from the Convention—there is no easy fix when it comes to international parental child abduction.

– Brian G., Case Worker



<sup>1</sup> The 1993 *International Parental Kidnapping Crime Act* makes it a federal crime to take an under 16-year old child out of the U.S. without consent of the other custodial parent – but with certain exceptions or “affirmative defenses”, such as when the abducting parent is fleeing domestic violence.

<sup>2</sup> Part of the broader Hague Conference on Private International Law.

<sup>3</sup> Importantly, courts retain the option to return a child even when the abducting parent is able to successfully argue that the child is well settled: this may be done in cases where return is seen as the option best in keeping with the aims of the Convention (e.g. not to “reward” the abducting parent for concealing the child from the LBP).

<sup>4</sup> Habitual residence is undefined in the Convention but interpreted by extensive case law.

<sup>5</sup> Any party with custodial rights to a child (it need not be a parent) can claim a wrongful taking or retention

<sup>6</sup> Custody rights are generally interpreted to mean the right to determine (or have input in determining) where a child shall live. Whether those rights were being exercised at the time of the wrongful taking or retaining requires an inquiry into the facts.

<sup>7</sup> See 2011 Report of the Hague Conference, available at <https://assets.hcch.net/upload/wop/abduct2011pd08ae.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See Convention's Explanatory Report by Elisa Pérez-Vera.

<sup>9</sup> Published under auspices of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

<sup>10</sup> For a list of contracting states see <https://www.hcch.net/en/instruments/conventions/status-table/?cid=24>. Although there are 94 contracting states, not all have had their accession to the Convention accepted by the U.S. (e.g. Iraq).

<sup>11</sup> State Department Annual Report for 2015 and data for calendar year 2014.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/hr3212/text>

<sup>13</sup> State Department Annual Report and data, *supra*.

<sup>14</sup> Including “exigent circumstances” involving the health or welfare of a child, or when the Secretary of State determines that issuance of a passport is warranted by “special family circumstances”.

<sup>15</sup> See the *Uniform Child Abduction Prevention Act (UCAPA)* of 2006. Not broadly adopted by states due to concerns that it may restrict freedom of movement within the U.S., the Act can nevertheless serve as guidance in assessing risks and drafting orders where international abduction is a real threat.





## WHAT'S PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT

### GOT TO DO WITH MISSING KIDS?

- BY AARON I., SHARI D., CHILD FIND'S PROFESSIONAL TRAINING TEAM

To some, it may seem a bit of a stretch for a missing children's agency to have concerns over parents using physical punishment. What would this have to do with missing children? Ask a case worker at Child Find and the answer is clear, though anything but short. If you read on, you'll find there are many reasons this agency is compelled to address the matter of parents who choose corporal punishment to teach lessons and to respond to challenging behaviors.

Child Find's mission speaks to a vision shared with parents and professionals the world over: to see children thriving in as many aspects of their lives as possible, be it mentally, socially, physically or emotionally. This is not an easily achieved goal, and figuring out the best way to guide children through the use of discipline is complex and quite personal. It is often an emotionally charged subject, one that is often deeply connected to our culture, sometimes our identity. For these reasons among countless others, it is very difficult to say which disciplinary techniques are the "best" for children. What *has* become impossible to ignore - through an extensive, solid and growing body of research - is that corporal punishment does not contribute to beneficial developmental outcomes. In fact, there is now a near total consensus that corporal punishment only increases the risks of many enduring, negative outcomes for children.



Corporal punishment can be defined as the use of physical force with the intention of causing the child to experience bodily pain or discomfort so as to correct or punish the child's behavior. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the

Child states that most instances of corporal punishment include: "hitting" "smacking" "slapping" "spanking" children, with the hand or with an implement – whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. The Committee goes on to state that corporal punishment "can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children's mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices). In addition, there are other non-physical forms of punishment which are also cruel and degrading... for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child." In short, the view of the Committee is that corporal punishment is invariably degrading to children, and does harm to the human spirit and individual potential. The weapon may be a hand, a belt, or harmful verbal messages that slowly – but surely - break down self-esteem.

. . . not surprisingly, missing child occurrences often follow corporal punishment by a parent. In fact, 43% percent of runaway youth (girls and boys) report physical abuse before leaving home.

The short list of possible negative outcomes in children who are physically corporally punished includes such things as developmental delays, increased aggression, depression, anxiety, increased drug use, and even lower IQ. Chief among these negative outcomes for Child Find is the increased risk of bullying, violent and self-harming behaviors in youth, increased delinquency, and increased risk of both running away and being thrown out of the home prior to the age of majority.

Another alarming outcome of physical corporal punishment relates to child abuse concerns. When parents are living apart, it's not uncommon for Child Find staff to hear concerns that the other parent is harming the child through this form of punishment. Protective parents are powerfully motivated to shield their children, and parental abductions quite often involve allegations that a child is being harmed



CHILD FIND of AMERICA®

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

in this manner. So not surprisingly, missing child occurrences often follow corporal punishment by a parent. In fact, 43% of runaway youth (girls and boys) report physical abuse before leaving home (Molnar et al, 1998).

Here is where the services of Child Find come in. Of course, we would prefer a world where such services were not necessary in the first place, but in keeping with the focus of Child Find mission, we would like to prevent these unfortunate outcomes, rather than strictly provide difficult resolution and location services.

Recent efforts by Child Find's training division are focused on engaging professionals on the issue of corporal punishment. These trainings examine the research and offer guidance to professionals on engaging parents respectfully and effectively. These trainings are also initiating dialogue about what effective discipline is. It is a large and often passionate subject for many, and we continue to receive very positive feedback from our participants. We believe that these trainings not only serve as an awareness campaign, but are also teaching skill-sets to other professionals who are helping parents.

We believe that fostering discussions, examining good scientific research, and working on a sort of grassroots movement to bring about change – one parent, one home, one family at a time – will see a steady decline in the shockingly high numbers of missing children. With hope, generations to come will benefit from learning productive, peaceful and positive ways to guide and teach our children.

### References:

Molnar, B., Shade, S., Kral, A., Booth, R., & Watters, J. (1998). Suicidal Behavior and Sexual/Physical Abuse Among Street Youth. *Child Abuse & Neglect*. Vol. 22, NO. 3, pp. 213-222.

National Runaway Safeline: <http://www.1800runaway.org/runaway-statistics/third-party-statistics/#focus-on-abuse>



CHILD FIND of AMERICA  
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Our Training Division helps agencies to help families in conflict by equipping their staff with the skills critical to building thriving children, families and communities.

CALL 845 883 6060 TO LEARN MORE



CHILD FIND of AMERICA

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE



## MISSING CHILDREN

CHILD FIND CASE #6645-P

TAMMY AND DIEGO FLORES

Tammy Flores  
Date of Birth: 3/30/2004  
HAIR: LIGHT BROWN  
EYES: BROWN

Diego Flores  
Date of Birth: 7/28/2005  
HAIR: LIGHT BROWN  
EYES: BROWN

Francisco Flores (abductor)  
Date of Birth: 4/23/1974  
HAIR: BLACK EYES: BROWN  
HEIGHT: 6'0" (183 cm)  
WEIGHT: 210 lbs (95 kg)  
*Mole under nose and on each cheek*

LAST SEEN: OCTOBER 23, 2000 VICTORVILLE, CA

Tammy and Diego Flores were allegedly abducted by their non-custodial father, Francisco Flores, who did not return them after a scheduled visit. The children's parents were in the process of a divorce at the time. When the no one answered the phone on the day of the disappearance, children's mother went Francisco's house and found it vacant. It was later discovered Francisco had taken out a second mortgage on his house and had quit his job of 10 years without notice. A felony warrant for Kidnapping was issued for his arrest on 01/18/2008. Flores has dual US/Mexican citizenship, with relatives in Mexico City. He and the children may have traveled to Mexico.

If you have any information or think you have seen these children or their abductor, please call 911

Ontario, CA Police Department: (909) 986-6711

Child Find of America: (845) 883-6060

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## STATEMENT OF AUDITED REVENUES & EXPENSES

Fiscal Year June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014

Fiscal Year June 1, 2014 to May 31, 2015

EIN: 22-2323336

	2014	2015
<u>REVENUE</u>	AUDITED	AUDITED
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$269,982	\$249,319
INTEREST & DIVIDENDS	\$31	\$86
CONTRACTS	\$142,406	\$173,964
PROGRAM SERVICE REVENUE	\$0	\$5,947
UNREALIZED GAIN ON SECURITIES	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL REVENUE GAINS &amp; OTHER SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$412,419</b>	<b>\$429,316</b>

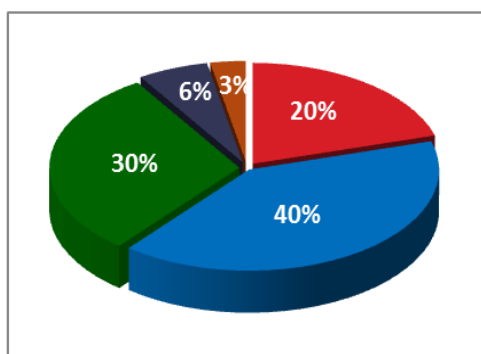
## EXPENSES

PROGRAM SERVICES	\$367,162	\$415,547
SUPPORTING SERVICES	\$34,523	\$40,889
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$401,685</b>	<b>\$456,436</b>

## NET ASSETS

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$10,605	\$27,467
NET ASSETS BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$96,076	\$106,681
<b>NET ASSETS END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$106,681</b>	<b>\$79,214</b>

## 91% OF REVENUE WAS ALLOCATED TO PROGRAMMING



## EXPENSES DISTRIBUTION

LOCATION	20.44%	\$93,275
PARENT HELP	40.30%	\$183,923
PUBLIC EDUCATION	30.31%	\$138,349
MANAGEMENT	5.82%	\$26,577
FUNDRAISING	3.03%	\$14,312
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>99.90%</b>	<b>\$456,436</b>

## CHILD FIND OF AMERICA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### PRESIDENT

Elizabeth M. Baker  
Vice President, NA I/T Security & Risk Mgt. IBM  
Johns Island, SC

### VICE PRESIDENT

Eric Malter  
Co-Founder, CEO, MDC Group  
New York, NY

### TREASURER

Arthur H. Finnel  
Co-Founder, Horizon Partners Ventures LLC  
Philadelphia, PA

### SECRETARY

Donna Linder  
Executive Director,  
Child Find of America, Inc.

### DIRECTORS

Marc Schweitzer, SPHR  
Principal, Blitz HR Solutions LLC  
New York, NY

Michael C. Titens, Esq.  
Thompson, & Knight, LLP  
Dallas, TX

*Child Find of America, Inc. is exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code and is not a private foundation as defined in section 509(a). Contributions made to help sustain the programs and services of Child Find are fully tax deductible by donors, as defined by law.*

## CHILD FIND of AMERICA STAFF

Donna Linder  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mark Delluomo  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Lorraine Fazio & Taylor Domenick  
ADMIN/PROGRAM ASSISTANTS

Shari D.  
DIRECTOR, PARENT HELP PROGRAM

Aaron I.  
SENIOR CASE MANAGER

Brian G.  
CASE MANAGER

Jennifer S.  
INTAKE / INFO & REFERRAL

Patricia V. & Javier C.  
SPANISH LANGUAGE INTAKE

Julia Ponder  
INTERN/ SOCIAL MEDIA

*Special thanks to Lorrie – who has more than earned her second attempt at retirement after 10 years of keeping our staff uplifted and in line; and to Julia who, after 5 semesters interning, stayed on as a social media volunteer while student teaching. Congratulations on your certification, Julia. Your future students will benefit not only from your ability and experience, but from your energy and empathy as well.*

Child Find of America's annual fiscal report, IRS Form 990 and Audit may be viewed online at: [www.childfindofamerica.org](http://www.childfindofamerica.org)



A+ Charity Watch Rating  
[www.charitywatch.org](http://www.charitywatch.org)





# STILL MISSING

If you have any information or think you have seen any of these children,  
please call Child Find, toll-free: 1-800-I-AM-LOST

\*Age progressions/composites courtesy of NCMEC



King Walker  
Gary, IN



Macin Smith  
St. George, UT



Brianna Maitland  
East Franklin, VT



Kimberly Arrington\*  
Montgomery, AL



Christopher Abeyta\*  
Colorado Springs, CO



**LOCATED**  
Since publication



Brooklinn Miller\*  
South Sioux City, NE



Vivian Trout\*  
Miami Beach, FL



Brittany Williams\*  
Richmond, VA



Samantha Kibalo\*  
Suffern, NY

## CHILD FIND OF AMERICA, INC.

PO Box 277  
NEW PALTZ 12561-0277

Administration: 845-883-6060  
Fax: 845-883-6614  
Location Services: 1-800-I-AM-LOST  
Parent Help : 1-800-716-3468 OR 1-800-A-WAY-OUT

Email: [information@childfindofamerica.org](mailto:information@childfindofamerica.org)  
Website: [childfindofamerica.org](http://childfindofamerica.org)



**CHILD FIND of AMERICA®**

BRINGING KIDS HOME • KEEPING THEM SAFE

**36 years**  
30 1982