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WHAT WE INVESTIGATE

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FBI

Violent Crimes Against Children

It's unthinkable, but every year, thousands of children become victims of crimes—

whether it's through kidnappings, violent attacks, sexual abuse, or online predators.

Overview

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Violent Crimes Against Children News

Overview

The mission of the FBI's Violent Crimes Against Children program is to:

- Provide a rapid, proactive, and comprehensive ability to counter all threats of abuse and exploitation to children when those crimes fall under the authority of the FBI
- Identify, locate, and recover child victims Strengthen relationships between the FBI and federal, state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement partners to identify,
- prioritize, investigate, and deter individuals and criminal networks exploiting children **Investigative Priorities**

- Child abductions: the mysterious disappearance of a minor, especially a minor of tender years (12 or younger)
- Contact offenses against children: production of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), sextortion, domestic travel to engage in sexual activity with children, and international travel to engage in sexual activity with children
- Sexual exploitation of children: online networks and enterprises manufacturing, trading, distributing, and/or selling CSAM
- Trafficking of CSAM: distribution or possession
- International parental kidnapping: wrongfully retaining a child outside the United States with the intent to obstruct the lawful exercise of parental rights

Other crimes against children violations within the FBI's jurisdiction are investigated in accordance with available resources.

Investigations

Child Abductions

In 1932, Congress gave the FBI jurisdiction under the "Lindbergh Law" to immediately investigate any reported mysterious disappearance or kidnapping involving a child of "tender age"—usually 12 or younger. There does not have to be a ransom demand nor does the child have to cross state lines or be missing for 24 hours before the FBI will become involved.

Our field offices respond to cases involving the mysterious disappearance of a child. All reports of circumstances indicating that a minor

may have been abducted are given an immediate preliminary inquiry to evaluate evidence, circumstances, and information. If a case is found to be warranted under federal law, we will immediately open an investigation in partnership with state and local authorities.

Child abductions by strangers are often complex, and time is of the essence. FBI Child Abduction Rapid Deployment (CARD) teams are deployed soon after an abduction has been reported to a local FBI field offices, FBI Headquarters, or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children or in other cases when the FBI determines an investigation is warranted.

Child Sexual Exploitation Investigations

Child sexual exploitation investigations—many of them undercover—are conducted in FBI field offices by Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Forces (CEHTTFs), which combine the resources of the FBI with those of other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

Each of the FBI's 56 field offices has worked investigations developed by the Crimes Against Children program, and many of our Legal Attaché offices have coordinated with appropriate foreign law enforcement partners on international investigations. Several of these investigations are also worked in coordination with Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces, which are funded by the Department of Justice. Furthermore, the FBI supports training for federal, state, local, and foreign law enforcement agencies involved in these investigations. **Child Sex Tourism**

travel overseas to engage in illegal sexual conduct with children under the age of 18. These crimes are exacerbated by the relative ease of international travel and the use of the Internet as a platform for individuals exchanging information about how and where to find child

victims in foreign locations. **International Parental Kidnapping** The FBI investigates when a parent or guardian removes a child from the United States, attempts to do so, or retains a child (who has been

in the United States) outside the United States with the intent to obstruct the lawful exercise of parental rights. Our field offices across the

country serve as the primary points of contact for those seeking help. To request assistance or learn more about our services, please

contact a member of the Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force in your local FBI office.

their home countries (The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction).

The FBI, in conjunction with domestic and international law enforcement partners, investigates U.S. citizens and permanent residents who

When a child is abducted by a parent or guardian and taken outside the United States, one criminal and one civil option may be pursued:

• A criminal arrest warrant can be issued for a parent or guardian who takes a juvenile under 16 outside of the United States without the other custodial parent's permission (International Parental Kidnapping Crime Act of 1993).

■ In nations that have signed the Hague Convention, there is a civil process that facilitates the return of abducted children under 16 to

The criminal process enables the arrest of the abducting parent or guardian but does not specifically order the return of the child, although the child is usually returned when the parent is apprehended. The civil process, on the other hand, facilitates the return of the child but

jeopardize an active Hague Convention civil process. Based on these considerations, we pursue criminal action in international parental kidnappings on a case-by-case basis. We take into account all the factors and guidance among the impacted state and federal law enforcement agencies, state and/or federal prosecutors, the Department of State, the Department of Justice, and the searching parent.

does not pursue the arrest or return of the abductor. As a result, a criminal process would not be pursued if circumstances indicate it will

It's important to understand that the FBI has no investigative jurisdiction outside the United States, except on the high seas and other locations specifically granted by Congress. We work through our existing partnerships with international authorities through the U.S. Department of State, our Legal Attaché program, and Interpol.

If you are the searching parent, visit the Department of Justice's International Parental Kidnapping web page for more information.

More on the Hague convention (click to expand) ▶

For more information about our current parental abduction cases and to help us find these children, see Wanted by the FBI Parental Kidnapping.

Our authority in parental kidnapping cases stems from the Fugitive Felon Act. Although this statute most commonly applies to fugitives who flee interstate and/or internationally, Congress has specifically declared that the statute is also applicable in cases involving interstate or international parental kidnapping. Because many fugitives flee with their own children, the statute serves as an effective means for the FBI to help local and state law enforcement arrest these fugitives.

For the FBI to assist with an Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution arrest warrant, the following criteria must be met:

- There must be probable cause to believe the abducting parent has fled interstate or internationally to avoid prosecution or confinement.
- State authorities must have an outstanding warrant for the abductor's arrest charging him/her with a felony under the laws of the state from which the fugitive flees.
- State authorities must agree to extradite and prosecute that fugitive from anywhere in the United States if the subject is apprehended by the FBI.
- The local prosecuting attorney or police agency should make a written request for FBI assistance. ■ The U.S. attorney must authorize the filing of a complaint, and the federal arrest process must be outstanding before the investigation
- is instituted.

Initiatives

Child Abduction Rapid Deployment (CARD) Team The first few hours after a child is abducted are critical. That's why we established CARD teams in October 2005. CARD teams are

composed of experienced personnel with a proven track record in crimes against children investigations, especially cases where a child has been abducted by someone other than a family member. Team members provide on-the-ground investigative, technical, and resource assistance to state and local law enforcement. The teams work closely with FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit representatives, National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime coordinators, and child exploitation task force members. CARD teams are capable of quickly establishing an on-site command post to centralize investigative efforts and operations. Other assets

coverage, and the Child Abduction Response Plan to guide investigative efforts. **Endangered Child Alert Program**

In 2004, the FBI began its Endangered Child Alert Program (ECAP) as a proactive approach to identifying unknown individuals involved in

the sexual abuse of children and the production of child sexual abuse material. ECAP—a collaborative effort between the FBI and the

they bring to the table include a mapping tool to identify and locate registered sex offenders in the area, national and international lead

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children—seeks national and international exposure of unknown adults (referred to as John/Jane Does). Partnership with National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

FBI personnel assigned to the NCMEC review information that is provided to NCMEC's CyberTipline. The tip line receives reports of child

sexual exploitation incidents via an online form. The NCMEC also maintains a 24-hour hotline at 1-800-THE-LOST and on missingkids.org.

FBI employees assigned to the NCMEC work to identify individuals suspected of any of the following: possession, manufacture and/or distribution of child sexual abuse material; online enticement of children for sexual acts; child sexual tourism; and/or other sexual exploitation of children. Once a potential suspect has been identified, investigators compile information and forward it to the appropriate FBI field office for investigation.

Violent Crimes Against Children International Task Force The Violent Crimes Against Children International Task Force (VCACITF) is a select cadre of international law enforcement experts working

together to formulate and deliver a dynamic global response to online child exploitation through strategic partnerships, the aggressive engagement of relevant law enforcement, and the extensive use of liaison, operational support, and coordination. The VCACITF (formerly known as the Innocent Images International Task Force) became operational in 2004 and serves as the largest

task force of its kind in the world, composed of 68 online child sexual exploitation investigators from almost 46 countries. A five-week training session for newly invited task force officers brings them to the United States to work side-by-side with FBI agents in the Violent Crimes Against Children program. The VCACITF also conducts an annual case coordination meeting where task force members come together in a central location to share best practices and coordinate transnational investigations between members. FBI Child ID App

information about your children so that it's literally right at hand if you need it.

harming or kidnapping children.

You can show the pictures and provide physical identifiers such as height and weight to security or police officers on the spot. Using a special tab on the app, you can also quickly and easily email the information to authorities with a few clicks. (The information is stored only on the user's mobile device

The FBI Child ID App provides a convenient place to electronically store photos and other vital

and is only transmitted if the user sends it.) The app is free to download on Android and Apple devices.

Most Wanted and Missing Persons Help us locate missing children and fugitives who are wanted for

Protecting Your Kids National Cyber Tip Line

- Crimes Against Children fugitives Kidnappings and Missing persons Parental kidnappings
- Endangered Child Alert Program (ECAP)
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
 - Coping with Child Sexual Abuse Material Exposure Project Safe Child Stop Cyberbullying

Additional Resources

International Family Abductions

- NetSmartz Workshops for Parents and Kids Child ID Kits Child ID App

01.05.2023 — Hardin County Man Guilty of Child Pornography Violations 01.05.2023 — Married Couple Arrested for Producing Child Pornography

01.05.2023 — Melrose Man Indicted for Child Pornography Offenses

01.05.2023 — Marinette Man Arrested for Online Crimes Targeting Children

Crimes Against Children News

01.05.2023 — Central California Man Sentenced to Federal Prison for Abducting and Sexually Abusing an Oregon Minor He Met Online 01.04.2023 — Wyoming Man Charged in Commercial Sex Investigation in Billings Admits Prostitution Crime 01.04.2023 — Registered Sex Offender Sentenced to 15 Years for Sexual Exploitation of Children 01.04.2023 — Federal Grand Jury A Indictments Announced—January 2023 01.03.2023 — Albuquerque Man Pleads Guilty to Cyberstalking, Child Pornography Offenses 01.03.2023 — New York Man Sentenced to Seven Years in Prison for Transporting Child Pornography Into New Jersey

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