

Autism and Wandering Resources

Studies show that nearly half of children with autism attempt to wander off or bolt from a safe supervised place ([Autism Speaks](#)). Children with Angelman Syndrome also tend to have an obsession with water and will tend to wander if water is nearby. The following resources includes wandering kits, articles and additional resources on the topic of wandering.

What is Wandering?

When a person, who requires some level of supervision to be safe, leaves a supervised, safe space and/or the care of a responsible person and is exposed to potential dangers such as traffic, open water (drowning), falling from a high place, hypothermia, heatstroke, dehydration.

Types of Wandering

- Goal-Directed Wandering- wandering with the purpose of getting to something (a place of obsession, water, etc.).
- Non goal-directed wandering- Wandering with no purpose, random from one place to another.
- Confusion Wandering- Wandering due to disorientation or confusion.
- Bolting/fleeing- The act of suddenly running or bolting, usually to quickly get away from something, or in negative reaction to an event, anxiety or stress.

Facts and Statistics

- Roughly half, or 49%, of children with an ASD attempt to elope from a safe environment, a rate nearly four times higher than their unaffected siblings.
- In 2009, 2010, and 2011, accidental drowning accounted for 91% total U.S. deaths reported in children with an ASD ages 14 and younger subsequent to wandering/elopement.
- More than one third of ASD children who wander/elope are never or rarely able to communicate their name, address, or phone number.
- 32% of parents reported a “close call” with a possible drowning.
- 40% of parents had suffered sleep disruption due to fear of elopement.
- half of families with elopers report they never received advice or guidance about elopement from a professional.

Source: Interactive Autism Network research report: Elopement and wandering (2011)

Source: National Autism Association, Lethal Outcomes in ASD Wandering (2012)

Caregivers Information

[Autism elopement and wandering kit for families](#) (Parenting Chaos)

[Big Red Safety Toolkit](#) (National Autism Association)

28 page toolkit that provides information on preventing wandering. The toolkit includes the following information:

- Caregiver checklist
- Family wandering emergency plan
- swimming lessons tool
- Root-causes scenario and strategies tool
- Caregivers log
- How to get tracking technology in your town.

First Responder Resources

[First Responder Checklist](#)– A checklist for first responders developed by the National Autism Association

[First Responder Notification Form](#)

[First Responder Tips](#)

GPS Tracking Technology

[The AngleSense Guardian Kit](#)

- Comes with a GPS device, embedded SIM card, customized wearables and a magnet key for parents \$39.00 monthly service plan.

[7 tracking devices to find a lost child with autism](#) (Friendship Circle)

Articles

[5 simple ways to prevent wandering in children with autism](#) (Autism Parenting Magazine)

[Autism and Wandering](#) (SFGate)

[Autism and Wandering: How ABA can help keep kids safe.](#) (HuffPost Parents)

[Teaching safety skills to children with autism](#) (Our Crazy Adventures in Autismland)

[The autism epidemic that can no longer be ignored](#) (HuffPost Parents)

[Wandering: A hazard for more than a third of kids with autism](#) (U.S. News)

[Wandering & Autism: Elopement within the classroom](#) (Autism Classroom Blog)

[Wandering & Autism: Students who flee, bolt, run and elope](#) (Autism Classroom Blog)