Family safety planning checklist

Wandering and elopement

Complete this plan, keep a copy somewhere easy to find and share it with family members, teachers, carers and anyone who regularly looks after your child. Review it every few months, and whenever something changes.

If your child goes missing, act immediately.
Call SAPS on 10111 (or 112 from a mobile phone). Say that your child is autistic, explain how they communicate, and search nearby water and roads first. Do not wait to see if they come back.

1. About my child

Full name

Age and date of birth

Height, build, hair and eye colour

Recent photo attached (date taken)

Clothing or items usually worn (for example ear defenders, ID bracelet, labelled clothing)

How my child communicates (speech, AAC, gestures, signs) and responds to their name

Favourite interests, places or things they may head towards

Sensory triggers and what helps them feel calm

Medical needs, allergies or medication

2. Emergency contacts

Parent or caregiver 1 (name and phone)

Parent or caregiver 2 (name and phone)

Neighbour or nearby contact (name and phone)

3. Known hazards near home, school and regular places

Water (pools, dams, rivers, beach, ponds)

Busy roads, parking areas and other dangers

4. Safety at home

- [ ] Gates and fencing are secure and checked regularly
- [ ] Doors and windows have suitable locks
- [ ] Door, window or movement alarms are in place
- [ ] Pool or water access is fenced, covered or locked
- [ ] Keys and access controls are kept out of reach
- [ ] Neighbours know my child and what to do if they see them alone
- [ ] Our neighbourhood WhatsApp groups know to contact me straight away if they see my child alone
- [ ] Our alarm or security company has a note on our address

5. Outings and school

- [ ] My child wears ID with emergency contacts and communication needs
- [ ] Iron-on or sewn-in labels with my contact details are in their clothing, in case ID bracelets or tracker watches are taken off
- [ ] I have checked the venue for exits, water, roads and crowds
- [ ] Extra supervision is planned for busy places and transitions
- [ ] A quieter space is identified if my child becomes overwhelmed
- [ ] School and carers have a copy of this plan
- [ ] I have a recent photo of my child on my phone

6. Possible triggers

When and where is wandering most likely? Think about transitions, noise, a favourite activity ending, or feeling overwhelmed.

Patterns I have noticed

7. If my child goes missing

1. Call SAPS on 10111 (or 112 from a mobile phone) straight away.
2. Say that your child is autistic and explain their communication and safety needs.
3. Share a recent photo and physical description.
4. Alert family, security staff and people nearby.
5. Search nearby water, pools and roads first, then the places your child likes to go.

Teaching safety skills helps, but it does not guarantee that a child will respond in every situation. Supervision and safety planning always come first.