

What is...

Wandering?

Wandering (also called eloping, bolting, running) occurs when a person, who requires some level of supervision to be safe, leaves a supervised, safe space and is exposed to potential dangers.

Contrary to the name, wandering (which implies a slow, unfocused movement) can happen quickly and with specific goals. There are three main types of wandering: goal-directed, bolting/fleeing and other.

More than HALF...

of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and many children with other disabilities (including Down syndrome, anxiety and ADHD) engage in wandering behaviors. These children are at risk for drowning, traffic accidents and other dangers.

- American Academy of Pediatrics, 2012.

What Can You Do?

Children who wander can be clever and determined. While every child is different, caregivers can use these tips to help put a S.T.O.P. to wandering:



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Supervise

Children who are at risk for wandering need constant supervision. Make sure your child has adequate supervision at school and arrange for respite care with a trusted caregiver so that you can be at your best when you are with your child.

Teach

Teach your child to stay within safe boundaries using visuals (such as stop signs) and social stories. Children who are at risk for wandering may also benefit from swimming lessons.

Organize

Be prepared for accidental wandering by having an up-to-date emergency wandering plan, identification and tracking device (if necessary).

Protect

Protect your child by securing your home and property with window and door locks, fences and/or alarms.

Where Can You Learn More?

More information, including specific resources to help you implement the S.T.O.P. tips above, is available online at:

www.connectingforkids.org/wandering



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