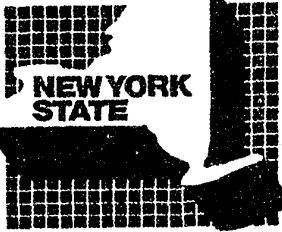




DIVISION OF  
**CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE  
SERVICES**



**REPORTED  
MISSING CHILDREN  
IN NEW YORK STATE  
1988**

119291

**OFFICE OF JUSTICE SYSTEMS ANALYSIS**  
*BUREAU OF STATISTICAL SERVICES*

**BUREAU OF IDENTIFICATION AND CRIMINAL HISTORY OPERATIONS**  
*MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN CLEARINGHOUSE*

119291

NEW YORK STATE  
MARIO M. CUOMO, GOVERNOR

DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES  
John J. Poklemba  
Director of Criminal Justice and Commissioner

# REPORTED MISSING CHILDREN IN NEW YORK STATE 1988

OFFICE OF JUSTICE SYSTEMS ANALYSIS  
Barry C. Sample, Executive Deputy Commissioner

NCJRS

SEP 7 1989

OFFICE OF IDENTIFICATION AND DATA SYSTEMS  
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Special Programs

119211

U.S. Department of Justice  
National Institute of Justice

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June 1989

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P R O C L A M A T I O N



State of New York  
Executive Chamber

When a child becomes missing, families, friends and entire communities suffer the loss of the child as well as share the fear for the child's safety. Also, there is no place in a civilized and enlightened society for the tragedy of child abuse and exploitation. The family of New York shares in the grief and trauma endured by its sons, daughters and parents who suffer the pain of a missing or exploited child.

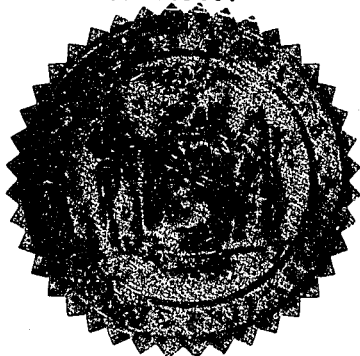
In 1984, New York responded to the issue of missing children by establishing the statewide Missing Children Register within the Division of Criminal Justice Services' Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse. The Missing Children Register presently contains over 1,500 active missing children cases from law enforcement agencies across the State. Last year the Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse, in cooperation with public and private sector organizations, was instrumental in the recovery of 55 missing children and shared a role in the location and recovery of many others.

For the purpose of heightening public awareness to the plight of missing and exploited children and to pledge the continued support of the State's resources to make New York a safer place for children to live and grow,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mario M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim May 25, 1989, as

MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN'S DAY

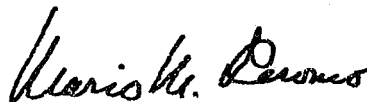
in New York State.



G I V E N under my hand and the  
Privy Seal of the State at the  
Capitol in the City of Albany  
this second day of May in the  
year one thousand nine hundred  
and eighty-nine.

BY THE GOVERNOR:

  
Secretary to the Governor



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## INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 880 of the Laws of 1986 amended Section 837 of New York State's Executive Law creating a statewide Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse within the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS). The Clearinghouse, which became effective on January 1, 1987, is operated by the DCJS Bureau of Identification and Criminal History Operations.

The tide of national public concern of missing and exploited children turned in 1982 as the result of grassroots parental action in response to several highly publicized cases of child abduction. Driven by youth-protection movements and other child advocate forces, the federal Missing Children Assistance Act was passed that year, and Congress mandated the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to become actively involved in missing children cases through use of both its investigative resources, and its National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer to maintain a national file of missing children. Federal efforts were further bolstered in 1984 with the creation of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

In November, 1984, New York State responded to the problem of missing and exploited children by establishing, through statute, a central statewide Missing Children Register based at DCJS. The Register is a computer file containing information on children under 18 years of age who are reported missing to law enforcement agencies in the State by persons responsible for their care. Law enforcement agencies are required by law to report missing children cases to the statewide Register upon receiving missing children complaints. A twenty-four hour hotline, 1-800-FIND-KID, is operational at the DCJS Clearinghouse for use by non-criminal justice agencies authorized by law to inquire against the Register, and for use by the public to report sightings of missing children, or to seek assistance in missing children cases. During 1988, approximately 1,500 requests for information and assistance were received over the hotline, as compared to under 300 the first year of operation. Law enforcement agencies access records on the Register through the New York Statewide Police Information Network (NYSPIN).

The DCJS Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse is a logical extension of the Missing Children Register, and expands the State's efforts in the publicity, identification and recovery of missing children. Toward this end, staff of the Clearinghouse focus efforts to:

- Interact with schools and community-based organizations to develop education and prevention programs concerning child safety;
- Establish a case data base containing non-identifying facts and statistics relative to missing and exploited children cases. The data are analyzed and profiled for the purposes of assisting law enforcement agencies in their investigations of missing and exploited children;

- Utilize the State's resources to duplicate photographs and posters of children reported missing by local police and, with appropriate parental consent, disseminate this information throughout the State through the media, law enforcement and publicity programs;
- Formulate and introduce publicity initiatives which concurrently sustain public awareness of the plight of missing and exploited children, and serve as an effective means of aiding in the safe and expedient recovery of children as well as reducing crimes against them;
- Assist federal, state and local agencies in their investigations of missing and exploited children;
- Provide assistance in returning recovered missing children to their normal and ordinary place of residence;
- In cooperation with the State Department of Social Services (DSS), develop and distribute procedures to law enforcement agencies concerning direct access to the DSS Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register in connection with missing children cases, and;
- Interact with legislative staffs to discuss the creation of, or modification to, laws that relate to the issue of missing and exploited children.

The Clearinghouse also strives to develop stronger ties with the many private voluntary groups and neighborhood associations that have evolved to combat the plight of missing and exploited children. In an attempt to address the issue on the national level, Clearinghouse staff work closely with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and Clearinghouses from other states.

The Clearinghouse has had success in accomplishing several predetermined goals, and has demonstrated steady progress in fulfilling its mandated responsibilities. Some of the Clearinghouse accomplishments include:

#### Redesign of the Missing Children Register

Working in conjunction with the New York State Police, Clearinghouse staff and Data Processing

Staff from DCJS enhanced the Missing Children Register by introducing new missing children case entry and case cancel reporting codes for use by law enforcement agencies when updating and cancelling missing children cases on the Register. The new codes were designed to capture more information concerning the circumstance surrounding the disappearance and recovery of missing children. Data collected through use of the new codes will provide some vision in defining the problem of missing children as it exists in New York State.

#### Missing Children Publicity Initiatives

In accordance with provisions of the Executive Law, the Clearinghouse publishes posters and flyers of missing children, with appropriate consent, and distributes them throughout the State and other states. Publicity programs have been established with, among others, the New York State Thruway Authority, the New York City Transit Authority, school districts and clearinghouses from other states. Through the production and dissemination of posters and flyers by Clearinghouse staff, many missing children cases have been resolved.

#### Community Relations/Training and Education

From time to time, Clearinghouse staff are called upon to deliver presentations on the issue of missing and exploited children. Presentations have been, and continue to be, conducted as part of forums, conferences or training seminars such as; the Governor's Conference on Crime Prevention; National Conferences on Missing and Exploited Children; various conferences and training programs sponsored by the State of New York Police Juvenile Officers Association, Inc.; conferences and workshops sponsored by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; and training and awareness programs sponsored by community-based organizations.

#### Support to Law Enforcement

Clearinghouse staff provide a variety of services to law enforcement agencies in assisting with missing children investigations, communicating with agencies from other states on behalf of investigating agencies and providing identification services in relation to children recovered who are unwilling or unable to identify themselves. Also, the Clearinghouse produced an investigative procedural guide for police officers to follow in missing children investigations. The guide has the approval of the State of New York Police Juvenile Officers Association.

On April 29, 1988, the United States ratified the multi-lateral Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. The Hague Convention, as it is commonly known, focuses on parental abductions and is designed to secure the prompt return of children who have been abducted, or wrongfully



retained, from their country of habitual residence. The Hague Convention does not create a system for the settlement of custody disputes. Rather, it provides for the use of federal, state and local agencies and courts to return children to their country of residence where any custody disputes can then be settled. The countries of Australia, Canada, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, The United Kingdom and the United States are signatories to the Hague Convention. Implementing federal legislation became effective on July 1, 1988 in the form of the International Child Abduction Remedies Act.

Last August, Governor Cuomo designated the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services' Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse as the State's central point of contact in Hague Convention cases. As such, staff of the Clearinghouse attempt to locate abducted children within the State and provide other administrative, coordinative and logistical services in relation to Hague Convention cases. The Clearinghouse coordinated successfully one of the first applications of the Hague Convention in the United States.

## OPERATION OF THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER

The New York State Missing Children Register became operational at DCJS on November 23, 1984. The Register is a computer file containing general pedigree and other information about missing children such as fingerprint classification, blood type, medical, dental and optical data. New York State Executive Law Section 837-e established the Register at DCJS, and initially required all law enforcement agencies in the State to report to the Register all cases of children under the age of sixteen who were reported missing by persons responsible for their care. Law enforcement agencies update cases to the Register via the New York Statewide Police Information Network (NYSPIN). Missing children entries and cancellations are transmitted to the Register through the use of special codes which serve to describe the general circumstances under which a child becomes missing and recovered. The codes were introduced into service in February 1987 in order to develop a better understanding of the missing children problem in New York State. Also, the Executive Law was amended in 1987 changing the legal definitional age of a missing child from under sixteen years of age to under eighteen. This amendment served to make New York State law consistent with most other states.

To collect as much information as possible about a missing child, parents or guardians of missing children are asked to complete the DCJS Missing Person/Children Data Collection Guide as well as provide a recent photograph of a missing child which would be used to prepare posters and flyers for publicity purposes. Missing Person/Children Data Collection Guides are distributed by the Clearinghouse, free of charge, to all law enforcement agencies in the State.

Upon receipt of a missing child report, the police agency enters appropriate data concerning the missing child to the Register via a NYSPIN terminal. Missing child entries, cancellations, modifies, and supplementals entered through NYSPIN are automatically entered or updated on both the NYS DCJS Missing Children Register and the FBI NCIC Missing Children (Person) File. It is the responsibility of the parent to deliver release forms to the child's doctor and/or optical specialist. Upon receipt of these forms, the practitioners send medical and optical records to the local police. The police then update the Register to include medical and optical information on the child. Medical information includes blood type, body x-rays, footprints, circumcision, etc. Optical data includes vision prescriptions. Fingerprint cards (if available) and photographs of the child are forwarded to DCJS. These documents are used to assist an agency that may have located a missing child to confirm identity.

If after 30 days the child has not been located, authorization to release dental records is delivered to the dentist by the parent or the police. The law requires the dentist to provide the information to the local police within 10 days. Upon receipt of the child's dental records, the local police update the Register or they forward the records to DCJS for entry into the Register. In either case, dental charts and x-rays must be

mailed to DCJS.

The FBI NCIC computer, upon receipt of data on the missing child, compares all of the relevant information to entries contained in the Unidentified Person File. This is a file which contains basic descriptor information on missing persons nationwide. If a possible match is made, notification is sent to both the agency that entered the unidentified person information and the agency which is conducting the missing child investigation. If fingerprints are available on the missing child, a copy of these prints is forwarded to the FBI Identification Division by DCJS to be compared against fingerprints currently on file or subsequently received by the FBI.

The police may, at any time, request that the child be included in the DCJS Missing and Exploited Children Publicity Program. Upon signed authorization of the parent, the police may contact DCJS to arrange for publicity of the missing child.

Qualified agencies from both the public and private sector access the Register as authorized by provisions of the Executive Law. These include law enforcement agencies, licensed child care agencies, school districts, coroners, medical examiners, courts and district attorneys. Inquiry data received from qualified agencies are searched against the Register in an attempt to match input names with those resident on the Register. Possible data matches are forwarded to local law enforcement agencies for further investigation to confirm or eliminate the identification of investigated subjects. Upon request, DCJS will provide (when available) copies of photographs, dental and medical records including x-rays, and other identification aids such as fingerprints to facilitate subject's identification.

The staff of DCJS perform regular ongoing quality control of records on the Register and conduct periodic validations for accuracy and currency of records with originating law enforcement agencies in the State. Upon cancellation of a record from the Missing Children Register, DCJS automatically purges information from the Register and returns all supportive documents submitted. Fingerprint cards which had been forwarded to the FBI will be retrieved by DCJS and returned to the originating agency.

One of the greatest utilities of the Register is in providing statistical information which can greatly enhance our understanding of the nature and extent of the missing children problem in New York State. The data from the Register allow us to profile those children who are particularly at risk or prone to be reported as a missing child. However, the original data elements stored on the Register were limited to demographic information detailing the age, sex, race, and county of disappearance. Quickly, deficiencies in the data being collected were noted as basic questions such as, "How many children were found dead?", "How many were the victim of a criminal act while missing?", and "How many cases involved runaways or abductions?", could not be answered. The data available were insufficient to describe the circumstances surrounding both the disappearance and recovery of missing children.

Recognizing the need to improve the quality and amount of information captured on the Register, DCJS redesigned the Register in order to collect more vital information. Beginning in February of 1987, reporting agencies were required to include details which characterize both the disappearance and methods of location of missing children. These data should aid efforts to develop prevention strategies, coordinate law enforcement responses to missing children, and increase overall understanding of the problem of missing children.

## STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF 1988 REGISTER ACTIVITY

This section profiles case activity on the Register during 1988. The following definitions explain the terms used in this summary:

<b>MISSING CHILD</b>	Any person under the age of 18 years missing from his or her normal or ordinary place of residence and whose whereabouts cannot be determined. Prior to September 1, 1987 only individuals under 16 years of age were reported to the Register as children who were missing.
<b>CASE ENTRY</b>	The reporting of a missing child case to the Register. The missing child "case" is the unit of count, and the figures cited refer to the number of cases, not children reported to the Register. A single child may appear in the Register multiple times if he or she was reported missing more than once during 1988. "Closed or cancelled" cases refer to the removal of a case from the Register upon the location of the child, and "active" cases are those that have been entered into the system and were still under investigation on December 31, 1988.
<b>RUNAWAY</b>	An unemancipated juvenile who has left his or her home environment without the parents' or caretakers' permission. This category includes juveniles that run away from parental or foster homes, as well as from state institutions.
<b>LOST</b>	A child is reported as lost when he or she disappeared in the context of daily childhood activities but is not considered to have run away.
<b>ABDUCTED</b>	Refers to the unlawful taking of a child by a noncustodial spouse or family member from the legal custody of the other parent, or by an acquaintance of the child, or by a stranger.
<b>RECOVERED</b>	A code sent upon cancellation of a case on the Register to report that the child was found as a result of law enforcement efforts.
<b>VICTIMIZED</b>	A cancellation code that indicates the child was a victim of criminal activity or exploitation while missing. Information describing the nature of the victimization (e.g., sexual abuse, assault) is not sent to the Register.
<b>VOLUNTARY RETURN</b>	A cancellation code that indicates the child returned home voluntarily and unharmed.
<b>REGION</b>	The three geographic areas of the State from which the child was reported missing. New York City consists of the five counties of Bronx, Kings, New York, Richmond and Queens. Suburban New York City includes Nassau, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester counties, and the Upstate region includes the remaining 53 counties.

## ANNUAL REPORTING VOLUME

Table 1

<b>ANNUAL REPORTING VOLUME TO THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER BY REGION 1985 - 1988</b>			
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>			
<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CASES REPORTED</u>	<u>CASES CLOSED</u>	<u>END-OF-YEAR ACTIVE CASES</u>
1985	17,232	17,217	1,198
1986	16,658	17,122	734
1987	18,203	17,647	1,290
1988	25,318	24,870	1,738
<b>NEW YORK CITY</b>			
1985	5,194	4,844	766
1986	5,001	5,485	282
1987	5,648	5,275	655
1988	8,672	8,310	1,017
<b>SUBURBAN NEW YORK CITY</b>			
1985	4,900	5,024	187
1986	4,178	4,192	173
1987	4,220	4,114	279
1988	5,659	5,610	328
<b>UPSTATE COUNTIES</b>			
1985	7,132	7,343	243
1986	7,476	7,441	278
1987	8,331	8,255	354
1988	10,980	10,942	392

*Note: Statewide totals include cases from non-New York State agencies not included in the three geographical areas.*

- Since 1985, an increasing number of children were reported missing to the New York State Missing Children Register. There were 25,318 cases of missing children reported in 1988, representing an increase of 47 percent from the 17,232 cases reported in 1985. Part of this increase is due to the broadened definition of a missing child to include 16 and 17 year olds which began in September of 1987. **However, reporting still increased 10 percent between 1985 and 1988 even when cases involving 16 and 17 year olds are excluded (from 17,232 cases in 1985 to 19,018 in 1988).** The greatest increase occurred between 1987 and 1988 (+39% total, or +17% excluding 16 and 17 year olds). This rise in case reporting may be a function of improved reporting to the Register rather than a rise in the number of actual incidents.

- The largest growth in reported cases between 1985 and 1988 occurred in New York City (+67%). Most recently, the total number of cases rose 54 percent between 1987 and 1988. When adjusted for the addition of 16 and 17 year olds, the number of reported cases rose 27 percent, from 4,945 in 1987 to 6,272 cases in 1988. Because of this large increase, New York City represented a slightly larger proportion of the total reported cases in 1988 (34%) than in 1985 (30%).
- The non-New York City areas also experienced an increase in missing children reports although more modest than in the City. Reports rose 38 percent during the four year period (from 12,032 in 1985 to 16,639 in 1988) and 33 percent between 1987 and 1988. When adjusted for the addition of 16 and 17 year olds the increase becomes 12 percent (from 11,369 in 1987 to 12,746 in 1988).

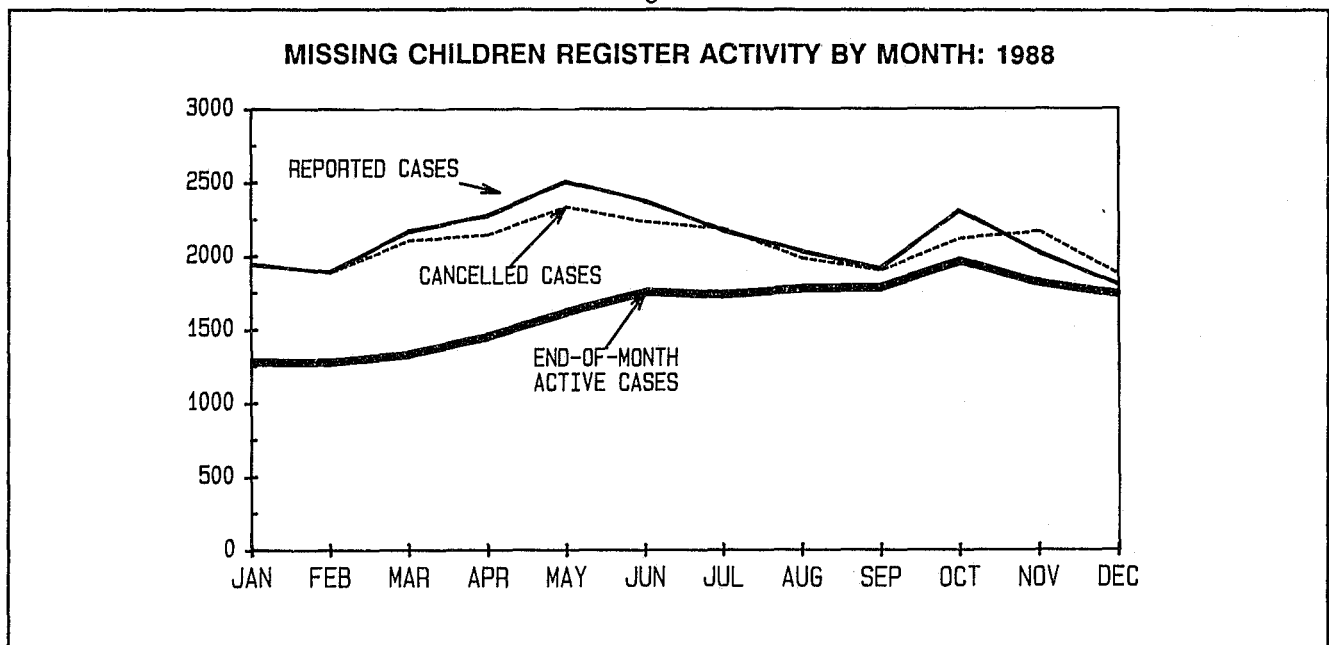
## 1988 REPORTING ACTIVITY

Table 2

<b>MONTHLY REPORTING VOLUME TO THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER 1988</b>			
<u>MONTH</u>	<u>CASES REPORTED</u>	<u>CASES CLOSED</u>	<u>END-OF-MONTH CASES ACTIVE</u>
JANUARY	1,938	1,948	1,280
FEBRUARY	1,883	1,887	1,276
MARCH	2,159	2,105	1,330
APRIL	2,266	2,145	1,451
MAY	2,498	2,333	1,616
JUNE	2,369	2,230	1,755
JULY	2,165	2,184	1,736
AUGUST	2,025	1,983	1,778
SEPTEMBER	1,905	1,899	1,784
OCTOBER	2,299	2,118	1,965
NOVEMBER	2,016	2,166	1,815
DECEMBER	1,795	1,872	1,738
<b>1988 TOTAL</b>	<b>25,318</b>	<b>24,870</b>	<b>-</b>

- The volume of cases reported to the Register fluctuated by month. Case entries rose somewhat steadily from January to May where they peaked at 2,498 cases. Case reporting activity then declined during the summer months and rose again in October (2,299).
- A smaller number of cases (24,870) were closed and removed from the Register during 1988 than were entered, resulting in a 35 percent increase in the active caseload at the end of 1988 compared with 1987. Overall, an average of 1,627 cases of missing children were under active investigation at the end of each month.

Figure 1



## COUNTY REPORTING ACTIVITY

Table 3

COUNTY REPORTING ACTIVITY TO THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER: 1988				
County	Cases Active 12/31/87	Cases Reported 1988	Cases Closed 1988	Cases Active 12/31/88
Albany	23	926	930	27
Allegany	0	27	27	0
Broome	2	224	220	6
Cattaraugus	1	80	76	5
Cayuga	1	93	93	1
Chautauqua	3	263	258	8
Chemung	9	255	254	10
Chenango	0	33	33	0
Clinton	0	60	60	0
Columbia	4	139	136	7
Cortland	2	47	49	0
Delaware	6	58	61	3
Dutchess	30	665	683	12
Erie	43	927	922	48
Essex	0	22	22	0
Franklin	0	18	17	1
Fulton	5	75	76	4
Genesee	1	78	78	1
Greene	1	13	13	1
Hamilton	0	0	0	0
Herkimer	0	48	46	2
Jefferson	4	105	107	2
Lewis	0	10	10	0
Livingston	2	9	11	0
Madison	0	57	57	0
Monroe	49	1,762	1,758	53
Montgomery	3	32	30	5
Nassau	46	1,305	1,298	53
Niagara	21	272	273	20
Oneida	6	389	386	9
Onondaga	41	1,232	1,231	42
Ontario	0	102	99	3
Orange	15	461	453	23
Orleans	2	79	81	0
Oswego	8	94	100	2
Otsego	2	42	42	2
Putnam	4	89	92	1
Rensselaer	7	234	230	11
Rockland	62	477	484	55
St. Lawrence	0	77	77	0
Saratoga	4	251	242	13
Schenectady	19	615	605	29
Schoharie	0	13	13	0
Schuyler	0	7	7	0
Seneca	0	55	55	0
Steuben	1	122	122	1
Suffolk	43	2,472	2,435	80
Sullivan	2	44	45	1
Tioga	0	32	31	1
Tompkins	2	145	144	3
Ulster	10	344	345	9
Warren	0	46	46	0
Washington	2	41	43	0
Wayne	2	108	109	1
Westchester	128	1,405	1,393	140
Wyoming	1	14	14	1
Yates	0	12	12	0
New York City*	655	8,672	8,310	1,017
DCJS Clearinghouse	40	34	18	24
Non-NYS Agencies	2	7	8	1
<b>State Total</b>	<b>1,290</b>	<b>25,318</b>	<b>24,870</b>	<b>1,738</b>

\* Includes Bronx, Kings, New York, Queens and Richmond Counties.

- The majority of cases were reported from the State's largest urban areas. Suffolk County reported the highest volume of cases (2,472) during 1988, followed by Monroe (1,762), Westchester (1,405), Nassau (1,305) and Onondaga (1,232). New York City reported 8,672 cases, but the counties within New York City do not report separately to the Register. Hamilton County was the only area not to report any cases of missing children during 1988. Overall, 18 counties each had fewer than 50 reported cases (down from 24 such counties in 1987).

- Register activity reported from the DCJS Clearinghouse include cases involving special circumstances ("Hague" cases involving international abductions) and cases which originated out of state but were entered into the New York State system to broaden publicity and expedite identification if the child is located.

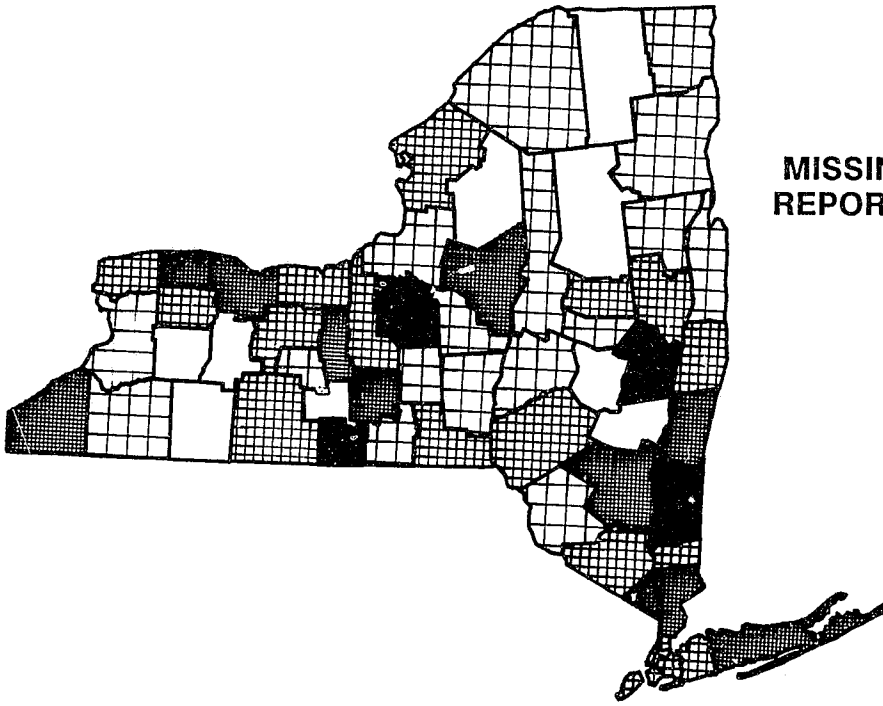
- The rate of missing children reports per 1,000 children aged 17 and under in New York State was 5.8 in 1988. Schenectady County had the highest reporting rate (18.0) among the counties, followed by Albany (14.8), Dutchess (10.5), Onondaga (10.5) and Chemung (10.4) counties.



Figure 2

**NEW YORK STATE  
MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER  
REPORTING RATES BY COUNTY  
1988**

(per 1,000 children)



**10.1 - 18.0**

Schenectady	18.0
Albany	14.3
Dutchess	10.5
Onondaga	10.5
Chemung	10.4

**4.1 - 6.0**

Orange	6.0	Genesee	4.9
Rensselaer	6.0	Wayne	4.5
Saratoga	5.8	Nassau	4.5
Steuben	5.7	Cayuga	4.4
Fulton	5.2	Broome	4.4
New York City	5.0	Ontario	4.4
Niagara	5.0	Jefferson	4.3
Delaware	4.9	Putnam	4.2

**6.1 - 10.0**

Monroe	9.8
Columbia	9.5
Ulster	8.9
Orleans	7.6
Westchester	7.4
Suffolk	7.2
Chautauqua	7.1
Rockland	7.0
Seneca	6.8
Tompkins	6.5
Oneida	6.1

**2.1 - 4.0**

Erie	3.9	Clinton	2.8
Cortland	3.6	Sullivan	2.7
Cattaraugus	3.3	Essex	2.5
Warren	3.2	Montgomery	2.5
Otsego	2.8	St. Lawrence	2.4
Washington	2.8	Chenango	2.4
Oswego	2.8	Tioga	2.3
Herkimer	2.8	Yates	2.2

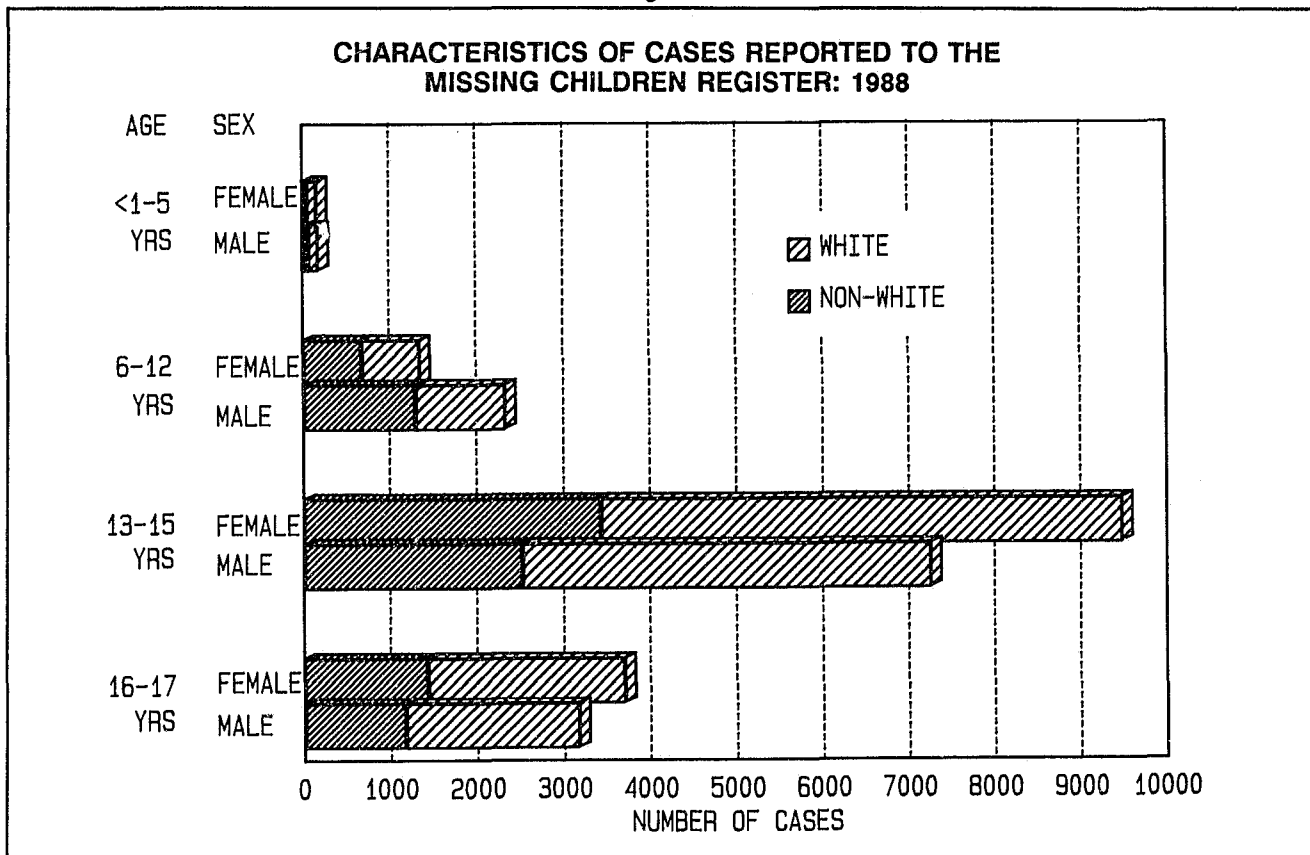
**0.0 - 2.0**

Allegany	1.8	Greene	1.3
Schoharie	1.6	Wyoming	1.3
Schuyler	1.5	Livingston	0.6
Franklin	1.5	Hamilton	0.0
Lewis	1.4		

Population figures derived from the New York State Department of Commerce, Official Population Projections for New York State Counties: 1985.

**MISSING CHILDREN CASES REPORTED IN 1988**

Figure 3



- Statewide, older children accounted for the largest proportion of missing children cases. During 1988, 61 percent of reported missing children cases involved 13 to 15 year olds, and 25 percent involved 16 and 17 year olds. Children aged 6 to 12 years comprised 13 percent, while reports of missing pre-school aged children were relatively rare (approximately one percent). Missing children tended to be slightly younger from New York City as 18 percent of the City's cases involved children under 13 compared with 12 percent in the Suburban New York City and Upstate areas.
- Just over half (58%) of the reported cases involved females and two times as many cases involved white children (62%) as non-white children (38%). Children reported missing from New York City were somewhat more likely to be females (61% of reported cases) than outside the City (56%) and much more likely to be black (53%) than the Suburban New York City cases (35%) or Upstate (24%).
- The single largest category of missing children cases were 15 year old white females who comprised 11 percent of the total cases reported during 1988.
- Of the 25,318 cases entered during 1988, 95 percent (24,111) were closed by the end of the year.

Table 4

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CASES REPORTED TO THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER  
1988**

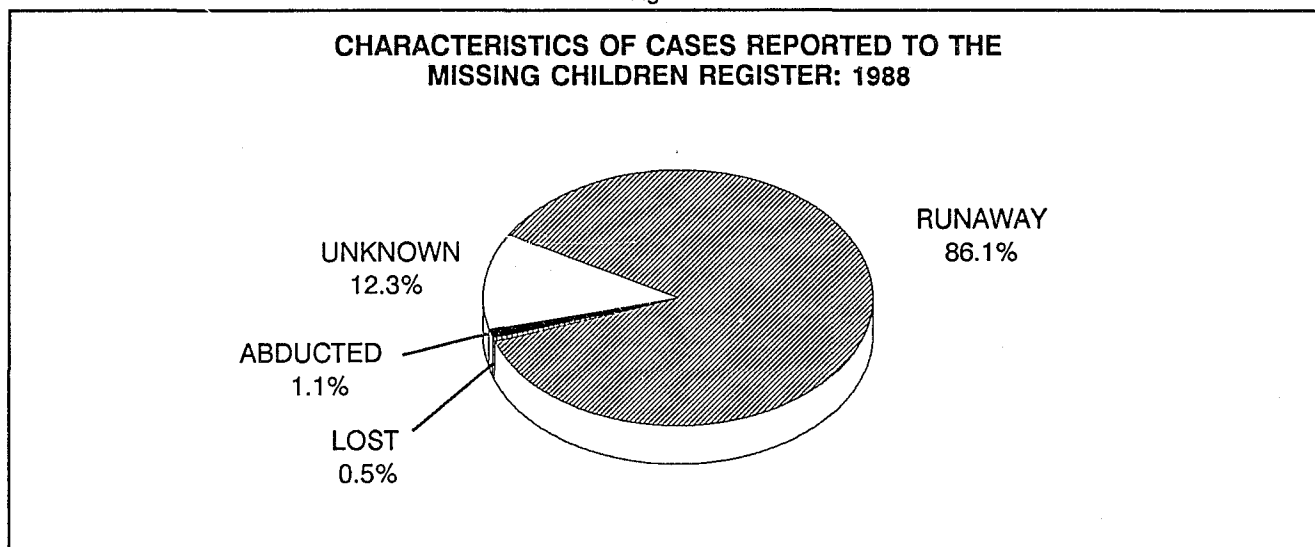
	<u>STATE TOTAL*</u>	<u>NEW YORK CITY</u>	<u>SUBURBAN NYC</u>	<u>UPSTATE</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,318</b>	<b>8,673</b>	<b>5,659</b>	<b>10,980</b>
<b>AGE:</b>				
< 1 - 5	313	68	90	155
6 - 12	3,256	1,460	548	1,245
13 - 15	15,449	4,745	3,498	7,204
16 - 17	6,300	2,400	1,523	2,376
<b>SEX:</b>				
MALE	10,612	3,347	2,535	4,727
FEMALE	14,706	5,326	3,124	6,253
<b>RACE:</b>				
WHITE	15,600	3,769	3,593	8,233
BLACK	9,173	4,555	1,994	2,623
OTHER/UNKNOWN	545	349	72	124
<b>CATEGORY:</b>				
LOST	124	1	38	85
RUNAWAY	21,795	7,669	5,005	9,118
ACQUAINTANCE ABDUCTION	30	2	8	17
FAMILIAL ABDUCTION	246	50	57	139
STRANGER ABDUCTION	5**	2	0	3**
UNKNOWN	3,118	949	551	1,618

\*Statewide totals include cases from non-New York State agencies not included in the three geographical areas.

\*\* Represents three cases entered by the DCJS Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse originating out of state and placed on the Register under agreement to provide assistance and publicize certain cases.

## MISSING CHILDREN CASES REPORTED IN 1988

Figure 4



- The overwhelming majority of cases entered into the Register involved suspected runaways (86% or 21,795). Abductions accounted for one percent (281) of all cases, and less than one percent (124) of the cases were due to the child wandering away and becoming lost. The circumstances of disappearance were not known in 12 percent (3,118) of the cases entered during 1988.

### RUNAWAYS

- Of the 21,795 cases reported as suspected runaways, 63 percent involved children between the ages of 13 and 15, and 25 percent involved children between the ages of 16 and 17. Children under 13 accounted for 12 percent of the runaway cases.
- Females represented a higher percentage of the suspected runaways (58%) than males (42%), and white children outnumbered non-white two to one (63% vs. 27% respectively).
- Thirty-five percent of the runaway cases were reported from New York City, 23 percent from Suburban New York City, and 42 percent from the Upstate area.

### ABDUCTIONS

- Of the 281 cases where abduction was suspected, the overwhelming majority involved abduction by a non-custodial family member (88%) or by someone acquainted with the child (11%).
- Cases of stranger abduction were extremely rare with a total of five cases reported to the Register during 1988. Three of these cases were abductions that occurred outside of New York State and were placed on the Register under agreements with other states to publicize certain cases. Thus, **stranger abductions were suspected to have occurred in only two cases of children missing from New York State during 1988.** Both of these were New York City cases.
- Abductions typically involved very young children. Over half of the children who were suspected victims of abduction were under six years old (56%), and 36 percent involved children between 6 and 12 years old.
- Suspected abductions of females (55%) occurred slightly more often than males (45%), and three-quarters of the cases involved white children. Over half (57%) of the total abductions were reported from the Upstate area.

Table 5

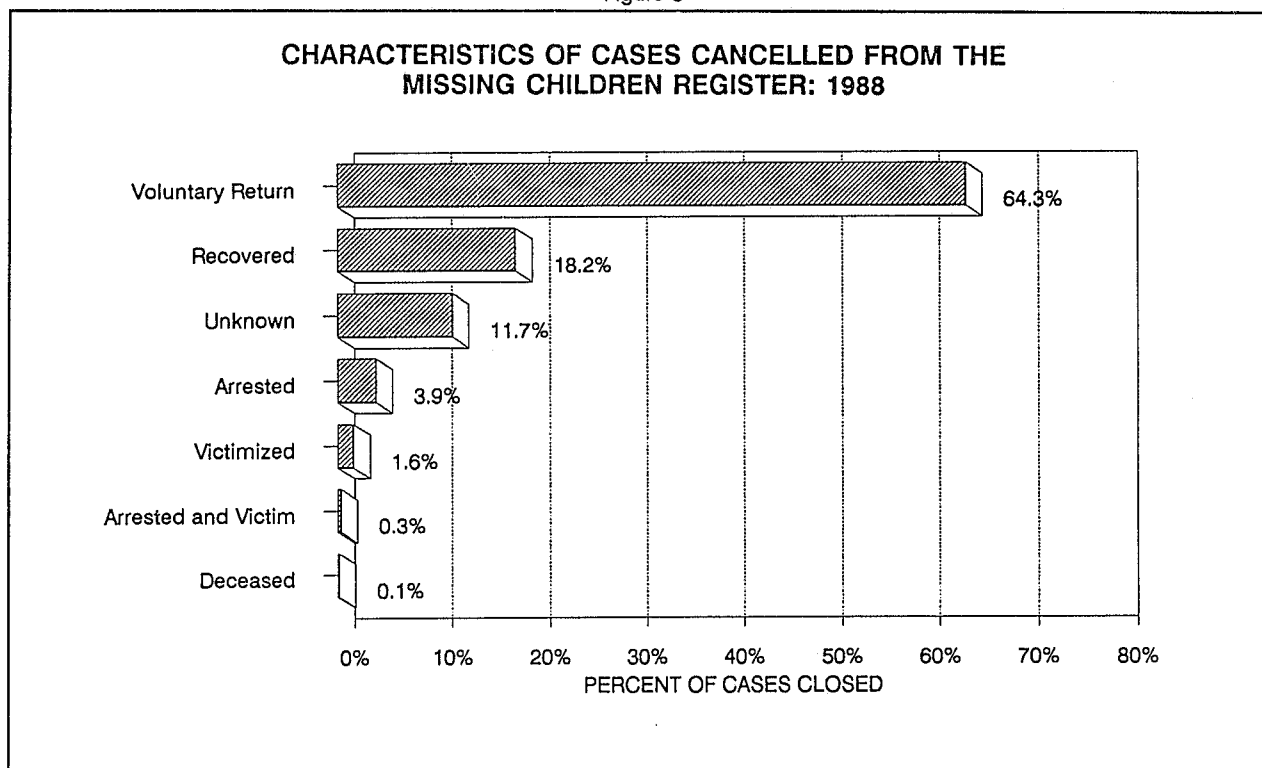
**CHARACTERISTICS OF CASES REPORTED TO THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER  
1988**

	Lost/ Wand. Away	Runaway	Acquaintance Abduction	Familial Abduction	Stranger Abduction	Unknown	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>124</b> (0.5%)	<b>21,795</b> (86.1%)	<b>30</b> (0.1%)	<b>246</b> (1.0%)	<b>5</b> (0.0%)	<b>3,118</b> (12.3%)	<b>25,318</b> (100.0%)
<b>AGE*</b>							
< 1 - 5	12	35	13	143	1	109	313
6 - 12	42	2,613	11	88	2	500	3,256
13 - 15	42	13,792	3	11	2	1,599	15,449
16 - 17	28	5,355	3	4	0	910	6,300
<b>SEX</b>							
MALE	49	9,138	12	112	2	1,299	10,612
FEMALE	75	12,657	18	134	3	1,819	14,706
<b>RACE</b>							
WHITE	90	13,429	19	186	3	1,873	15,600
BLACK	31	7,895	9	55	2	1,181	9,173
OTHER/UNK.	3	471	2	5	0	64	545

\*Age measured at time of case entry.

## MISSING CHILDREN CASES CLOSED IN 1988

Figure 5



- There were 24,870 missing children cases closed during 1988. These cancellations predominately involved cases that were also entered during 1988 (24,111) and the remaining 759 cases involved more long term cases that had been reported to the Register prior to 1988.
- Almost two-thirds (64% or 15,995) of the missing children cases were closed because the child voluntarily returned home after being reported missing. Eighteen percent of the cases involved recovery through law enforcement efforts, and an additional four percent resulted from the child's arrest for involvement in criminal activity. Some form of exploitation or criminal victimization was reported to have occurred in two percent of the cases, and fourteen children were found deceased. The circumstances surrounding the recovery of children in 2,908 cases were not known.
- Runaways accounted for 86 percent of the cases closed during 1988. An arrest of a runaway occurred in 950 cases (four percent), with 65 of those cases reporting some victimization occurred while missing. There were six runaway cases which resulted in death.
- While males accounted for 42 percent of the closed cases in 1988, they accounted for a disproportionate amount of the cases which resulted in arrests (53%).

Table 6

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CASES CANCELLED FROM THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER  
1988**

	<u>STATE TOTAL</u> *	<u>NEW YORK CITY</u>	<u>SUBURBAN NYC</u>	<u>UPSTATE</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,870</b>	<b>8,311</b>	<b>5,610</b>	<b>10,942</b>
<b>AGE:**</b>				
< 1 - 5	282	56	81	145
6 - 12	3,084	1,343	533	1,204
13 - 15	15,008	4,505	3,419	7,082
16 - 17	6,407	2,358	1,564	2,484
> 17	89	49	13	27
<b>SEX:</b>				
MALE	10,401	3,201	2,488	4,708
FEMALE	14,469	5,110	3,122	6,234
<b>RACE:</b>				
WHITE	15,399	3,599	3,583	8,211
BLACK	8,945	4,378	1,959	2,607
OTHER/UNKNOWN	526	334	68	124
<b>CIRCUMSTANCES OF RECOVERY:</b>				
VOLUNTARY RETURN	15,995	6,694	4,034	5,264
RECOVERED	4,515	1,400	583	2,532
VICTIMIZED	406	10	95	298
ARRESTED	958	89	187	682
ARRESTED AND VICTIMIZED	74	5	7	62
DECEASED	14	4	1	9
UNKNOWN	2,908	109	703	2,095

\*Statewide totals include cases from non-New York State agencies not included in the three geographical areas.

\*\*Age measured at time of case cancellation.

Table 7

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CASES CANCELLED FROM THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER  
1988**

	Voluntary Return	Recovered by Law Enf.	Recovered, Victimized	Arrested	Arrested, Victimized	Deceased	Other/ Unknown	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,995</b> (64.3%)	<b>4,515</b> (18.2%)	<b>406</b> (1.6%)	<b>958</b> (3.9%)	<b>74</b> (0.3%)	<b>14</b> (0.1%)	<b>2,908</b> (11.7%)	<b>24,870</b> (100.0%)
<b>AGE:*</b>								
< 1 - 5	118	61	30	5	1	0	67	282
6 - 12	2,140	570	39	38	6	1	290	3,084
13 - 15	9,584	2,803	247	667	53	7	1,647	15,008
16 - 17	4,105	1,068	90	246	13	6	879	6,407
> 17	48	13	0	2	1	0	25	89
<b>SEX:</b>								
MALE	6,599	1,884	171	513	33	11	1,190	10,401
FEMALE	9,396	2,631	235	445	41	3	1,718	14,469
<b>RACE:</b>								
WHITE	9,449	2,994	301	674	60	11	1,910	15,399
BLACK	6,165	1,445	99	268	14	3	951	8,945
OTHER/UNK.	381	76	6	16	0	0	47	526

\*Age measured at time of case cancellation.



Table 8

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CASES CANCELLED FROM THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER  
BY ENTRY TYPE: 1988**

Entry Type	Voluntary Return	Recovered by Law Enf.	Recovered, Victimized	Arrested	Arrested, Victimized	Deceased	Other/ Unknown	TOTAL
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,995</b>	<b>4,515</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2,908</b>	<b>24,870</b>
<b>Runaway</b>	<b>13,889</b>	<b>3,952</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2,256</b>	<b>21,377</b>
<b>Lost/ Wand. Away</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>Familial Abduction</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Acquaintance Abduction</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Stranger Abduction</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>1,963</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>3,149</b>

## LENGTH OF TIME ON THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER

Table 9

DAYS BETWEEN CASE ENTRY AND CANCELLATION FOR CASES CLOSED DURING 1988		
Days	No. of Cases	Cumulative Percent Cancelled
<1	4,607	18.5%
1	3,971	34.5%
2	1,750	41.5%
3	1,348	46.9%
4	1,183	51.7%
5	995	55.7%
6	879	59.2%
7	827	62.6%
8	624	65.1%
9	528	67.2%
10	460	69.0%
11	456	70.9%
12	389	72.4%
13	381	74.0%
14	345	75.4%
15	292	76.5%
16	251	77.5%
17	206	78.4%
18	215	79.2%
19	213	80.1%
20	202	80.9%
21	187	81.7%
22	157	82.3%
23	144	82.9%
24	152	83.5%
25	133	84.0%
26	123	84.5%
27	134	85.1%
28	127	85.6%
29	113	86.0%
30	117	86.5%
31-60	1,829	93.8%
61-90	694	96.6%
91-120	551	98.8%
121-365	203	99.7%
366+	84	99.9%
TOTAL	24,870	100.0%

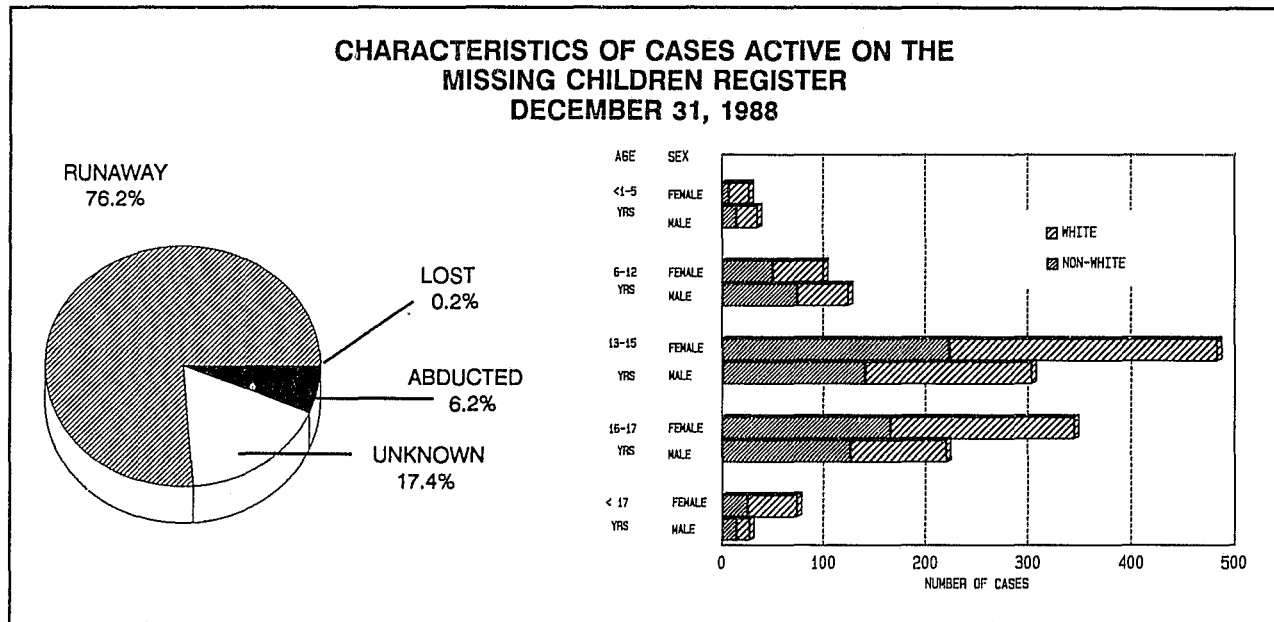
- Cases remained active on the Register a relatively short period of time. For the 24,870 cases closed during 1988, the median\* length of time between the reporting and cancellation of a case on the Register was 4 days.
  
- Nineteen percent of all the closed cases were removed from the Register on the same day that they were entered.
  
- Approximately two-thirds of the closed cases were cancelled from the Register within one week of entry.
  
- The median time elapsed between the entry and cancellation of a case was considerably longer in New York City (10 days) than in the Suburban New York City (2 days) and Upstate (3 days) areas. This variation may be due to different cancellation procedures in New York City rather than a real variation in procedures for locating missing children.
  
- Cases involving familial abductions typically took the longest to close (6 days) compared with cases involving runaways (4 days), acquaintance abductions (3 days) or those who were lost or wandered away (less than one day).

\*The median represents the midpoint of a ranked distribution. That is, half of the cases were on the Register longer than four days and half were on for less than four days.

## CASES ACTIVE ON DECEMBER 31, 1988

A profile of cases active on the last day of the year provides a snapshot of a typical caseload under investigation on a given day. This profile includes both the short term cases that happened to be active on the last day of 1988, and a relatively small group of longer term cases that may have been entered into the Register prior to 1988.

Figures 6-7



- There were 1,738 cases in active status on December 31, 1988. Approximately 84 percent involved children over 12 years old. Of these, 101 were cases in which the individual was entered as a missing child (less than 18 years old) but was now beyond 17 years old and remained missing.
- Almost two-thirds (1,029) of the cases were reported as missing females. White children accounted for slightly more than half (52%) of the active end-of-year caseload. Seventy-six percent of the cases involved suspected runaways. Six percent involved abductions, of which the majority were familial abductions (100 out of the 107 abduction cases active on December 31, 1988).
- When compared to the Register entry proportions, these numbers indicate that cases involving abductions and younger children are not resolved as quickly as those cases involving runaways and older children. This is demonstrated by the median length of time that cases were active. For all cases open on December 31, 1988 the median was 73 days. The median for active cases involving familial abductions was considerably longer (186 days) than the median for active cases involving runaways (52 days). For cases involving children under six years old, the median length of active status was 127 days compared with 84 days for six to twelve year olds, 41 days for 13 to 15 year olds and 108 days for active cases involving 16 to 17 year olds.
- New York City accounted for an increasing percentage of the statewide active caseload on the end-of-year active caseload in 1988 (59%) compared with 1987 (51%). Cases from the Upstate area constituted 23 percent of the cases active on December 31, 1988 and the remaining 18 percent were from Suburban New York City. Overall, 17 counties in the State had no active missing children cases on the last day of 1988. (See Table 3).

Table 10

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CASES ACTIVE ON THE MISSING CHILDREN REGISTER**  
December 31, 1988

	<u>STATE TOTAL</u> *	<u>NEW YORK CITY</u>	<u>SUBURBAN NYC</u>	<u>UPSTATE</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,738</b>	<b>1,017</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>392</b>
<b>AGE:**</b>				
< 1 - 5	62	28	15	19
6 - 12	224	144	27	53
13 - 15	786	428	158	200
16 - 17	565	367	99	98
> 17	101	50	29	22
<b>SEX:</b>				
MALE	709	379	178	151
FEMALE	1,029	638	150	241
<b>RACE:</b>				
WHITE	900	459	167	273
BLACK	784	517	154	113
OTHER/UNKNOWN	54	41	7	6
<b>CATEGORY:</b>				
LOST	3	0	2	1
RUNAWAY	1,325	807	243	275
ACQUAINTANCE ABDUCTION	3	1	1	1
FAMILIAL ABDUCTION	100	35	19	46
STRANGER ABDUCTION	4***	1	0	3***
UNKNOWN	303	173	63	66

\*Statewide totals include cases from non-New York State agencies not included in the three geographical areas.

\*\*Age measured on date of active status as December 31, 1988. Cases where the child was reported missing (under 18 years old) but remained missing beyond emancipation are shown in the greater than 17 years category.

\*\*\*Represents three cases entered by the DCJS Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse originating out of state and placed on the Register under agreement to provide assistance and publicize certain cases.

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## SUMMARY

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Reports of missing children rose a dramatic 47 percent since the introduction of the Register in 1984, however much of the increase may be due to improvements in reporting and increased sensitivity and awareness of child safety issues. While large numbers of cases were reported, the majority were also cancelled from the Register within a relatively short period of time. Most of the missing children cases involved older females. As a result of enhancements to the Missing Children Register and its ability to capture greater detail regarding the circumstances of disappearance and methods of recovery, we know far more today about the nature and extent of the problem of missing youth in New York State. While cases involving stranger abduction have typically generated the most publicity and concern, these cases are statistically very rare. Almost nine out of every ten cases of children reported missing were classified as runaways. Although the majority of these runaways return home voluntarily and not as a result of law enforcement investigation, both the causes and consequences of running away suggest that these youths are particularly at risk. A National Center for Missing and Exploited Children study<sup>1</sup> estimated that over forty percent of youth run away to escape from the physical or sexual abuse they had experienced. Additionally, data show that many of them either become perpetrators or victims of crime while missing. Thus, the problems of runaways elicit response from numerous institutions beyond the family including law enforcement, social services, juvenile justice, and community agencies. Through a new understanding of the missing children problem gained by information captured by the Missing Children Register and efforts by the Missing and Exploited Children Clearinghouse, New York State is better suited to respond to the many ramifications of missing and exploited youths.

<sup>1</sup>See Burgess, Ann W., *Youth at Risk*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1986.



Operators License Number(OLN) \_\_\_\_\_ License State(OLS) \_\_\_\_\_  
 License Year(OLY) \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle License Plate(LIC) \_\_\_\_\_ License Plate State(LIS) \_\_\_\_\_  
 License Year (LIY) \_\_\_\_\_ License Type (LIT) \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle Identification Number(VIN) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vehicle Year(VYR) \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle Make(VMA) \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle Model(VMO) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vehicle Style(VST) \_\_\_\_\_ Vehicle Color(VCO) \_\_\_\_\_

BLOOD TYPE(BLT) CIRCUMCISION(CRC) FOOTPRINTS AVAILABLE(FPA) BODY X-RAYS AVAILABLE(BXR)  
 [ ] APOS [ ] ANEG [ ] AUNK [ ] (C) Circumcised [ ] (Y) Yes [ ] (N) No [ ] (F) Full body x-rays  
 [ ] ABPOS [ ] ABNEG [ ] ABUNK [ ] (N) Not Circumcised [ ] (P) Partial body x-rays  
 [ ] BPOS [ ] BNEG [ ] BUNK [ ] (U) Unknown [ ] (N) No body x-rays  
 [ ] OPOS [ ] ONEG [ ] OUNK

Vision Care Specialist: Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Glasses: [ ] Yes [ ] No Vision Prescription (VRX) Right Eye: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact Lens: [ ] Yes [ ] No Left Eye: \_\_\_\_\_

Jewelry Type (JWT):  
 [ ] (AB) Ankle Bracelet [ ] (BB) Belt Buckle [ ] (BP) Broach/Pin [ ] (CL) Cigarette Lighter  
 [ ] (CO) Comb [ ] (CU) Cuff Links [ ] (ER) Earring [ ] (KC) Key Chain  
 [ ] (MC) Money Clip [ ] (NE) Necklace [ ] (PK) Pocket Knife [ ] (PC) Pocket Watch Chain  
 [ ] (RI) Ring [ ] (TC) Tie Clasp [ ] (WP) Wallet/Purse [ ] (WA) Watch  
 [ ] (WB) Wrist Bracelet

Jewelry Description and Location(JWL): \_\_\_\_\_

AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE, DESCRIBE THE SITUATION SURROUNDING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THIS INDIVIDUAL:  
 Select and circle one code from column I and one code from column II for ALL missing persons who are  
less than 18 years old. For missing persons 18 and older, only one code from column II may be used.

COLUMN I		COLUMN II	
CODE	MEANING	CODE	MEANING
"L"	LOST - Lost or wandered away.	"D"	DISABLED - Proven mental/physical disability exists or is senile.
"R"	RUNAWAY - Voluntarily missing.	"E"	ENDANGERED - In the company of another person under circumstances indicating endangered safety.
"A"	AQUAINTANCE - Abduction by friend, neighbor, babysitter, etc.	"I"	INVOLUNTARY - Disappearance considered NOT voluntary.
"F"	FAMILIAL - Abduction by parent or relative.	"V"	VICTIM - Disaster or catastrophe victim, either natural or man-made.
"S"	STRANGER ABDUCTION - Abductor NOT known to family or guardian.	"J"	JUVENILE - Use only if <u>less than 18 years old</u> and codes "D", "E", "I" or "V" do not apply.
"U"	UNKNOWN - Missing under unknown circumstances.	"O"	OTHER - Use only if 18 or older and codes "D", "E", "I" or "V" do not apply.

**CAUTION:** The "O" code will cause the record to be entered in DCJS only. It will NOT be forwarded to NCIC.

BEFORE A MISSING PERSON ENTRY CAN BE MADE VIA NYSPIN, CERTIFICATION VERIFYING THE MISSING PERSON'S NAME, DATE OF BIRTH AND CONDITION UNDER WHICH THE PERSON IS REPORTED MISSING AS DESCRIBED ABOVE MUST BE OBTAINED FROM A PARENT, GUARDIAN OR OTHER AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE.

I CERTIFY THAT, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THE INFORMATION I HAVE PROVIDED TO THE INVESTIGATING POLICE AGENCY AND TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT, IS CORRECT AND THE PERSON I HAVE REPORTED AS MISSING IS MISSING UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED BY THE CODE(S) CIRCLED ABOVE.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Missing Person \_\_\_\_\_

Signature & Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Shield Station \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Signature & Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Shield Station \_\_\_\_\_ Approved \_\_\_\_\_