

Based on a review of current data, here are several key statistics on child abduction and missing children in the United States:

General Statistics and Recovery Rates

- In 2024, the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) received 349,557 reports of missing youth.¹
- A 2002 federal study estimated that 99.8% of children reported missing were located or returned home alive.²
- In 2024, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) assisted with 29,568 reports of missing children and reported an overall recovery rate of 91% for those cases.³

Abduction Case Types

Data from NCMEC in 2024 shows a distinct breakdown of case types, with abductions making up a small percentage of overall reports:

- Endangered Runaway: 27,293 cases.³
- Family Abduction: 1,171 cases.³
- Non-Family Abduction: 104 cases, which represents only 1% of the missing children cases reported to NCMEC.³
- Lost, Injured, or Otherwise Missing (LIM): 164 cases.³

Perpetrator Relationship

Contrary to common perception, abductions by strangers are rare.

- In one analysis, 49% of child abductions were by family members, 27% by acquaintances, and only 24% by individuals unknown to the victim.⁵
- An FBI analysis in fiscal year 2010 found that 70% of child abduction cases involved an offender with a known relationship to the victim, while Registered Sex Offenders (RSOs) were involved in less than 1% of cases.⁶

Timeline and Outcomes

While most missing children cases resolve quickly and safely, a very different timeline exists for the rare, high-risk abductions that result in murder.

- In a study of child abduction murders, 76% of the children were killed within three hours of the abduction.²
- 89% of these children died within 24 hours of their disappearance.²
- In nearly 60% of these cases, there was a delay of more than two hours between the time a caretaker realized the child was missing and the police were notified.²

AMBER Alert Data

- The AMBER Alert system has been credited with the successful recovery of 1,268 children as of December 31, 2024.³
- In 2024, 68 children were reported as rescued due to an activated alert.³