

establish procedures to begin an investigation as soon as a report is received; and

(4) Children, parents, educators, and others should be educated about child protection.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Family Law

9-401-

~~THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT:~~

~~(1) THIS STATE HAS A DUTY TO LOCATE AND PROTECT CHILDREN WHO ARE REPORTED MISSING;~~

~~(2) THE NUMBER OF MISSING CHILDREN HAS INCREASED, AND THIS PROBLEM REQUIRES A STATEWIDE SYSTEM FOR EXCHANGING INFORMATION, A CENTRAL REPOSITORY FOR INFORMATION ON MISSING CHILDREN, AND SPECIAL TRAINING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL;~~

~~(3) THE FIRST 24 TO 48 HOURS AFTER A CHILD IS REPORTED MISSING ARE CRUCIAL, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTIGATING REPORTS OF MISSING CHILDREN SHOULD ESTABLISH PROCEDURES TO BEGIN AN INVESTIGATION AS SOON AS A REPORT IS RECEIVED; AND~~

~~(4) CHILDREN, PARENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHERS SHOULD BE EDUCATED ABOUT CHILD PROTECTION.~~

9-402: 9-401.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) "LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY" MEANS A STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPAL POLICE DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY, OR A SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT.

(C) "MISSING CHILD" MEANS A PERSON WHO IS:

(1) UNDER THE AGE OF 18 YEARS; AND

(2) THE SUBJECT OF A MISSING PERSONS REPORT FILED WITH A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY IN THIS STATE AND WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN.

9-403: 9-402.

(A) ON RECEIPT OF A REPORT REGARDING A MISSING CHILD BY A LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY SHALL IMMEDIATELY DETERMINE IF: