

# Parental Abduction: 10 Ways to Reduce the Risk

1. Try to stay out of court over parenting issues and use mediation. Parents are more likely to follow an agreement that they were involved in rather than a judge's order. Incorporate any mediated agreement into a court order signed by a judge.
2. If there are serious problems between you and your co-parent, you first must obtain legal, permanent or temporary custody of your child. If necessary, consider getting a restraining order, supervised visitation, and/or posting bond before visits.
3. Once you have custody, get a passport for your child. Notify the Passport Office that your child may not be taken out of the country without your written permission. Ask the Passport Office to mail the passport to you with a return receipt requested.
4. Keep the lines of communication open, even when it's difficult. Be non-confrontational. Involve your co-parent and share the decision making process. A co-parent that feels involved is less likely to feel the need to turn to abduction.
5. If the co-parent threatens to abduct, have the threats witnessed or taped. Keep a log of events. This can help incorporate serious safeguards into custody and/or visitation orders.
6. Keep and maintain a list of current vital information about your child and the co-parent, including social security number, license number, license plate, credit information, job information, as well as contact information for the co-parent's friends and family.
7. If your child attends school, daycare, camp, or stays with a sitter, submit a certified copy of your custody order with a photo of the non-custodial parent to the appropriate person. Also explain in writing who is allowed to take the child from school.
8. Talk to your child about what to do in case of an abduction. Teach them your full name, address and phone number. Show your child how to make long distance calls and call home collect. Let your child know that they have the right to contact you no matter who forbids it.
9. Do not tie parenting time to child support. This causes tension and encourages them to abduct and flee. Follow court orders or seek emergency court protection.
10. Know the profile of a potential child abductor, they can be impulsive, erratic, easily angered, hostile, revengeful or abusive. An abductor may also have skills which can support them while on the move, or have someone to support them financially. A potential abductor also has a poor record of employment and few business responsibilities.



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