



Montgomery County, Maryland  
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE



# Autism, Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities Alzheimer's, Dementia Unit

Providing a "Layered Approach" to Safety,  
Awareness and Action Through Education, Outreach,  
Empowerment, Follow Up, and Response

# Autism/IDD/Alzheimer's Wandering Prevention Safety Tips

- ✓ **Do Not Hesitate to CALL 911 - Do Not Wait.** In some instances, families will search for their missing loved ones alone and feel as if they can't call 911 for assistance. If you are searching beyond your yard, call 911. If the loved one is located soon after you call, just call back and let us know. Montgomery County Police handle three to five calls a week for critically at-risk individuals with Autism/IDD/Alzheimers. You are not alone in the sometimes struggle to keep your loved one safe in your home. Waiting to call 911 could lead to tragic results. Have a "script" prepared with pertinent information to relay to 911 call takers and responding officers. If your Autistic loved one will go into bodies of water, please notify the 911 operator.
- ✓ **Install an Alarm of Some Type.** Many times, caregivers are not aware that the loved one has left the home, especially during the evening hours when "sundowning" (waking at all hours of the night) is common. An alarm is also important during the day when caregivers may be distracted. If you can not afford a professionally installed alarm, magnetic door alarms are a good option as well. They are inexpensive and readily available. The alarm is attached with strong tape or a screw to either side of a door frame. When the connections are separated (door opening) it gives off a high decibel alarm. They can be set to chime during hours when a door may be opened more frequently.
- ✓ **Identification.** Make sure that the loved one has some type of identification on them at all times. Writing contact information in permanent ink on as much clothing as possible is a good, cheap idea. However, an ID bracelet is the best option, the rubber or silicone types are the best option. MCPD encourages caregivers, families of individuals with Autism to have the wearer show the bracelet to officers in the community when feasible. This act creates an encounter with law enforcement when the wearer is not under stress. It can reinforce the idea that law enforcement are here to assist when needed. It also makes the officer aware of those with Autism/IDD that live in the area the officers patrol. The familiarization is so important for both the wearer and the officer.
- ✓ **Informing.** We encourage informing neighbors of the situation, if you feel comfortable doing so. We understand that some caregivers might not feel comfortable letting neighbors know that there is an issue. However, a tragedy may be prevented by making them aware of the potential dangers of your loved one wandering alone. You can provide the neighbors with a contact person's cell phone or request they call 911 in the event they think the loved one is in need of assistance.
- ✓ **Consider Swim Lessons.** For caregivers of children with Autism/IDD, teaching your child to swim early could absolutely save their life!





# Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities ELOPEMENT 911 “SCRIPT”

**CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY IN THE EVENT OF AN ELOPEMENT!**

The below 911 Script is to be filled out ahead of time by caregivers of the individual. In the event of an elopement, caregivers can easily relay the important information to the 911 call taker and responding officers.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_ Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

Last seen wearing: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

INSERT CURRENT  
PICTURE HERE IF YOU  
FEEL COMFORTABLE  
SHARING ONE.

General description, past locations found (previous places of residence, employment, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE TURN OVER)



# Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities ELOPEMENT 911 "SCRIPT"

**CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY IN THE EVENT OF AN ELOPEMENT!**

**DON'T WAIT TO CALL 911 – we are your best tool in locating your loved one quickly.**

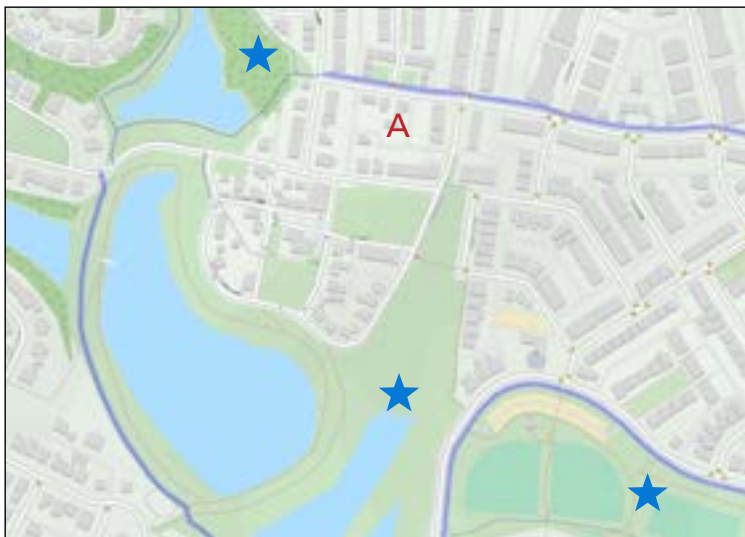
My loved one may do the following should they elope (bolt and run, not respond to name, go to bodies of water, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

My loved one may go to the following destination should they elope (local parks, local businesses, bodies of water, pools, ponds, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

If you encounter my child the following would be helpful for officers to know (they may bolt and run, they may not respond to their name, they may hide, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

It is beneficial to responding officers that you are familiar with potential points of interest for your loved one as well as the locations of bodies of water, especially for individuals with Autism. Please print out and include with your 911 Script a Google map of the area around your home and pin point any potential dangers or possible destinations your loved one may be drawn towards in the event of an elopement/wandering episode.

SAMPLE MAP BELOW:



**A** = Our House  
(12345 Street Name)

**★** = Potential points  
of interest

*Identifying and acknowledging an individual's diagnosis,  
and getting them home quickly and safely.*



# Autism/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

## Neighbor Letter

Please help us keep an eye out for our child:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Who Has Autism/IDD.

He/she is \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

We watch our child very carefully, but sometimes he/she unpredictably wanders away.

If you see our child and he/she is alone please call

\_\_\_\_\_

We are probably already looking for him/her. If you can not reach me at the number above, please also call 911 and tell them that you have found our child.

\_\_\_\_\_ does not speak very well.

Our child does not appreciate danger. He/she might approach a dog or walk into the street without looking. He/she might walk in your house if a door is open.

\_\_\_\_\_ will become lost very easily and not know he/she is lost. If you ask our child a question he will likely not answer.

\_\_\_\_\_ may seem to be deaf. However, our child can hear. But he/she does not appreciate or act upon things that he/she hears or sees. Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

For more information on Autism resources, go to [www.pathfindersforalzheimers.org](http://www.pathfindersforalzheimers.org)

For more information on Down Syndrome resources, go to [www.DSNMC.org](http://www.DSNMC.org)

A PDF of this document can be found at the site below. The provided information can be modified specific to your loved one. [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd)

INSERT CURRENT  
PICTURE HERE IF YOU  
FEEL COMFORTABLE  
SHARING ONE.



# Awareness Through Action



MCPD partners with Pathfinders for Autism in our "Mock Traffic Stop" webinar and in person traffic stops. Click here for upcoming dates <https://pathfindersforautism.org/>



Officers from the MCPD Autism/IDD Unit presenting to schools on community safety.



Officers from the MCPD Autism/IDD Unit and our partnering agencies providing community outreach.



# Understanding Through Recognition



▲ John and his family receiving the MCPD Chiefs' Award at the 2015 MCPD Autism Night Out.



▲ MCPD Officer Kevin Correa and his Dad Manuel.



**Front Cover:** Jake hugging his mother after he gave his keynote speech at the 2015 Annual Autism Night Out Event. Jake is the first and current Chief MCPD Autism Ambassador. From left: MCPD Chief Manger, Police Officer Laurie Reyes and Jake.





# Alzheimers/Dementia

## *Neighbor Letter*

Please watch out for:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Who Has Alzheimer's/Dementia.***

This letter lets your neighbors know that if they see him/her at an unusual time out alone, they should call your cell phone or call 911.

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

What they normally wear: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

INSERT CURRENT  
PICTURE HERE IF YOU  
FEEL COMFORTABLE  
SHARING ONE.

He/she should normally not be out and about alone, if you should see him/her, please don't hesitate to approach him. Please contact my cell phone number if you should see him alone.

We do our best to watch him/her at all times, but occasionally he/she will get out without us and become confused.

Provide any other information you feel comfortable sharing. Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

# MCPD SUPPORTS AUTISM/IDD AWARENESS

An awesome person who has Autism/IDD might be a passenger in this car. In the event of an emergency, check the glove box for more information. For information on how the Montgomery County Police supports Autism/IDD awareness, please visit the following:

 [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd)

 Montgomery County  
Police Department  
(OFFICIAL)



Autism/IDD Vehicle Window Clings are part of the MCPD Autism/IDD Wandering Safety Kit which can be requested by visiting [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd) and emailing the program coordinator.



Autism/IDD Safety T-Shirts were designed by Montgomery County Police to save lives. They can be used as a tool and are **ONLY for those that can not speak for themselves and are in immediate danger should they elope/wander.** The t-shirts are part of our MCPD Autism/IDD Wandering Safety Kit (pictured below) which can be requested by visiting [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd) and emailing the program coordinator.



The MCPD Autism/IDD Unit provides a safety kit, including our safety shirt and other resources as part of our wandering prevention/safety efforts.

It's our way of saying "you are not alone on this journey."

*Interacting and understanding our vulnerable community.*

# Resources

Some of the most frequently suggested resources are listed below.

The MCPD Autism/IDD unit regularly partners with Pathfinders for Autism on Officer training, outreach, community presentations and providing direct family immediate resources.

## **Pathfinders for Autism**

<https://pathfindersforautism.org/>



SPANISH

<https://pathfindersforautism.org/articles/espanol/>

## **Pathfinders for Autism Wandering and Elopement Resources**

<https://pathfindersforautism.org/resources/safety/wandering-and-elopement/>

## **Down Syndrome Network Montgomery County**

<https://dsmc.org/>



## **Autism Speaks**

[www.autismspeaks.org/](http://www.autismspeaks.org/)



## **Maryland Low Intensity Services Grant page / Maryland Developmental Disabilities**

<https://health.maryland.gov/dda/Pages/liss.aspx>

## **Montgomery County Crisis Center**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Program.aspx?id=BHCS/  
BHCS24hrcrisiscenter-p204.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Program.aspx?id=BHCS/BHCS24hrcrisiscenter-p204.html)

## **Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Aging and Disability Services**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/ADSADSResourceUnit-p179.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/ADSADSResourceUnit-p179.html)

## **Alzheimer's Association**

[www.alz.org/](http://www.alz.org/)



**We understand the diversity of culture and language as it relates to those impacted in our community with loved ones with different special needs. Our unit works to ensure that all in our community are provided access and understanding in knowing that the Montgomery County Police and partnering agencies are here to ensure they know, they are not alone in this sometimes challenging journey.**

# community

Awareness  
Education  
Outreach  
Empowerment  
Follow Up  
Response

*Learning from each other . . .*

The MCPD Autism/IDD, Alzheimer's, Dementia Unit, as part of its layered approach to awareness and safety provides Autism/IDD, Alzheimers, Dementia education to all of our MCPD officers, caregivers, the community and individuals. The goal is to provide a safe, understanding and well informed community for those with Autism/IDD, Alzheimers, Dementia to live and flourish. The unit provides outreach beyond wandering and elopement for concerned family members and caregivers.

Please visit [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/aidd)  
or contact the program coordinators for more information.



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<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/howdol/autism-alzheimer-outreach.html>

Officer Laurie Reyes, [Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Laurie.Reyes@montgomerycountymd.gov) • (240) 855-1605

Officer Tara Bond, [Tara.Bond@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Tara.Bond@montgomerycountymd.gov) • (240) 671-7498

Officer Amy Stoughton, [Amy.Stoughton@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Amy.Stoughton@montgomerycountymd.gov) • (240) 907-9869

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