



JACOB WETTERLING RESOURCE CENTER

We value children

We advocate for the missing

We believe in the power of prevention

JWRC has a proven history of **helping missing and exploited kids and their families**. We provide direct assistance to families in crisis and strengthen the systems around child wellness and welfare with research-based, child-centered solutions.

A program of the Zero Abuse Project—which works to end all forms of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation—JWRC is shaping the **next generation of community leaders**, victim assistance professionals, and criminal justice workers.

24-HOUR CRISIS LINE: **1-800-325-HOPE**
www.jwrc.org

 a program of
zero abuse PROJECT



Victim Assistance

Since 1990, the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center has provided expert assistance and emotional support to families of missing and exploited children. **We've provided direct case management in over 1,000 missing-persons cases**, and have assisted thousands more victims and families struggling with the effects of child abuse and exploitation through support, resources, and referrals.

Today, 97% of children that go missing return home safely, but that **trauma has a profound impact on victims and their families**—who often don't know where to start. JWRC works closely with law enforcement, national and local nonprofit organizations, legislators, and the media to assist them.

And JWRC continues to provide services for as long as they are needed.

Heartbreakingly, dozens of our missing-persons cases remain open and unresolved. JWRC knows that these families have unique needs, and hosts an annual "Family Gathering Retreat"—a weekend-long support group for families and friends with current or previously missing loved ones.

JWRC Services for Victims and Families

Whether in person or through our **24-hour Victim Assistance Helpline (800-325-HOPE)**, we provide the following specific services:

- Active case-management for: family and non-family abduction; lost, injured, or otherwise missing children; runaway youth; and adults missing under suspicious circumstances
- Step-by-step guidance on proper abuse reporting procedures
- Assistance with creating and distributing missing-persons posters and flyers
- Assistance on working with the media
- Referrals for search and rescue on active cases
- Guidance on developing a family safety plan
- Resource guides and referrals for victim-centered services, culturally specific organizations, specialized trauma counselors, therapists, and family resources



24-hour
victim assistance
helpline

**1-800-325-
HOPE**

Prevention Education

JWRC also develops and conducts **robust community training** to help keep kids safe. We believe in the power of prevention education—giving people the tools and information they need to better understand risk and make healthy choices.

Trainings focus on a wide variety of topics around **personal and online safety**. In 2019, a full **10,000 children, parents, and professionals** across the country received abuse prevention and safety information through our trainings and community events.

Popular Sessions

Teachable Safety Skills: Replacing Myths with Facts – *For parents, teachers, youth leaders, community members.* How do I talk to children about personal safety without scaring them to death? This session provides current information about various safety challenges children and teens face, both in-person and online, and how to educate youth in a positive way.

Empower Me! – *For Grades K-6.* Children learn about personal safety in this interactive session that covers: the buddy system, checking first, secrets vs. surprises, 5 trusted adults, listening to your uh-oh feeling, and body ownership. Never fear-based, material is presented in a way that empowers children. (Often combined with "Teachable Safety Skills" for parents.)

Protecting Your Online Footprint – *For grades 7-12 (parental attendance is encouraged).* Designed to empower teens and give them tools to make healthy decisions as they gain independence, this discussion-based training covers online risks and dangers, behaviors that trigger warning flags, and sexting and cyberbullying.

Navigating the Virtual Playground – *For parents, teachers, youth leaders.* Designed for parents, caregivers, and teachers working with youth ages 11 and up, this workshop aims to help adults feel more comfortable talking with teens about making safe choices with technology. It delves beyond the shocking headlines to provide accurate information and prevention strategies to avoid online exploitation of youth.

Community Notification Meetings – *For community members.* What can parents do when a convicted sex offender moves in down the street? This workshop gives specific information about how to talk about sexual abuse prevention without scaring children. (Usually a supplement to meetings arranged by law enforcement.)



What Parents Say

"As a parent, it's difficult to think about someone wanting to sexually exploit or take my child, but it's an issue JWRC has helped me learn to address with my children in positive, healthy ways."

"I was surprised to learn that those most likely to exploit or abduct a child are also most likely known to the child, family, or neighborhood. The vast majority are not strangers."

What Law Enforcement Says

"As a police officer who attended [your] training, I took your story back to the middle school in hopes that something as tragic as this would not happen to another child, another family, or another community. For 10 years I have had the opportunity to share this prevention message with over 3,500 youngsters."

History of the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center

On October 22, 1989, 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted from a group of three boys in a small town in Minnesota. In response, his family, friends, and community turned their anger, sadness, and fear into a groundswell of action to protect other children. Led by Jerry and Patty Wetterling, they formed Friends for Jacob in 1990, later named the Jacob Wetterling Foundation and now named the **Jacob Wetterling Resource Center**. Their mission was to educate the public about **who** takes children, **how** they do it, and **what each of us can do** to stop it.

The public began to ask for laws that would help supervise and rehabilitate convicted sex offenders. JWRC responded by advocating for Jacob's Law in Minnesota and throughout the United States. The public needed a missing child emergency response system, so JWRC responded by helping to launch the A.M.B.E.R. Plan in Minnesota, used in the most severe cases of missing children.

Sometimes children or teens go missing at the hands of non-family members, or family members, or sometimes they run away from abusive homes and land on the streets, becoming prey for those who seek to exploit them. Sometimes they are thrown away or trafficked for profit or personal gain. JWRC works to prevent these crimes, knowing that every child deserves to be safe.

In September 2016, the Wetterlings finally learned, 27 years later, that Jacob had been found deceased. They did not want Jacob's story to end this way. They had a choice to walk into bitterness and anger or to walk into what could be—to walk into hope. Their choice continues to change the world.

In January 2019, the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center merged with the Zero Abuse Project. Their focused efforts and combined resources will help ensure that every child grows up in a healthy, safe world free from abuse, exploitation, and abduction.



JWRC Values

We value children.

- We use the answer to “what is best for children?” to guide our choices
- We believe every child should be allowed a safe childhood.
- We believe children have the right to be heard and believed.
- We believe children should be given the tools to talk about their bodies and feelings.

We advocate for the missing.

- All missing persons deserve to be found or recovered.
- All loved ones of missing persons should be supported throughout their journey of searching and healing.
- Our clients are best served when we are able to collaborate with other professionals working to find answers.

We believe in the power of prevention.

- We believe that diversity in representation matters.
- We believe all community members have a stake in keeping children safe.
- We believe all people should be given accurate, appropriate education and knowledge to keep communities safe.

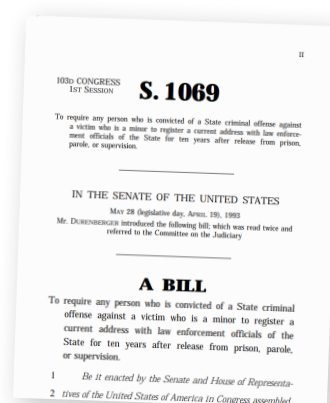
Jacob's Legacy in Law

The Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act (the Wetterling Act) is a federal statute that requires states to implement a sex offender and crimes against children registry. The law, enacted as part of the Federal Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, requires states to form registries of offenders convicted of sexually violent offenses or offenses against children, and to form more rigorous registration requirements for sex offenders. States must also verify the addresses of sex offenders annually for at least 10 years, and those offenders classified as sexually violent predators must verify their addresses quarterly for the rest of their lives. Non-compliance results in a 10% reduction of federal block grant funds for criminal justice.

While states initially had discretion regarding whether to disseminate registration information to the public, Congress amended the Wetterling Act in 1996 with Megan's Law. Now law enforcement agencies are required to release information about registered sex offenders if they deem that information relevant to protecting the public.

The Wetterling Act was last amended in 1998 with Section 115 of the General Provisions of Title I of the Departments of Commerce, Justice and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (CJSA). The CJSA amendment gave states more discretion for how they contacted registered

offenders to keep their addresses updated. The CJSA also required offenders to register in a state other than their own if they resided there for school, as well as required federal and military employees to register in their current state of residence. ■



Jacob Wetterling believed in a fair and just world, where all children know they are special and deserve to be safe. We invite you to participate in the #11forJacob movement by pledging to:

1. **Be Fair**
2. **Be Kind**
3. **Be Understanding**
4. **Be Honest**
5. **Be Thankful**
6. **Be a Good Sport**
7. **Be a Good Friend**
8. **Be Joyful**
9. **Be Generous**
10. **Be Gentle with Others**
11. **Be Positive**



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