



Youth at Risk for Running Away

Tips for Caregivers and Staff

What you can do

“Please don’t go ... I care about you.
What do you need right now? How can I help?”

Data indicates youth with the characteristics below are at a higher risk for running away:

- Entered care as an adolescent
- Recent change in legal status (dependent to legally free)
- Have been in care one to two years, or five-plus years
- Has multiple placements (the higher the number of placements, the higher the risk)
- Placement was a result of neglect
- Age 12 or older (highest risk are 15- to 17-year-olds)
- Disconnected, unable to form positive relationships
- Youth who have previous runs (the more runs, the higher the risk to run again)

History of:

- Alcohol/substance abuse
- Mental health issues
- Behavioral problems
- Delinquency
- Impulsiveness
- Externalization of behaviors

The resources below may assist you in reducing or preventing a youth from running away:

- “How to Help a Youth at Risk to Run Tips for Caregivers”
- “Run Prevention Tips for Staff”
- “When Youth Returns From a Run Tips for Staff”
- “When a Youth Runs and Returns Tips for Caregivers”
- “Resource Information For Youth at Risk to Run”

For more information, visit:

www.dcyf.wa.gov



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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