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Shining Hope

The "Shining Hope" newsletter offers valuable resources and support to families facing child abduction and parental alienation. Our publication provides uplifting and informative messages to parents dealing with the abduction of their children, fostering a strong and supportive community throughout their difficult journey. Stay informed and up-to-date with the latest news, events, and pressing issues through our comprehensive and timely newsletter.



Donate now at STL's official website! Your support brings kids HOME!

Bi-Weekly Parent Support Zoom Call: Email contactshinethelight@gmail.com for dates and the link to join.

STL's new [YouTube channel](#) is now live, offering weekly tools, stories, and encouragement to help families stay supported and empowered!

“

Goodness grows in the soil of endurance.

”

What Matters Most in the First Weeks After Reunification

Reunification is an incredibly emotional time, and it rarely unfolds the way it was imagined. Even when it's long hoped for, it can bring a surprising mix of relief, fear, grief, and uncertainty.

In these early days, what matters most is helping your child feel safe again. It will take time, and it is best nurtured slowly and without pressure. During this initial period, it's important to remind yourself that you do not need to have everything figured out right away.

This is not the end of the journey, nor is it the end of its effects. Even so, it marks the beginning of a new chapter and a new season of rebuilding trust, safety, and connection.

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The First Weeks After Reunification

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You will need to provide your child with consistency and presence. This often means grounding yourself, staying calm, and listening more than talking. It also means accepting that you may not have all the answers, and that you may never fully understand how your child experienced the separation or the emotional conflicts they carry.

What may be happening for your child

Your child's behavior after coming home is often shaped by stress and survival instincts, not by anything intentional or personal. Emotional distance or flatness are common and do not reflect rejection or a lack of love. Children who have experienced prolonged separation or emotional pressure learn to protect themselves by staying guarded. This protective response may last for days, months, or even years, as safety gradually returns.

Your child may feel relief and fear at the same time. They may accept care but resist closeness. They often want space while still checking that you are nearby. These mixed signals are common and are just part of a nervous system finding its footing again after prolonged stress, not a failing relationship. Over time, your consistency and calm presence will allow security to take root.

Children process crisis through a developing mind, which can intensify confusion, anger, shame, and internal conflict. What you can offer is steadiness, protection from further harm, and a healing environment that reduces long-term effects. Remember, your child needs presence more than performance.

They do not need you to make up for lost time, explain the past, or look to them for reassurance. They do need to experience you as a trustworthy parent who is steady, undemanding, and emotionally available. Listening will matter most to them during this time. Let your child share if they choose, and allow silence if they do not. Try to resist the urge to correct memories or clarify misunderstandings. Safety comes before understanding, and connection comes before clarity.

What your child needs most right now

Keeping life grounded and predictable is essential. Children coming out of trauma feel safer with structure, not intensity. Focus on regular meals, consistent sleep routines, simple choices, calm transitions, and low stimulation. Keep life small and manageable in the beginning. Avoid big outings, emotionally charged conversations, or sudden changes early on.

Healing is built through repetition and predictability, not special moments. Together, these form a key foundation in the early stages.



Reunification

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Protecting your child emotionally

Your child's nervous system is still highly sensitive. Shield them from adult conversations, legal discussions, case-related phone calls, or commentary about the other parent. Even neutral remarks can feel overwhelming and destabilizing. If you need to process anger or frustration, do so away from your child with a trusted adult or professional.

Protecting your child from adult emotional material supports regulation and healing. Following through on small things, staying emotionally steady, apologizing calmly when needed, and remaining consistent all make a meaningful difference.

This season is very demanding, but it is also a time of joy and growth. The right support matters because what you are doing is difficult and your steadiness will help your child regain their footing. Remember, seeking help is also part of protecting your child and sustaining you for the road ahead. ❤️

Prevention Through

Preparation:

Practical Steps to Protect What Matters Most

Parental child abduction most often unfolds during intense custody disputes, when conflict escalates and communication breaks down. In many cases, parents, attorneys, and advocates recognize warning signs but do not always act quickly enough to put safeguards in place.

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Helpful Resources

For additional information and support related to reunification and parental child abduction, the following resources may be helpful:

- [Parental Child Abduction-National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#)
- [Reunification Tips for Parents](#) -(general reunification guidance)
- [Family Resource Guide on International Parental Kidnapping](#)_- U.S. Department of Justice (government resource covering legal process and post-return adjustment)

In Summary

- ❤️ Listen without correcting or explaining
- ➔ Allow your child to lead interactions
- 🗑️ Shield your child from adult conversations
- 🔗 Maintain consistency, even if your child pulls away
- 🧩 Introduce simple, shared activities
- ✅ Follow through on small promises
- 🔥 Repair calmly if emotions escalate
- 👐 Respect boundaries without withdrawing care
- 📅 Keep routines predictable and grounded
- 🌙 Model emotional regulation
- 👫 Invite connection without pressure
- 🌿 Seek professional support when needed

Prevention Through Preparation: Practical Steps to Protect What Matters Most

Take threats seriously and act early

Judges and child safety professionals urge families to take prevention seriously by securing clear court orders and keeping thorough documentation. Travel notification programs, supervised visitation arrangements, and accurate custody records give families practical tools to reduce risk and protect children during vulnerable times.

Shine the Light for Abducted Children works to raise awareness, promote prevention, and support families before, during, and after parental child abduction.

Provide schools with custody orders

Arrange supervised visitation when needed

Through education, advocacy, and community outreach, STL helps parents recognize warning signs, understand their legal options, and find practical support when they need it most. By keeping this issue in the public conversation and connecting families with real resources, Shine the Light for Abducted Children strengthens prevention efforts and stands alongside children and parents whose lives have been disrupted by abduction. 

Register with CPIAP program

References & Further Reading

- [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#)
- [Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program \(CPIAP\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Justice](#)
- [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)
- [U.S. Department of State](#)
- [Hague Conference on Private International Law](#)
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)

Contact Us

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Share your stories, ideas, or feedback with our Editor at info@tiffanyfontana.com. We value your input and look forward to hearing from you!