

ROOT-CAUSE SCENARIOS

It's critical to seek out the root cause of a child's wandering behavior – WHY is the child wandering/bolting? What do they want/not want? Wandering behaviors usually have a reason. Once you find the reason, you can create strategies to prevent wandering incidents and teach your child about dangers.

SAMPLE SCENARIO: CHILD IS DRAWN TO WATER

Emily loves playing in water. She loves splashing water, watching it pour out of a cup, swimming in it, and she loves bath time. On walks, she often wants to go look at the pond, water fountain, or cries for these things when passing them in the car.

STRATEGY: Allow the child to enjoy water time in an adult-supervised, controlled setting. For any child who wants to reach water for any given reason, try scheduling consistent "water play" times each day, or at the same time each week. Schedule around times easily recognized, such as after dinner or before bath time. Make sure the child sees that each water-play activity has an end time and is "all done." Swimming lessons are a must. Swimming lessons each week can also act as way for the child to reach their goal of playing in water. Be sure to take a picture of the swim instructor and place this into the schedule. *Knowing what to expect may satisfy your child's desire to reach water, as well as give him/her a tool to communicate their desire with a trusted adult before attempting to reach a destination on their own.*



PICTURE SCHEDULE TIPS: take pictures of your child doing a water-play activity, or water-play setting that is safe.

For more tips, visit awaare.org.

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SAMPLE SCENARIO: CHILD HAS A UNIQUE FASCINATION

Alex loves road signs, especially highway exit signs. He often cries or reacts to signs when passing them on the highway. He verbally stims on highway exit numbers. He will leave home or school to find his item of interest.

STRATEGY: Allow the child to explore fascinations in an adult-supervised, controlled setting. Try to find ways to incorporate the focus/fascination into daily activities so the child knows when to expect it. Use drawing, pictures, games and other creative ways to satisfy the child's need to touch or explore items of obsession.



PICTURE SCHEDULE TIPS: create ways for your child to explore an item of focus through their own creativity, or use the item in a social story.

Teach your child about the dangers of trying to reach an item of focus. For more tips, visit awaare.org.