WANDERING AND SAFETY

According to the National Autism Association, “wandering is the tendency of an individual to leave the safety of a responsible person’s care or safe area, which may result in potential harm or injury.” Other names for wandering are running, bolting, or elopement.

Ways to keep your children safe

1. Supervise your child at all times.

2. Get your child a tracking device and/or wearable identification.

3. Secure your home. You can install alarms, door chimes, and/or deadbolts.

4. Learn what triggers your child to wander and devise strategies to minimize these triggers.

5. Be conscious of what your child is wearing when they go out into the community.

6. Create a family emergency plan.

7. Have a recent photo of your child with you at all times.

8. Teach your child skills to stay safe, including learning how to swim. (Remember that this does not guarantee safety but it helps.)

9. Create social stories for your child that can help them understand how to be safe at home and in the community.

10. Notify first responders and trusted neighbors of your child’s tendency to wander.

11. Inform school and program staff (including non-school programs) that your child wanders. You can include this information on their Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This keeps school and program staff accountable and aware.

Please visit www.awaare.org for more information and resources.