

# NASC Statement on Calgary Search Highlights Autism Elopement Crisis

*Following the Calgary search for missing 11-year-old Parker, NASC urges greater global efforts to prevent autism elopement fatalities.*

CARY, NC, UNITED STATES, July 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Autism Safety Council \(NASC\)](#) today expressed its condolences [in a statement](#)

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Today's heartbreaking news is another reminder that autism safety must remain a national and global priority," NASC Board Member Shahriar Afshar

following confirmation by the Calgary Police Service that a body found during the 13-day search for missing 11-year-old Parker is believed to be the child.

The news comes amid a string of recent autism elopement-related deaths this month, including a 7-year-old girl who drowned in a pond in Calgary, a missing boy found dead in a sewage tank in Brazil, a 6-year-old boy

with autism who died in a drain near his home in Malaysia, and multiple fatalities this month in the United States.

"Today's heartbreaking news is another reminder that autism safety must remain a national and global priority," said NASC Board Member Shahriar Afshar.

According to NASC President Lori McIlwain, who has tracked and studied autism elopement fatalities for the past 20 years, drowning is consistently the leading cause of elopement-related deaths, accounting for more than 80% of fatalities in many recent years, followed by vehicular injury. In the United States, known cases averaged seven autism-related elopement fatalities per month in 2024. That average rose to eight per month in 2025 and currently stands at nine fatalities per month in 2026. Currently, 73.6% of drowning fatalities have occurred in non-pool water such as ponds, lakes, creeks, and canals.

NASC notes that while these numbers are likely an undercount, the increase in reported elopement fatalities over recent years may reflect a combination of rising autism diagnoses and improvements in fatality reporting, rather than an increase in occurrence alone.

As part of its ongoing efforts to prevent autism elopement fatalities, NASC recently launched several tools, including a dashboard featuring [2026 autism elopement fatality data](#) in the U.S., giving families, advocates, and first responders real-time insights into this year's trends.

NASC extends its heartfelt condolences to Parker's family and to every family around the world that has experienced the unimaginable loss of a loved one following elopement. Their stories reinforce why families are in greater need of support, resources, services, and community-wide safety nets across the nation and globe.

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