

A Mother's

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CEDAR RAPIDS (KWWL) - Carolyn Pospisil wants what every mother wants: to make sure her kid is ok.

"Erin is a very outgoing child," Carolyn Pospisil said. "She really enjoys being around people. She loves to read. She loved animals. She has a love for anything that gets her out socially. She was on dance team and she was involved in other school activities."

It's been seven years since Pospisil has seen her stepdaughter. Erin vanished from a Cedar Rapids neighborhood in June, 2001.

"Sometimes you do ok, sometimes you don't. It's kind of a roller coaster ride all the time," Pospisil said.

Erin was last seen getting into a two-door black Chevy Cavalier.

"You do think about them every day," Pospisil said. "You think about she'd really enjoy doing this place we go to dinner, at her favorite place to eat. You see someone that looks kind of like her, you get that jump in your stomach. You see her in things that you wouldn't associate with your child."

To add to Carolyn's desperation is frustration. According to law enforcement, Erin is classified as a runaway.

"Because of her age, it's automatically assumed in a lot of jurisdictions that a child ran unless you can prove that the child didn't run," Pospisil said. "When I was asked specifically what I had to do to not have her classified as a runaway we have to have proof that she wasn't a runaway that's that we go with."

"At the time she was 15 years old," said Lt. Ken Washburn with the Cedar Rapids Police Department. "She was last seen June 3, of 2001. Her mother reported her missing June 5. At the time, there was nothing to indicate foul play. . She was last seen getting into a car on the 1500 block of 2nd Avenue Southeast. She hasn't been seen since."

Carolyn is fighting for uniform procedures in every law enforcement office across the state.

"It's not anything against the Cedar Rapids Police Department, it's just a matter of the way that they work and it's the way everyone knows how to do it and that's the way it gets done," Pospisil said.

"We try to determine whether they're at risk," Washburn said. "If they've had problems, if they've had a fight with parents or if something else is going on that they've runaway and gone over to a friend's house, just because of family problems. Or if there's other things going on, maybe they're in danger or they've been abducted."

"The parent is frantic," Pospisil said. "For whatever reason their child is not home, the parent is frantic. That parent doesn't know what to do. They are waiting for someone to tell them what to do. Even having a canned answer. Here is what we do next and here's what you can do next."

At first, Pospisil thought she was alone. She thought she was the only parent dealing with this.

That's until she found other people going through the same nightmare.

Now she wants to help them.

"I don't want another family to go through what I went through," Pospisil said. "I don't want another family to feel they are the only ones out there going through this when there's 420 missing persons cases in Iowa active and every one of those families feel like they are the only ones and they're not."

She advises that if you think your child is missing, don't wait to report it.

"The first 24 hours don't wait to report they are missing. You can still keep looking for them. You don't have to exhaust your leads before calling police. Calling police and letting them know this is the situation. My child is gone and this is what we think happened," Pospisil said.

"I just want to know she's ok, that's it, I want her to know she's ok," Pospisil said.

Carolyn Pospisil has created a website geared to helping parents find missing children: [Help Find A Child](#)

Other resources:

[Iowa's Missing Persons](#)

[National Center For Missing & Exploited Children](#)

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